



SON OF SEMELE

NEWS RELEASE

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New plays investigate relationship of art and artists to rise of fascism, anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany

Open Fist premieres 'The Bauhaus Project' by Tom Jacobson

Son of Semele and Victory Theatre co-premiere Jacobson's 'Crevasse'

Satellite events set for ArtCenter College of Design, Skirball Cultural Center and more

LOS ANGELES (June 7, 2024) — Two new productions look at the rise of fascism and anti-Semitism in pre-war Germany and its effect on art, as well as at the artists who resisted, or — in some cases — contributed. A group of struggling Southern California art students creates a dramatic presentation on the history of the famous Bauhaus School in *The Bauhaus Project* by **Tom Jacobson**, a world premiere theatrical event presented in two binge-worthy parts (*Part 1: Bauhaus Weimer* and *Part 2: Bauhaus Dessau and Bauhaus Berlin*) by **Open Fist Theatre Company** from **July 12** through **August 18** at **Atwater Village Theatre**. Filmmaker and Nazi propagandist Leni Riefenstahl meets Walt Disney in the world premiere of Jacobson's *Crevasse*, a co-production of **Son of Semele** and **The Victory Theatre Center**, running **July 26** through **August 18** at the **Victory Theatre**. A series of related events will take place throughout the summer at the **ArtCenter College of Design, Skirball Cultural Center** and more under the collective title *Reflections on Art and Democracy*.

"*The Bauhaus Project* takes place on several levels," explains Open Fist artistic director **Martha Demson**, who worked closely with Jacobson to develop the piece and is directing. "The framing device is a play within a play in which modern-day art school

students trace the historical narrative of the Bauhaus, a groundbreaking art school committed to ‘marrying beauty with utility’ that was closed by the Nazis in 1933. Meanwhile, the production design will emphasize the enormous influence of the Bauhaus and the exhilaration of cross-disciplinary collaboration.”

Taking on the roles of the art students are **Jack Goldwait** (“Owen”), **Sang Kim** (“Duck”), **Chloe Madriaga** (“Brec”) and **John C. Sweet** (“Kai”), each of whom, in turn, portrays multiple historic Bauhaus figures, many of whom later fled to the U.S. or died in concentration camps: architect and Bauhaus founding director **Walter Gropius** and his successors, architects **Hannes Meyer** and **Ludwig Mies van der Rohe**; painters **Paul Klee**, **Wassily Kandinsky**, **Oskar Schlemmer** and **Lyonel Feininger**; textile artists **Gunta Stolzl**, **Maria Kipp** and **Otti Berger**; furniture designer **Marcel Breuer**; photographer **Laszlo Moholy-Nagy**; graphic designer **Herbert Bayer**; composers **Arnold Schönberg** and **Alma Mahler** (widow of Gustav Mahler and wife of Walter Gropius); and architects **Ludwig Hilberseimer** and **Fritz Ertl** — the latter of whom would go on to design buildings at Auschwitz.

The Open Fist creative team includes scenic designer **Richard Hoover**, lighting designer **Gavan Wyrick**, composer and sound designer **Tim Labor**, projections designer **Gabrieal Griego**, costume designer **Michael Mullen**, prop masters **Bruce Dickinson** and **Ina Shumaker**, and assistant director **Sarah Zuk**. **Martha Demson** and **Amanda Weier** produce for Open Fist Theatre Company, and **Nychelle Hawk** is associate producer.

Nearby, in Burbank, Victory Theatre Center artistic director **Maria Gobetti** welcomes Son of Semele artistic director **Matthew McCray**, who will be directing Jacobson’s *Crevasse* in a co-production between the two companies. In 1938, German filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl went to Hollywood to find American distribution for her award-winning film, *Olympia*. Only one studio head would meet with her: Walt Disney. **Ann Noble** and **Leo Marks** star in an astonishing true story of betrayal, Nazi propaganda and cartoons.

“In November 1938 there was public outcry about Germany, but full details were not yet known,” says McCray. “This was just after Kristallnacht, years before the U.S. officially entered the war. There is a perplexing draw toward autocracy again, so it’s important to explore issues around power, and the conflicting influences of money and ethics. In *Crevasse*, the comparisons between the work and ideals of filmmakers Disney and Riefenstahl provide a compelling examination of business and power through film.”

“The Victory is thrilled to collaborate with Son of Semele on this provocative tale,” comments Gobetti. “*Crevasse* and *The Bauhaus Project*, may be separate productions, but taken together they add up to a compelling warning in today’s political climate.”

The creative team for *Crevasse* includes scenic designer **Evan Bartoletti**, lighting designer **Azra King-Abadi**, sound designer **John Zalewski** and costume

designer **Michael Mullen**. **Maria Gobetti** and **Matthew McCray** produce.

Reflections on Art and Democracy is designed to raise awareness about the current rise of fascism and anti-Semitism in the U.S. and around the world, the power of art and design to resist them, and the confluence of visual and performative artworks to promote democracy. Events include ***Education as Radical Political Act***, a webinar presented by **ArtCenter College of Design** (information and tickets at artcenter.edu); **Maria Kipp (1900-1988): *Handweaver Ahead of Her Time***, a webinar hosted by **Open Fist Theatre Company** (openfist.org); and an illuminated lecture at the **Skirball Cultural Center** presented by **theatre dybbuk** [sic] (skirball.org / theatredybbuk.org).

Performances of ***The Bauhaus Project*** take place **July 12** through **August 18**, with previews the weekend prior, on July 5, July 6 and July 7. Part I, which focuses on the school's founding and early years in the city of Weimar, will run **Fridays at 8 p.m.** and **Saturdays at 4 p.m.**, while Part 2, which looks at the school's moves, first to Dessau, then to Berlin, in the face of increasing Nazi scrutiny, will play on **Saturdays at 8 p.m.** and **Sundays at 4 p.m.** Audience members can choose to view the entire *Bauhaus Project* over the course of two evenings (any Friday and any Saturday at 8 p.m.); two matinees (any Saturday and any Sunday at 4 p.m.); or on a single Saturday, at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. (The history is sequential, so it is not advised to view the parts out of order.) **Atwater Village Theatre** is located at **3269 Casitas Ave** in **Los Angeles, CA 90039**. A combination ticket to both Parts 1 and 2 is **\$50**, while admission to a single part is **\$35**. Students receive a **\$5** discount, and preview performances are **Pay-What-You-Can**. To make a reservation for ***The Bauhaus Project***, call **(323) 882-6912** or go to www.openfist.org.

Performances of ***Crevasse*** run from **July 26** through **August 18** on **Fridays** and **Saturdays at 8 p.m.** and **Sundays at 4 p.m.**, with two previews set for **Friday, July 19** and **Saturday, July 20**, each at **8 p.m.** **The Victory Theatre Center** is located at **3326 W Victory Blvd., Burbank, CA 91505**. Tickets range from **\$32** to **\$40**; groups, students, seniors and union members are **\$25**, and previews are **\$20**. To make a reservation for ***Crevasse***, call **(818) 841-5421** or go to www.thevictorytheatrecenter.org.

A **three-play package** (*Bauhaus Part 1*, *Bauhaus Part 2*, *Crevasse*) is available for **\$75** and can be purchased at either openfist.org or thevictorytheatrecenter.org.

[Click here](#) to download high-resolution photos from *Crevasse*. [Check back here](#) to find photos, coming soon, from *The Bauhaus Project*.

The Bauhaus Project and *Crevasse* are each made possible in part with support from the **California Arts Council** and the **Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture**.

Details for Calendar Listings 'The Bauhaus Project' & 'Crevasse'

WHAT:

Two new productions highlight the rise of fascism and anti-Semitism in Germany and the power of art to resist. A group of struggling Southern California art students creates a dramatic presentation on the history of the famous Bauhaus School in ***The Bauhaus Project*** by **Tom Jacobson**, a world premiere theatrical event presented in two binge-worthy parts (*Part 1: Bauhaus Weimer* and *Part 2: Bauhaus Dessau and Bauhaus Berlin*) by **Open Fist Theatre Company**. Filmmaker and Nazi propagandist Leni Riefenstahl meets Walt Disney in the world premiere of Jacobson's ***Crevasse***, a co-production of **Son of Semele** and **The Victory Theatre Center**. A series of related events will take place throughout the summer at the **ArtCenter College of Design, Skirball Cultural Center** and more under the collective title ***Reflections on Art and Democracy***.

WHO:

◆ ***The Bauhaus Project***

- Written by **Tom Jacobson**
- Directed by **Martha Demson**
- Starring **Jack Goldwait, Sang Kim, Chloe Madriaga, John C. Sweet**
- Presented by **Open Fist Theatre Company**

◆ ***Crevasse***

- Written by **Tom Jacobson**
- Directed by **Matthew McCray**
- Starring **Leo Marks and Ann Noble**
- Presented by **Son of Semele and The Victory Theatre Center**

WHEN:

◆ ***The Bauhaus Project***

Previews: July 5, July 6, July 7

Performances: July 12 through August 18:

- Fridays at 8 p.m.: *Part 1 (Bauhaus Weimar)*
- Saturdays at 4 p.m.: *Part 1 (Bauhaus Weimar)*
- Saturdays at 8 p.m.: *Part 2 (Bauhaus Dessau & Bauhaus Berlin)*
- Sundays at 4 p.m.: *Part 2 (Bauhaus Dessau & Bauhaus Berlin)*

Audience members can choose to view the entire Bauhaus Project over the course of two evenings (any Friday and any Saturday at 8 p.m.); two matinees (any Saturday and any Sunday at 4 p.m.); or on a single Saturday, at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. (The history is sequential, so it is not advised to view the parts out of order.)

◆ ***Crevasse***

Previews: July 19 and July 20

Performances: July 26 through August 18:

- Fridays at 8 p.m.
- Saturdays at 8 p.m.
- Sundays at 4 p.m.

WHERE:

◆ ***The Bauhaus Project***

Atwater Village Theatre
3269 Casitas Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90039

◆ ***Crevasse***

The Victory Theatre Center
3326 W Victory Blvd.
Burbank, CA 91505

TICKETS:

◆ ***The Bauhaus Project***

- Part 1 and Part 2 (combination ticket): **\$50**
- Part 1 or Part 2 (individual ticket): **\$35**
- Students receive **\$5** off either price
- Previews: **Pay What You Can**

◆ ***Crevasse***

- Performances: **\$32–\$40**
- Groups, students, seniors and union members: **\$25**
- Previews: **\$20**

◆ **3-play package** (*Bauhaus Part 1, Bauhaus Part 2, Crevasse*): **\$75**

PHOTOS:

[Click here](#) to download high-resolution photos from *Crevasse*.

[Check back here](#) to find photos, coming soon, from *The Bauhaus Project*.

HOW:

◆ ***The Bauhaus Project***: www.openfist.org

◆ ***Crevasse***: www.thevictorytheatrecenter.org

The Bauhaus Project and *Crevasse* are each made possible in part with support from the **California Arts Council** and the **Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture**.

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