

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Shotgun Players presents *Dry Land*, written by Ruby Rae Spiegel, directed by Ariel Craft

"As girls, we are often taught 'I'm gross.' 'I bleed.' 'I poop.' 'I have a vagina.' *Dry Land* is a look at what happens when we aren't scared away by each other's less than beautiful humanness." —Ariel Craft, *Dry Land* director

Berkeley, CA – Amy and Ester are teammates on a suburban Florida high school swim team. Ester is aiming for a scholarship. Amy just wants to get through an unwanted pregnancy. *The New York Times* describes *Dry Land*: "this portrait of an unlikely friendship under uncommon pressure is tender, caustic, funny and harrowing... Ms. Spiegel demonstrates an uncanny gift for presenting the unavoidable messiness of being young." *Dry Land* begins previews on Thursday, May 17; opens on Friday, May 25; and runs through Sunday, June 17, 2018, at The Ashby Stage. Audience members are invited to participate in talkback discussions immediately following each performance.

Dry Land director Ariel Craft, who will take the helm as Cutting Ball Theater's artistic director this year, reflects on why this play carries a message worth sharing: "*Dry Land* explores the experience of being a young woman trying to build a sense of identity that's your own—not just what others expect of you—and a sense of worth that's strong enough to weather your own failures." When asked about the meaning of the play's title, Craft said: "To me there's something revealing about weightlessness in water. Through the whole play we're in this place [the locker room] that is adjacent to the good, sterilized, weightless space, where we're dealing with all of the muck of who we actually are."

Dry Land isn't just an inside look into the challenges that face teenage girls, it's a story of a young female playwright inspired by the work of another young female playwright. Ruby Rae Spiegel was just wrapping up her high school sophomore year, when she started writing *Dry Land*. And her theatre scholar/Weather Underground activist parents took her to see *Blasted* by Sarah Kane, a foundational experience boundary-pushing theatre cited by Spiegel in a [2015 American Theatre interview](#).


Dry Land centers around one character's pursuit to end an unwanted pregnancy. So what do reproductive rights and policies look like for women and girls today? Since the first days of the Trump/Pence administration, against the backdrop of the Women's March, there's been a renewed attack on women's reproductive rights. First was President Trump's mandate reinstating a Reagan-era "Global Gag Rule," restricting funding to international family planning organizations. In his first year in office, [Trump backed every attempt to defund Planned Parenthood](#), he signed legislation making it easier for state and local governments to defund abortion clinics, and [he appointed anti-abortion-movement leaders in an effort to reshape women's reproductive rights](#) at the White House and U.S. Health and Human Services. President Trump is the first sitting U.S. president to speak at the March for Life—the nation's largest anti-abortion rally. **The Trump administration and Congress have repeatedly tried to repeal the Affordable Care Act (which covers 41 percent of women of reproductive age), particularly Medicaid, which pays for half of all U.S. births and two-thirds of unplanned births.** For more information on federal and state laws and policies affecting reproductive rights, visit [NARAL's Laws & Policy page](#).

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SHOTGUN PLAYERS



The cast of *Dry Land* features Martha Brigham*, Adam Magill*, Grace Ng, Amy Nowack, and Don Wood. The creative team features set design by Angrette McCloskey, lighting design by Cassie Barnes, costume design by Valera Coble, stage management by Heather Kelly-Laws*, props design by Devon LaBelle, video design by Erin Gilley, theatrical violence by Dave Maier, sound design by Sara Witsch, and production assistance by Lenny Adler.

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers. This Theatre operates under an agreement with Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

Dry Land features one character's pursuit to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. Patrons with questions and concerns about content are encouraged to contact the Shotgun Players box office at 510.841.6500 ext. 303.

More at shotgunplayers.org/online/article/dryland.

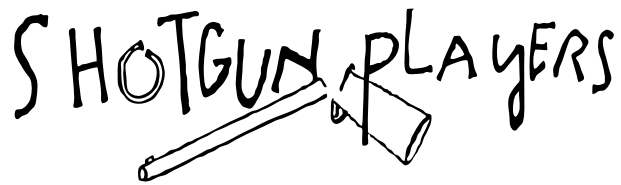
Artist Bios

Ruby Rae Spiegel, Playwright

Ruby Rae Spiegel is from Brooklyn, New York. Her first play, *Carrie & Francine*, was selected for the Off-Broadway Summer Shorts 5 Festival. *Dry Land* was produced at the HERE Arts Center by downtown theater company, Colt Coeur, Permanent Record Theatre, Kings Cross Theatre, Center Theatre Group, TheatreLAB, Kirk Douglas Theatre, Forum Theatre, and it was developed at New York Stage and Film's Powerhouse Summer Theater Session, as well as the Ojai Playwrights Conference. She has written for TV and short films including *The OA* (2016), *Mindhunter* (2017), and *Some of Us Had Been Threatening Our Friend Colby* (2015). Ruby is a graduate of Young Playwrights Inc. and Yale University.

Ariel Craft, Director

Ariel Craft is a director, generative theater-maker, and incoming artistic director of San Francisco's Cutting Ball Theater. Recent directing credits include Paula Vogel's *The Mineola Twins*, the collectively-created *MacBitch*, Jean Racine's *Phèdre*, a world premiere adaptation of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman*, Bekah Brunstetter's *The Oregon Trail*, Federico García Lorca's *Blood Wedding*, and a world premiere adaptation of John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. Ariel has served as associate artistic director at the Cutting Ball Theater for the past three seasons, founded and led The Breadbox for five seasons, and previously served as assistant artistic director at The Custom Made Theatre Co. and artistic fellow at the American Conservatory Theater. She holds a BFA with honors from New York University, where she studied multidisciplinary theater-making at the Playwrights Horizons Theater School. Ariel received a Theatre Bay Area Award for Outstanding Direction for Cutting Ball Theater's *Phèdre* as well as Theatre Bay Area's TITAN Award.



Calendar Listing

WHAT: Amy and Ester are teammates on a suburban Florida high school swim team. Ester is aiming for a scholarship. Amy just wants to get through an unwanted pregnancy. *The New York Times* describes *Dry Land*: "this portrait of an unlikely friendship under uncommon pressure is tender, caustic, funny and harrowing... Ms. Spiegel demonstrates an uncanny gift for presenting the unavoidable messiness of being young."

WHEN: Thursday, May 17–Sunday, June 17, 2018

WHERE: [The Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Avenue, Berkeley](#)

TICKET PRICES: Pay-what-you-can previews: May 17–24. Regular tickets: \$25–\$42. Advance reservations strongly advised. Shows will sell out!

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For more information, go to shotgunplayers.org/online/article/dryland

About Shotgun Players

Shotgun Players is a company of artists determined to create bold, relevant, affordable theatre that inspires and challenges audience and artist alike to re-examine our lives, our community, and the ever-changing world around us.

Nothing excites Shotgun more than taking on projects that other companies might deem too expensive, too unwieldy, or just plain impossible. Our commitment to new play development has made Shotgun Players a vital part of the arts community in the Bay Area and beyond. Shotgun celebrated its 20th anniversary with an entire season of new works, and put a stake in the ground by producing a year of all female playwrights in 2015.

More at shotgunplayers.org.