



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 2018

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Shotgun Players presents *Women Laughing Alone With Salad*, written by Sheila Callaghan, directed by Susannah Martin

"If you're going to talk about feminist issues in our culture, you can't not talk about them as perceived by men."

—Sheila Callaghan, *Women Laughing Alone With Salad* playwright

Berkeley, CA – Inspired by the internet meme of "Women Laughing Alone With Salad," Sheila Callaghan explores gender stereotypes, relationships, and sexism, with a healthy side of humor and mixed greens. Callaghan breaks all the rules of our image-obsessed culture in this raw, feminist comedy where everyone is about to get tossed! ***Women Laughing Alone With Salad* begins previews on Friday, October 12; opens on Friday, October 19; and runs through Sunday, November 11, 2018, at the Ashby Stage.** Audience members are invited to participate in talkback discussions immediately following each performance.

Playwright Sheila Callaghan uses absurd and wildly incisive humor to skewer how women are portrayed in the media—and how both women and men are affected by these stereotypes. She comments: "If you're going to talk about feminist issues in our culture, you can't not talk about them as perceived by men. It just seems like a one-sided conversation. It's not placing blame or pointing fingers. It's not women only at the mercy of these images. Men are also at the mercy of what these images do to women, men who are involved in women's lives. So our man is victimized in a way, too, by these images. He wants to connect with these women who for whatever reason are shamed into not being who they need to be."

Director Susannah Martin reflects on how effective images—like the stock photography used in the "Women Laughing Alone With Salad" meme—can be in shaping norms of womanhood and femininity. "I can look at the salad meme and think, 'How ridiculous. Who would ever be swayed by these images?' But they work. Somehow, they creep into your brain, making you notice every little change in your body that takes you away from the glossy perfection of an ad campaign. As a middle-aged woman, I am affected on the daily by images and messaging that tell me about my lack of relevance, my increasing invisibility, and my decreasing viability as a woman. As a teacher of teenagers and young adults, I watch the pressure put on my students to live up to the most absurd, unachievable standards in terms of appearance, desirability, accomplishments, relationships, and gender roles. All of this makes me really angry. All of this makes me want to grab people by the collar and say, 'This is a big problem. WHY AREN'T WE TALKING ABOUT THIS ALL THE TIME???'"

The cast of *Women Laughing Alone With Salad* features **Caleb Cabrera, Melanie DuPuy, Regina Morones, and Sango Tajima.** The creative team features set design by **Mikiko Uesugi**, lighting design by **Allen Willner**, costume design by **Christine Crook**, costume design assistance by **Nancy Bach**, assistant direction by **Quinci Waller**, stage management by **Bri Owens**, props design by **Devon LaBelle**, video design by **Erin Gilley**, sound design by **Jake Rodriguez**, choreography by **Natalie Greene**, fight direction by **Dave Maier**, and production assistance by **Kieran Beccia.**

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

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Artist Bios

Sheila Callaghan, Playwright

Sheila Callaghan's plays have been produced and developed with Soho Rep, Playwright's Horizons, Yale Rep, South Coast Repertory, Clubbed Thumb, The LARK, Actor's Theatre of Louisville, New Georges, The Flea, Woolly Mammoth, Boston Court, and Rattlestick Playwright's Theatre, among others. Sheila is the recipient of the Princess Grace Award for emerging artists, a Jerome Fellowship from the Playwright's Center in Minneapolis, a MacDowell Residency, a Cherry Lane Mentorship Fellowship, the Susan Smith Blackburn Award, and the prestigious Whiting Award. Her plays have been produced internationally in New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Germany, Portugal, and the Czech Republic. These include *Scab*, *Crawl Fade to White*, *Crumble (Lay Me Down, Justin Timberlake)*, *We Are Not These Hands*, *Dead City*, *Lascivious Something*, *Kate Crackernuts*, *That Pretty Pretty; or, The Rape Play*, *Fever/Dream*, *Everything You Touch*, *Roadkill Confidential*, *Elevada*, *Bed*, and *Women Laughing Alone With Salad*. She is published with Playscripts.com and Samuel French, and several of her collected works are published with Counterpoint Press. She has taught playwriting at Columbia University, the University of Rochester, the College of New Jersey, Florida State University, and Spalding University. Sheila is an affiliated artist with Clubbed Thumb and a member of the Obie-winning playwright's organization 13P. Sheila is also an alumni of New Dramatists.

In 2010, Callaghan was profiled by *Marie Claire* as one of "18 Successful Women Who Are Changing the World." She was also named one of *Variety's* "10 Screenwriters to Watch" of 2010. Sheila is currently a writer/producer on the hit Showtime comedy *Shameless* and a founder of the feminist activist group The Kilroys. She was nominated for a 2016 Golden Globe for her work on the Hulu comedy series *Casual* and a 2017 WGA Award for her *Shameless* episode "I Am A Storm." sheilacallaghan.com

Susannah Martin, Director

An award-winning director, teacher, and theatre-maker, Susannah's relationship with Shotgun began in 2004 when she conceived and directed an original multidisciplinary theatre piece on faith in America called *The Faith Project* as part of Shotgun's Lab. Her work has been seen at A.C.T., Boxcar Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, Crowded Fire, Golden Thread Productions, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Mugwumpin, the Playwright's Foundation, Porchlight Theatre Company, San Francisco Playhouse, and TheatreFIRST. Susannah is also the theatre director & arts program coordinator at San Francisco University High School and a proud company member of Mugwumpin. She is honored to call Shotgun her artistic home. susannahmartin.net



Calendar Listing

WHAT: Inspired by the internet meme of “Women Laughing Alone With Salad,” Sheila Callaghan explores gender stereotypes, relationships, and sexism, with a healthy side of humor and mixed greens. Callaghan breaks all the rules of our image-obsessed culture in this raw, feminist comedy where everyone is about to get tossed!

WHEN: Friday, October 12–Sunday, November 11, 2018

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

TICKET PRICES: Pay-what-you-can previews: October 12–18. Regular tickets: \$7–\$42. Advance reservations strongly advised. Shows will sell out!

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

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.

More at shotgunplayers.org.