

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES NEW DIGITAL WITHOUT WALLS (WOW) PROJECTS BY INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED ARTISTS: GOB SQUAD, CULTURE CLASH AND TOM SALAMON

THREE MORE WORLD-PREMIERE WOW PRODUCTIONS JOIN PLAYHOUSE'S LINEUP OF INVENTIVE, INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES FOR AT-HOME PLAY

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse is pleased to announce three more productions in its **digital Without Walls (WOW) series**, including *Show Me A Good Time*, by the Berlin-based **Gob Squad** (2017 WOW Festival's *Super Night Shot*), co-produced and co-commissioned with HAU Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin; *The Totally Fake Latino News with Culture Clash*, a brand new Playhouse-commissioned piece written and performed by **Culture Clash** (*American Night, Zorro in Hell, The Mission*); and the Playhouse-commissioned *The Wizards of Oakwood Drive*, by New York-based artist **Tom Salamon** (WOW productions of *Accomplice: San Diego* and *The Grift at the Lafayette Hotel*).

"All of the artists in this next WOW cohort are deservedly renowned for their playful, genre-defying work. Gob Squad, who brought their inventive *Super Night Shot* to the 2017 WOW Festival, is now applying their singular mashup of theatre and real life to this equally singular time; Tom Salamon is crafting a charismatic, interactive online journey for kids in the style of his popular *Accomplice* series; and Culture Clash is meeting the moment with a monthly 'news' segment laced with their signature irreverent humor. These artists bring original and meaningful voices to the WOW series, offering even more virtual pathways to art and human connection," noted **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse.

Gob Squad's *Show Me A Good Time* is a 12-hour, live-streamed international event that features nine performers in multiple locations – from inside an empty theatre, to private homes, to the streets of Berlin – all combining into one live video that speaks to this particular time. The show is set during the summer solstice at a moment when the pause button has been pressed on society, and everyone is stuck in a perpetual selfie, staring at themselves on a filtered screen. Gob Squad artists reveal an alien world of habits, signs and symbols that once seemed to make sense but now only evokes a time already passed. Patrons can tune in for the full twelve hours or just check in periodically as Gob Squad tries to heal "The Present" in their signature style that blurs the boundaries of art, theatre and real life. US audiences can access the show on **June 20 from 9am to 9pm PST/12pm to 12am EST**, and European audiences from 6pm June 20 – 6am June 21 CEST. Tickets are \$10 and will be available on June 5.

The Totally Fake Latino News with Culture Clash offers a series of 10-minute doses of levity, poetics and *payasadas* {clowning}, from their homes and streets of SoCal and beyond. While the nation's premier Latino Performance Trio – **Richard Montoya, Ricardo Salinas** and **Herbert Siguenza** – abides by social distancing and science, they recognize the need to chronicle the isolation, joys and silver linings of their artsy activist lives in a fake news pandemic-ready format. We got this America! Send in the Clash Clowns! Tickets for *The Totally Fake Latino News with Culture Clash* are free, with six episodes running June through October (dates to be announced).

-- more --

Tom Salamon's *The Wizards of Oakwood Drive* is a live, zoom-connected performance for 10 kids at a time, telling the story of two sibling wizards in an all-out, winner-take-all magic spell contest. With a little help from parents to set the stage, the wizards take participants on a treasure hunt around your own home, finding items in hidden locations in a one-of-a-kind interactive experience sure to delight your kids. Tickets are \$25; July dates to be announced shortly.

These projects join the previously-announced WOW productions of *Ancient*, by **Mike Sears** and **Lisa Berger**; *Walks of Life*, by **Blindspot Collective**; *BINGE* by **Brian Lobel & Friends**; and *Portaleza*, by **David Israel Reynoso/Optika Moderna**.

Since its inception in 2011, **Without Walls (WOW)** has become one of San Diego's most popular and acclaimed performance programs. This signature Playhouse initiative is designed to break the barriers of traditional theatre, offering immersive, site-inspired and digital works that venture beyond the physical confines of the Playhouse facilities. Over the last decade, the Playhouse has been commissioning and presenting a series of immersive and site-based productions at locations throughout the San Diego community, including *Susurrus* (2011) at the San Diego Botanical Garden, *The Car Plays: San Diego* (2012) in the Playhouse parking lot, *Sam Bendrix at the Bon Soir* (2012) at Martinis Above Fourth, *Accomplice: San Diego* (2013) in Little Italy, *El Henry* (2014) at SILO in Maker's Quarter, *The Grift at the Lafayette Hotel* (2015) in North Park, *The Bitter Game* (2016) at Writerz Blok, *What Happens Next* at the Challenged Athletes Foundation (2018), and four biennial WOW Festivals in 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019.

The virtual WOW series joins the Playhouse's previously-announced series of online content, including **LJP Vault**, a series of posts by staff members and artists sharing favorite Playhouse memories; **Artist Alley**, a collection of exciting artist-driven content, such as live master classes and rarely-heard cut songs from Playhouse musicals; as well as **Create & Learn** educational tools and fun at-home activities for educators, students and families. This digital content is available on the Playhouse website at LaJollaPlayhouse.org, as well as on social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

La Jolla Playhouse is a place where artists and audiences come together to create what's new and next in the American theatre, from Tony Award-winning productions, to imaginative programs for young audiences, to interactive experiences outside our theatre walls. Founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire and Mel Ferrer, the Playhouse is currently led by Tony Award winner Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, and Managing Director Debby Buchholz. The Playhouse is internationally renowned for the development of new plays and musicals, including mounting 105 world premieres, commissioning 52 new works, and sending 33 productions to Broadway – including the hit musical *Come From Away* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

-- more --

La Jolla Playhouse Digital Without Walls (WOW) Projects

Ancient

By Mike Sears and Lisa Berger

La Jolla Playhouse Commission

May 14 – June 7; Free

This Playhouse-commissioned video installation explores the relationship between repetition and meditation, the routine and the ancient. With an original score composed by Shawn Rohlf for cello, piano and guitar, text by Rainer Maria Rilke, and a company of nine actors, *Ancient* invites the audience to observe an unfolding of day-to-day tasks that have been in play for centuries. An opportunity to experience nothing happening -- and everything happening. A reminder that we have been here before and that somehow, we go on.

Walks of Life

By Blindspot Collective

La Jolla Playhouse Commission

First episode available May 26; Free

Walks of Life is an original, Playhouse-commissioned work of auditory theatre featuring short scenes by playwrights and composers from across the country. In the midst of a pandemic that fractures and isolates our communities, this aural experience offers the opportunity to safely and imaginatively reconnect with each other by bearing witness to life's intimate moments captured entirely in sound. Participants experience the piece while walking independently through their own neighborhoods, and over the course of three 30-minute parts, they are introduced to characters and stories that might be unfolding in the homes around them.

BINGE

By Brian Lobel & Friends

June dates to be announced; \$25

This one-on-one performance piece takes the solitary experience of binge-watching television shows and transforms it into an opportunity to find comfort in the lives of fictional characters. Tailor-made to fit the life of each individual audience member, the performance offers a live Zoom session with a personal artist companion, resulting in the prescription of a classic television episode to provide a little bit of solace at home. Leave your own drama behind, and insert yourself into a world where whatever the drama, it'll probably be solved in under 30 minutes.

The Totally Fake Latino News with Culture Clash

By Culture Clash

La Jolla Playhouse Commission

June – October – dates to be announced; free

Culture Class offers 10-minute doses of levity, poetics and *payasadas* {clowning}, from their homes and streets of SoCal and beyond. While the nation's premier Latino Performance Trio – Richard Montoya, Ricardo Salinas and Herbert Siguenza – abides by social distancing and science, they recognize the need to chronicle the isolation, joys and silver linings of their artsy activist lives in a fake news pandemic-ready format. We got this America! Send in the Clash Clowns! Tickets for *The Totally Fake Latino News with Culture Clash* are free, with six episodes running monthly June – October.

-- more --

Show Me A Good Time

By Gob Squad

World premiere co-produced and co-commissioned with HAU Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin)

June 20, 2020:

- 9am – 9pm, San Diego (PST)
- 12pm – 12am, New York (EST)
- 6pm – 6am June 21, Berlin (CEST)

On Sale June 5; Tickets \$10

Show Me a Good Time is a 12-hour, live-streamed international event that features nine performers in multiple locations – from inside an empty theatre, to private homes, to the streets of Berlin – all combining into one live video that speaks to this particular time. The show is set during the summer solstice at a moment when the pause button has been pressed on society, and everyone is stuck in a perpetual selfie, staring at themselves on a filtered screen. Gob Squad artists reveal an alien world of habits, signs and symbols that once seemed to make sense but now only evokes a time already passed. Patrons can tune in for the full twelve hours or just check in periodically as Gob Squad tries to heal “The Present” in their signature style that blurs the boundaries of art, theatre and real life.

A new production by Gob Squad. World premiere co-commissioned and co-produced by: HAU Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin); co-production: Mousonturm (Frankfurt), Schlachthaus Theater Bern, International Summerfestival Kampnagel (Hamburg). Supported by: Fonds Darstellende Kuenste with funds from the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media. Gob Squad is funded by Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe.

The Wizards of Oakwood Drive

By Tom Salamon

La Jolla Playhouse Commission

July dates to be announced; \$25

This live, zoom-connected performance for 10 kids at a time tells the story of two sibling wizards in an all-out, winner-take-all magic spell contest. With a little help from parents to set the stage, the wizards take participants on a treasure hunt around your own home, finding items in hidden locations in a one-of-a-kind interactive experience sure to delight your kids.

Portaleza

By David Israel Reynoso/Optika Moderna

La Jolla Playhouse Commission

July dates to be announced; \$25

David Israel Reynoso/Optika Moderna are creating a one-of-a-kind Without Walls experience that takes audiences members on an inventive, multi-sensory virtual journey without ever leaving their living room. Following a set of clues, guests will unlock an online secret portal and meet Optika Moderna’s mysterious opticians who will reveal their latest procedure: **Portaleza**. This kinetoscopic wormhole expedition will engage audiences’ senses in unexpected ways. This world premiere will evoke all the visual lushness, theatrical surprise and one-on-one connection of Optika Moderna’s acclaimed WOW pieces *Las Quinceañeras* and *Waking La Llorona*, re-envisioned through the lens of a digital space.

-- more --

Artist Biographies

Lisa Berger is a freelance director, Meisner Teacher and Professor of Theatre. Her San Diego directing credits include *How High the Moon*, *The Car Plays: Incident Row* (La Jolla Playhouse WOW Festival); *The Car Plays: We Wait* (La Jolla Playhouse, Moving Arts); *Red Bike* (Moxie Theatre); *Red Truck, Blue Truck, When It Comes and Skelton Crew* (readings; The Old Globe); *The Moors, The Long Christmas Ride Home* (Patte Award) and *Looking for Normal* (Diversionary Theatre); *Parlour Song* (Backyard Renaissance); *A Behanding in Spokane* (Cygnet Theatre); *Ajax* (co-direct The Old Globe MFA program); *Metamorphoses* (San Diego City College); *Credible, The Secret in the Wings, Anatomy of Gray, Eurydice* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (USD); *The Collector* (Animal Cracker Conspiracy); *Buried Child, Simpatico, Things We Want* (New Village Arts); *Killer Joe* (Compass Theatre - Patte Award). She received her M.F.A. from the University of Montana and is also a graduate of The William Esper Studio in New York City. She currently teaches at Mira Costa College, City College and University of San Diego. She is co-artistic director of Meisner/Chekhov Integrated Training Studio.

Blindspot Collective develops radically inclusive programming that cultivates new work, emerging artists, and diverse audiences. The company develops transformative theatre that amplifies marginalized voices, illuminates untold stories, and energizes vulnerable communities in San Diego County. Since its founding in 2017, Blindspot Collective has collaborated with La Jolla Playhouse; The Old Globe; California Center for the Arts, Escondido; Diversionary Theatre; ARTS (A Reason to Survive); UC San Diego and other community partners to develop projects that meaningfully engage audiences and artists in the blindspot of society. The organization centers equity, inclusion, and pressing social issues in its work on and off stage with collaborators that include San Diego Unified School District, Juvenile Court and Community Schools, Cajon Valley Union School District, and Live Well San Diego. Most recently, Blindspot Collective was the first theatre company to be awarded a performing arts residency at the San Diego International Airport, where the organization developed and presented site-specific performances in 2019. The company has received acclaim for its original work, including *Hall Pass*, an immersive musical featured in the 2019 Without Walls Festival; *Qulili*, a documentary play based on the stories of local refugees developed with support from the Critical Refugee Studies Collective; *The Magic in this Soul*, a verbatim play about discrimination and resilience that won the Audience Favorite Award at the 2018 San Diego International Fringe Festival; and *Untold*, another verbatim play about mental illness that won the Dunn-Rankin Award for New Work at the 2017 San Diego Fringe. The company also develops interactive Forum Theatre for youth audiences, including *Safa's Story* and *Danny's Story*, which allow young people to consider the complexities of difference and prejudice. Those two productions have been seen by over 12,000 students in the past two years.

Culture Clash celebrated their 36th anniversary in the 2019/2020 season with both new and vintage works for the stages of Berkeley Repertory Theater, Victory Gardens, South Coast Rep, Getty Villa and Pasadena Playhouse. Their works swing wildly from satire to social realism and whiplash back to drama with gleeful abandon. Greek adaptations co-mingle with landmark historical looks at Los Angeles and the Southwest. They completed a book for Frank Loesser's long-lost musical *Señor Discretion Himself* and donned masks, swords and stretchy pants for La Jolla Playhouse audiences in *Zorro In Hell!*. Founded in 1984 on May 5 (Cinco de Mayo when Mexican Troops drove the French out of Chula Vista!) in San Francisco's historic Mission District, Culture Clash is Richard Montoya, Ricardo Salinas and Herbert Siguenza. Works for the national stage lays include the award-winning *Water & Power* (LA Drama Critics Circle Award), *Chavez Ravine*, *Bordertown*, *Culture Clash (Still) in America* and *American Night: The Ballad of Juan José* (2010), selected to launch OSF's *American Revolutions: The United States History Cycle*. The accomplished actors, scholars and book authors have appeared in *Nacho Libre*, *COCO* and *Encino Man! The Holy Mother Trinity of LatinX film!* Gracias LJP and to a World Without Walls! SALUD!

-- more --

Gob Squad is a seven-headed monster, an arts collective with seven bosses. Gob Squad has a schizophrenic identity and a multiple split personality: hermaphrodite, binational and bilingual, both a patchwork family and a social utopia. They have been devising, directing and performing together since 1994, working where theatre meets art, media and real life. For 25 years, Gob Squad have been searching for new ways to combine media and performance, producing stage shows, video installations, radio plays, interactive live films and urban interventions. The use of audio and video technology plays a prominent role in their work, with the result that alienated forms of intimacy have become a central theme. They try to scratch beneath the shiny, pixelated surface of the 21st century, seeking out the dark corners and hidden desires of contemporary culture. Always on the hunt for beauty amidst the mundane, they place their work at the heart of urban life: in houses, shops, underground stations, car parks, hotels or directly on the street, as well as in theatres and galleries. Everyday life and magic, banality and idealism, reality and entertainment are all set on a collision course and the unpredictable results are captured on video. Motivated by a desire to elevate the everyday and empower audience members to step beyond their traditional role as passive spectators. Core members are Johanna Freiburg, Sean Patten, Sharon Smith, Berit Stumpf, Sarah Thom, Bastian Trost and Simon Will. Gob Squad's international reputation has grown steadily since coming to prominence at documenta X in 1997. Their productions have been shown on all the continents (apart from Antarctica) where projects such as *Super Night Shot* (2003), *Gob Squad's Kitchen* (2007, winner of New York's Drama Desk Award 2012), *Saving the World* (2008, winner of the Goethe-Institut Preis at the Impulse Festival), *Before Your Very Eyes* (2011, selected for Germany's Theatertreffen), *Western Society* (2013), *Creation (Pictures for Dorian)* (2018) and most recently *I Love You, Goodbye (The Brexit Edition)* have received wide acclaim.

HAU Hebbel am Ufer, with its three venues HAU1, HAU2 und HAU3 – HAU for short – is a paragon of current artistic positions at the interface of theatre, dance and performance. In addition, music, visual art and theoretical debates are a constant component of the wide-ranging program. Since 2012 under the direction of Annemie Vanackere and her [team](#), HAU is one of the most highly regarded and well-connected of international production houses. Both co-productions and touring productions by renowned artists and groups from all over the world are produced and shown here, as well as projects coming from the German and Berlin independent theatre and dance scenes. The HAU Artist Office provides production and touring management for selected artists. HAU stands for innovative formats that frequently attract attention far beyond Berlin, and provides impulse and inspiration for other art and culture producers. Festivals and thematic focal points are also a part of the programme, as is the [Houseclub](#), especially targeting young people, where artists and students regularly work together side by side. In addition, HAU Hebbel am Ufer puts on one of Europe's most renowned dance festival every year, "[Tanz im August](#)".

Brian Lobel is a performer, teacher and curator who is interested in creating work about bodies and how they are watched, policed, poked, prodded and loved by others. His practice is most efficiently described as Former-American-Camp-Counselor-Turned-Performance-Artist, and his work has shown work internationally in a range of contexts from Sydney Opera House, to Harvard Medical School, to the National Theatre (London) and Lagos Theatre Festival, blending provocative humour with insightful reflection. Major projects include *BALL & Other Funny Stories About Cancer*, *Purge*, *Hold My Hand and We're Halfway There*, *Ruach*, *24 Italian Songs & Arias* and *Cruising for Art* which have been presented in over 25 countries internationally. Brian has received commissions and grants from the Wellcome Trust, Complicite Jerwood, and Arts Council England, among others and is the author of *Theatre & Cancer* (2019). Brian is a Professor of Theatre & Performance at Rose Bruford College, an Artist in Residence at King's College, the cofounder of *The Sick of the Fringe* and a Winner on the tv show *Come Dine With Me*. The highlight of Brian's professional career was being featured on the #EveryOutfitonSATC instagram account, to which Sarah Jessica Parker herself wrote "Wait, what?"

-- more --

David Israel Reynoso is a scenic/costume designer and the creator, with Optika Moderna, of La Jolla Playhouse's acclaimed Without Walls Festival productions of *Las Quinceañeras* (2019) and *Waking La Llorona* (2017). Other Playhouse designs include: *Queens*, *At the Old Place*, *Tiger Style!*, *Healing Wars*, *The Darrell Hammond Project* and *Kingdom City*. He is also recognized locally for his designs of The Old Globe's *Ebenezer Scrooge's Big San Diego Christmas Show*, *As You Like It*, *The Tempest*, *The Wanderers*, *tokyo fish story*, *Twelfth Night*, *Arms and the Man*, *Water by the Spoonful* and *Time and the Conways*, among others. The Obie Award-winning costume designer of *Sleep No More* (New York and Shanghai), Mr. Reynoso's other selected work includes: *Hamlet* at ACT and *Futurity*, *Cabaret*, *The Snow Queen*, *Alice vs. Wonderland* at ART. He is the recipient of the Creative Catalyst Grant of The San Diego Foundation, an Elliot Norton Award, a Craig Noel Award nomination and multiple IRNE and BroadwayWorld Award nominations.

Tom Salamon began his career as a writer and director in 2005 with *Accomplice: New York*, which is widely regarded as a pioneering and influential work in the early days of immersive theater. In the years since he has written and directed work in New York City, London, Los Angeles and San Diego, been produced by Tony Award-winning theaters, including at La Jolla Playhouse, where his *Accomplice: San Diego* and *The Grift* enjoyed sold-out, extended runs, and co-produced shows with Tony Award-winners Neil Patrick Harris and the Menier Chocolate Factory. In 2016, he co-wrote and directed *Goosebumps: Alive* in London, based on RL Stine's best selling children's books and co-written with Gabriel Greene, La Jolla Playhouse Director of Artistic Development. In 2019, he wrote and directed immersive experiences at San Diego Comic Con for Amazon Prime Video's *The Boys*, *Carnival Row*, and *The Expanse*, and in Los Angeles for Netflix's *The Witcher*. He has also developed immersive experiences for Walt Disney Imagineering for use inside the parks, on tour, and on cruise lines, and created and directed tailor-made events for such companies as Paramount Pictures, Universal Pictures, Google, American Express, Hewlett Packard, among many others. His shows have been attended by over 350,000 and now, maybe, your kid. www.TomSalamon.com

Mike Sears' plays include *Red Truck/Blue Truck*, *How High the Moon* (Craig Noel Award nomination, Best New Play), *Cowhead*, *The Corpse Bride*, *The Pied Piper: A Punk Rock Musical* and *Felt*. Mike's work has been developed by The Old Globe, Cygnet Theatre, Muscle and Bone Co. His play *How High the Moon* was recently produced by La Jolla Playhouse for their 2019 WOW Festival. Awards include The 2015 San Diego Creative Catalyst Grant (\$20,000 prize) to write *How High the Moon*, The Cygnet Theatre Finishing Line Commission, The Old Globe Playwrights Commission and SD Actors Alliance Best of the Fest Award. He is a member of The Playwrights Center and The Dramatists Guild. He earned a B.F.A. in Acting from The University of Montana and the Maggie Flanagan Studio in New York City.

#