

Meet The Winners

“This southern-gothic dramedy was inspired by little-known historical events and explores the inter-generational wealth, power, and privilege of an American family—ill-gotten gifts that must be passed down”



Olga El is an award-winning playwright, performance activist, and folkloric dancer who aims to inspire change—on the level of the personal, communal, or beyond—that will ultimately lead to a more just, compassionate, and healthy society. In March 2011 she founded The Kandake Dance Theatre for Social Change after years of experimenting with similar projects. Through The Kandake she creates free community initiatives, theatrical works, and other offerings that are immersive, accessible, and unique. She has performed for HBO, BAM, Dixon Place, Park Avenue Armory, Lincoln Center, and more. A game she wrote, a queer eco-thriller called *The Forest Protector*, can be played via her website www.TheKandake.com.

The Play: Negro Leather Shoes

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“This play is a real-time queer drama set in a cramped NYC apartment which follows a single night of deception, grief, and escalating violence among four strangers and roommates connected through hookup apps and shared isolation”



Gabriel Villa is a New York City-based writer and performer who trained at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy. He recently wrote, produced, and starred in his first full-length play, *I Don't Wanna Be Here*, at the 2024 New York Theatre Festival, where he earned a Best Actor nomination. His body of work, which includes four screenplays and three stage plays, often explores the intersection of surrealism, trauma, queer identity, and dark comedy. Gabriel draws deep inspiration from the works of George Sand, Stephen Adly Guirgis, and Neil Simon. Beyond the page, his recent credits include work as a reader at the Producer's Club and originating the role of Lazy Daisy in a corporate spoof of *Alice in Wonderland*.

The Play: Tina - Faggot - Vape

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"The tenants of one apartment building struggle to survive the quiet, relentless force of gentrification, one tenant at a time."



Matthew McLachlan is a Scottish-American playwright born in Scotland, raised in Florida, and currently survives in New York City. He is a Grand Prize Winner of the 2024 ScreenCraft Stage Play Competition, Finalist of the 2022 ScreenCraft Stage Play Competition, a Samuel French OOB Festival Finalist, and a member of the Playwrights and Directors Unit at The Actor's Studio. His plays have been presented by Playwrights Horizons, Labyrinth Theater Company, Abingdon Theatre Company, The Chain Theatre, and Nylon Fusion, and have been performed regionally all over the U.S. His published collection of works *A Collection of One-Acts & Other Things You May or May Not Enjoy* and full-length play *Orion* are available now at The Drama Bookshop and on Amazon.

The Play: Apartment Play