



For Immediate Release: April 4, 2022

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Horticulture Playwrights Workshop Announces 2022-23 Cohort

BALTIMORE, MD - Two area playwrights will receive \$1,000 and a year of feedback, support, and readings of their work as members of Horticulture Playwrights Workshop's 2022-23 cohort.

Sharea Harris (Baltimore, MD) and **Julia Marks** (Washington, DC) were selected from a pool of three dozen applications, each reviewed by a volunteer reading committee composed of local artists, audience members, and former Workshop participants.

Harris' play will focus on three generations of Black women working towards their dreams. The writer adds: "This is a story about the life we're hoped to live and the lives we change when we find the courage to choose our own course."

Marks' play will explore the works and relationships of the woman behind Aqua Tofana—a supposed miracle face oil—and the network of women who dosed their unfortunate husbands with the "cosmetic" in pursuit of personal agency. "Giulia Tofana was a real, living and breathing person in 17th century Italy. Although she is one of the most prolific serial killers of all time, she is also one of the most mysterious," says Marks.

“Horticulture is designed to give writers a supportive environment to help them with challenging projects, as Julia is taking on, or shifting to a new type of writing like Sharea. I'm excited to see how these two writers' distinct voices and differing areas of expertise open up unexpected avenues through our many meetings in the coming year,” offers Horticulture Playwrights Workshop Program Director Abigail Cady. “These are plays and artists you won't want to miss!”

Now in its fourth cycle, Horticulture Playwrights Workshop (a program of Sisters Freehold) supports the development of new, full-length plays by providing the essential safe space, time, and structure for local playwrights to experiment and bring their new plays into the world. A public staged reading of the finished plays will take place in April 2023.

To learn more about Horticulture Playwrights Workshop, please visit:

<https://www.sistersfreehold.org/horticulture>

ABOUT SHAREA:

Sharea Harris, MFA, is a black woman from deep in the American south. A writer and educator, Sharea continuously observes the song and dance of identity and environment, how these birth experiences, and their weight on us all. A multi-genre writer, Sharea's poetry (Dictionary: See Poems) and plays (Black Maggie's I, II, & III) focus on how black women build systems to navigate their internal and external worlds. Her work has appeared in magazines, literary journals, and local and international stages. Sharea has joined judge panels for grants, read for literary magazines, moderated artist panels, facilitated writing workshops, consulted creative projects, and cultivated small creative communities from a space like home, Baltimore, MD. During the day, she works in higher education as the assistant director (pronounced Writing Specialist) of a university writing center; she also introduces American rhetoric and literature to international and multilingual learners.

ABOUT JULIA:

Julia Marks is a playwright, actor, and theatre-maker originally from South Carolina. She graduated from the College of Charleston with a BA in Theatre, and trained at the Gaiety School of Acting in Dublin, Ireland. Currently based in Washington, DC, she has worked at home and abroad with the Scene and Heard Festival, Fishamble, Rorschach, The Orchard Project, and Rhizome DC. She aims to make theatre in which the audience-work relationship is unique and vital to each piece, and in which the practice of making is as experimental, form-twisting, and joyful as the performance.

About Sisters Freehold

Founded in 2021, Sisters Freehold is a new theatre company with a mission to grow Baltimore theatremakers. We create robust, supportive experiences for artists--with a focus on emerging BIPOC and female directors--through hands-on production opportunities and intentional theatremaking.

About Horticulture Playwrights Workshop

Horticulture Playwrights Workshop supports the development of new, full-length plays by playwrights in the DC-Maryland-Virginia (DMV) region for DMV audiences by providing the essential safe space, time, and structure for playwrights to experiment and bring their new plays into the world.

Horticulture Playwrights Workshop originated as the Playwrights Fellowship at Cohesion Theatre Company. The process encompasses the new play development process from idea to finished script with monthly meetings and two opportunities to hear the developing scripts aloud. From beginning to end, the process adapts to serve the needs of the playwrights as their scripts develop.

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