

ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE

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“Sandwich artists” determined to succeed on their own damned terms in Drama Desk award-winner Bess Wohl’s **AMERICAN HERO**

- WHO:** Artists Repertory Theatre
- WHAT:** AMERICAN HERO
By Bess Wohl. Directed by Shawn Lee.
- WHEN:** October 4 – October 30, 2016
- Preview performances: October 4-7
 - Opening Night/Press Night: October 8
 - Regular run: through October 30. Wednesday-Sunday @ 7:30pm; Sundays @ 2pm; Tuesday, October 25 @ 7:30pm; Wednesday, October 19 @ noon; Sunday, October 23 @ 7:30pm (Open Captioned); Saturday, October 29 @ 2pm (ASL Interpreted)
 - Post-show discussions following Sunday 2pm matinee performances
- WHERE:** Artists Repertory Theatre, Alder Stage, 1516 SW Alder Street, Portland
- TICKETS:** \$50 regular price; \$25 preview/student/under 25
NEW PREVIEW WEEK SPECIALS
- Pay-What-You-Can First Preview performance: Tuesday, October 4
 - \$10 book ahead or PWYC at the door
 - Preview Play Price & Pizza: Wednesday, October 5
 - \$25 ticket & FREE slice of HotLips Pizza
 - Preview Play & FREE Beer: Thursday, October 6
 - Preview Play + Happy Hour + Live Music: Friday, October 7
 - Buy Tickets: 503.241.1278 or www.artistsrep.org
- SHOW IMAGE ATTACHED:** Photo credit, David Straub
- PRODUCTION PHOTOS AVAILABLE:** October 5, 2016
- TEASER VIDEO:** [HERE](#)

Portland, Oregon | September 20, 2016. Artists Repertory Theatre presents the Northwest Premiere of Drama Desk award-winner Bess Wohl’s AMERICAN HERO to Portland audiences starting October 4, 2016. Directed by Shawn Lee, this comedy takes a look at the struggles and perseverance of the American working class through the lens of a franchise-owned sandwich shop. AMERICAN HERO runs through October 30 on the Alder Stage.

When the American Dream is dashed, try making a sandwich! A trio of disparate and desperate 'sandwich artists' find themselves abandoned by their fast-food franchise and left to their own devices in this utterly amusing and ridiculously believable story of making ends "meat and cheese." This post-recession, comedic commentary embraces the humor in misery, the creativity in despair, and the ingenuity of the human spirit as this indomitable group bands together to succeed on their own damned terms. *"...a sweet and sour new comedy."* – *New York Times*

"I ordered the same sandwich at Subway for years, everyday, never really thinking about the lives of those 'sandwich artists' behind the counter, and here Bess Wohl's play tells the collective, true-to-life story of those many hardworking people in our society just trying to get by," said the play's director Shawn Lee, at the production's first rehearsal. "A sharp comedy and commentary, this play features characters that represent working-class people with a lot going on in their lives, each with their own sets of baggage and aspirations, all struggling to survive this economy, but doggedly still chasing the American Dream. With wit and empathy, the play reminds us that if we don't work together to succeed, we don't move forward – and that's a message we all need to hear."

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Wohl began her career as an actress, earning an MFA from Yale, and has since become a writer, developing projects for the stage, motion pictures, and television. She is currently at work on a family drama about the meat business for HBO. She is also working on an original musical about the adult entertainment business, a recent commission from the Center Theater Group in Los Angeles. Her first play, CATS TALK BACK, had its world premiere at the Yale Cabaret while she was a student at Yale. It was subsequently performed at the Williamstown Theater Festival and finally at the NYC International Fringe Festival where it won the award for Best Overall Production. Her play, TOUCH(ED), had its world premiere at the Pioneer Theatre Company earlier this year. BARCELONA was recently workshopped at Ojai Playwrights Conference. Her plays have been produced or developed at The Vineyard Theater, The Pittsburgh Public Theater, The Northlight Theater, TheaterWorks New Works Festival, and The Geffen Playhouse. Her work has also been supported by the MacDowell Colony, where she was recently a fellow. Upcoming productions include the world premiere of her play, IN, at the Pioneer Theater in 2011. Her screenplay adaptation of her play, IN was included on Hollywood's Black List of best feature scripts. She has also developed for network television, and recently wrote an original pilot for Twentieth Century Fox Television/FBC. As an actress, Bess has appeared onstage in New York, regionally and at Williamstown Theater Festival (five summers) and in numerous films and TV shows, where she has given birth, solved crimes, committed crimes, been wrongly accused, and come back from the dead. She is a graduate of Harvard, Magna Cum Laude, where she was awarded the Rona Jaffe Writing Prize and the Tennessee Williams Scholarship. At the Yale School of Drama, she was a recipient of the Rebecca West Scholarship. Wohl won the 2015 Drama Desk Sam Norkin Off-Broadway Award that recognizes excellence and significant contributions to the theater for establishing herself as an important voice in New York theater, and having a breakthrough year with the eclectic AMERICAN HERO, PRETTY FILTHY and SMALL MOUTH SOUNDS. She is originally from Brooklyn, New York, and divides her time between New York and Los Angeles.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

This is Shawn's first time directing for Artists Rep. He recently directed the Portland Premiere of EM Lewis' THE GUN SHOW at CoHo Productions starring Artists Rep Resident Artist Vin Shambry. He is in his third season as Artistic Producer at Artists Rep, where he has produced 16 shows to date and coordinated with companies such as Profile Theatre, Portland Shakespeare Project, Risk/Reward, Hand2Mouth, Corrib Theatre, PHAME and the Grammy-nominated band Tiempo Libre. In 2001, he co-

founded the Furious Theatre Company in Los Angeles where he served as co-artistic director until moving to Portland in 2014. He is the recipient of the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award, the Back Stage Garland Award, LA Weekly Theatre Award, LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award and the Pasadena Arts Council's Gold Crown Award. With Furious Theatre, over 25 productions including the award-winning rolling U.S. premiere of FOXFINDER with Artists Rep and THE PAIN AND THE ITCH with The Theatre@Boston Court. He is a co-creator of foundfootage.net with Matt Pelfrey (MTV Skins) and directed several episodes of the web-series A.G.A.N.G. He is a member of Actors' Equity Association.

AMERICAN HERO

By Bess Wohl

Directed by Shawn Lee

CAST

Sheri | **Emily Eisele**⁺ (THE NORWEGIANS, EDGAR & ANNABEL/Third Rail)

Ted | **Gavin Hoffman*** (THE UNDERSTUDY~, THE MONSTER-BUILDER)

Jamie | **Val Landrum***[^] (THE MIRACLE WORKER, THE BIG MEAL, THE MOTHERFUCKER WITH THE HAT)

Bob/Customer/Gregory/Sandwich | **Mueen Jahan*** (BOMBAY DREAMS/Broadway, THE SOPRANOS, LAW AND ORDER)

~ Drammy award-winning performance

CREATIVE TEAM

Shawn Lee	Director
Megan Wilkerson# [^]	Scenic Designer
Emily Horton	Costume Designer
Kristeen Willis Crosser# [^]	Lighting Designer
Jen Raynak	Sound Designer
Kaye Blankenship	Props Master
Mary McDonald-Lewis [^]	Voice & Text Director
Luan Schooler	Dramaturg
Jonathan Cole	Resident Fight Choreographer
Carol Ann Wohlmutter* [^]	Resident Stage Manager
Nate Cohen	Assistant Director
Trevor Sargent	Assistant Scenic Designer
Karen Hill ⁺	Production Assistant
Jason Coffey	Board Op

** Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers*

[^] Artists Rep Resident Artist

⁺ Equity Membership Candidate

The scenic, costume, lighting, projection and lighting designers are represented by United Scenic Artists

GALLERY INSTALLATION

During the run of AMERICAN HERO, we will exhibit a number of pieces from the [Regional Arts & Culture Council's Visual Chronicle of Portland](#). The Visual Chronicle of Portland is a city-owned collection of works on paper—prints, photographs, paintings and drawings—that focuses on artists' views of the city's social and urban landscapes. This installation is in collaboration with [LineStorm Playwrights](#) and their production of *Portland in Play...a story on every street* October 17 & 18 on Artists Rep's Alder Stage.

ABOUT ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE

[Artists Repertory Theatre](#)'s mission is to produce intimate, provocative theatre and provide a home for artists of varied backgrounds to take creative risks. Artists Rep is Portland's premiere mid-size regional theatre company and is led by Artistic Director Dámaso Rodríguez and Managing Director Sarah Horton. Founded in 1982, Artists Repertory Theatre is the longest-running professional theatre company in Portland. Artist Rep became the 72nd member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) in May 2016 and is an Associate Member of the National New Play Network (NNPN).

[Artists Rep's 2016/17 season](#) offers a stylistically diverse season of seven imaginative and entertaining plays that grapple with family and the pursuit of happiness. The season features one World Premiere commissioned by Artists Rep's new play development program Table|Room|Stage, along with five Northwest Premieres (including a musical) by some of the best contemporary playwrights in the country, and one re-imagined classic featuring an all-female cast. The 2016/17 selections emphasize the aesthetic and scope of work Artists Rep has been committed to producing for almost 35 years as Portland's premiere mid-size regional theatre company.

Artists Rep has become a significant presence in American Regional Theatre with a legacy of world, national and regional premieres of provocative new work with the highest standards of stagecraft. The organization is committed to local artists and features a company of Resident Artists, 24 professionals of varied theatre disciplines, who are a driving force behind Artists Rep's creative output and identity. Artists Rep is committed to developing new work through the recently launched new play development program Table|Room|Stage. With T|R|S, Artists Rep strives to empower and support Oregon-based playwrights while also creating a Portland home for writers from around the country to develop their work. Additionally, this program will make a meaningful impact on equity in the arts by mandating opportunities for women writers and writers of color, and cultivating the next generation of theatre-goers by creating work specifically for young people (13 and up). Artists Rep makes a significant impact on the Portland arts community with its ArtsHub, creating space and offering a home to more than eight multidisciplinary arts organizations within its facility.

[RESIDENT ARTISTS](#) – Artists Rep productions feature the work of a core group of 27 multidisciplinary theatre professionals. Hailing from around the country, our Resident Artists are nationally renowned and award-winning actors, directors, writers, designers and educators who have chosen to make Portland and Artists Rep their artistic home. Working together and independently, they create inventive and theatrically rich experiences for our audiences while playing a major role in defining Portland's cultural landscape.

[TABLE|ROOM|STAGE](#) – Through T|R|S, Artists Rep is committed to becoming an engine for new play development. As a recipient of a \$125,000 Oregon Community Foundation Creative Heights grant to establish a robust new play development program, the company is creating opportunities for local and national playwrights to ensure that underrepresented voices are heard on stage. The T|R|S program will commission a total of eight plays by 2017 – at least four of the eight commissions will go to writers of color, at least four will go to women, one play will be written for young adults and one will be the [Oregon Play Prize](#), awarded to an Oregon writer. Artists Rep has extended four of the eight play commissions to Yussef El Guindi, Linda Alper, Larissa FastHorse and Andrea Stolowitz.

[ARTSHUB](#) – Artists Rep is also home to the ArtsHub, serving as a community arts center, where its performance venues and lobbies buzz with creative energy and Portland’s arts-loving audiences can gather. Artists Rep offers a home within its facility to a diverse range of artists and arts organizations. They can thrive here with access to affordable administrative, performance and rehearsal space, as well as a myriad of support services. Over the last year, hundreds of performances, events and happenings by Portlanders found a place in Artists Rep’s building.

The 2016/17 Artists Repertory Theatre season is presented by sponsors Ronni Lacroute/WillaKenzie Estate and David & Christine Vernier and the Robert and Mercedes Eichholz and Renaissance Foundations. Other season support comes from the Collins Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation, Theatre Communication Group and the Regional Arts and Culture Council and Work for Art.

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