

# THERE'S ALWAYS THE HUDSON

BY PAOLA LÁZARO  
DIRECTED BY JESS McLEOD



MAY 9 -  
JUNE 5, 2022

WOOLLY  
MAMMOTH

## A NOTE FROM MARIA

On March 17, 2020, each of the cast members of ***THERE'S ALWAYS THE HUDSON*** tagged our green room wall with only their first names, as part of a Woolly tradition. We had just made the heartbreaking decision to postpone the show due to the coronavirus pandemic. Before we sent everyone home, Emika and I made the commitment to have everyone back, as soon as it was safe to do so, to finish what we had started.

A lot has changed in these last two years, and yet the company and creative team has not wavered in their commitment to tell this story on the Woolly stage. You are here now witnessing their auspicious and long-awaited return.

I first met Paola Lázaro through the Emerging Writers Group at The Public Theater in NYC, and knew her to be a fierce writer/ performer from Puerto Rico. When I came across her play ***THERE'S ALWAYS THE HUDSON***, I was completely unprepared. It is unapologetically fearless, confronting trauma, abuse, addiction, and the roadblocks to healing and survival. This play is also outrageously funny, mining the raw humor that arises when people discover they have nothing left to lose. Through them, Paola reminds us that humor can make space for us to understand, and hopefully move through, deep and unreconciled pain. Paola is also part of a wave of actors of color actively creating their own work—when they see a lack of characters of color, they write them. It's been thrilling to collaborate with Paola not only as a writer but also as an actor at the center of her own world premiere production.

Director Jess McLeod is a brilliant partner to Paola. She excels in creating a rehearsal room that is light amidst the heaviness, nurturing bravery in the performances and in the writing. Jess is also working with Woolly in a longer term capacity as our BOLD Resident Director, spearheading a project of her own design as well as working with us this summer at THEARC on a new project with local singer-songwriter-poet-activist O-Slice. The BOLD Circle, established by the Helen Gurley Brown Foundation and led by the fierce Carol Dunne of Northern Stage, provides major support for artistic initiatives focused on women artists. Woolly is so grateful to be a part of this esteemed community.

***THERE'S ALWAYS THE HUDSON*** is a reminder that we can create chosen families, connections that lift us up and carry us through. Let's take aim at a world that silences, stigmatizes, and shames survivors of sexual abuse. Let's believe survivors when they demand recognition and justice.

It's the first step on the path of healing, for all of us.

Hasta la proxima,



Maria Manuela Goyanes, Artistic Director  
Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

**Woolly Mammoth acknowledges that our theatre stands upon occupied, unceded territory: the ancestral homeland of the Nacotchtank whose descendants belong to the Piscataway peoples. Furthermore, the foundation of this city, and most of the original buildings in Washington, DC, were funded by the sale of enslaved people of African descent and built by their hands.**

*Language developed in consultation  
with Dr. Gabrielle Tayac*

WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY

MARIA MANUELA GOYANES  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

EMIKA ABE  
MANAGING DIRECTOR

# THERE'S ALWAYS THE HUDSON

BY PAOLA LÁZARO

SCENIC DESIGN  
MISHA KACHMAN+~

COSTUME DESIGN  
IVANIA STACK +~

LIGHTING DESIGN  
BARBARA SAMUELS+

SOUND DESIGN  
TOSIN OLUFOLABI

FIGHT AND INTIMACY  
CHOREOGRAPHER  
RACHEL LEE FLESHER

DRAMATURG  
CHELSEA RADIGAN

ASSISTANT SOUND DESIGN  
KAITLYN E.M. SAPP

STAGE MANAGER  
LEIGH ROBINETTE\*

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER  
EMILY ANN MELLON\*

CASTING  
JUDY BOWMAN, CSA

UNDERSTUDY CASTING  
ERIKA SCOTT

DIRECTED BY  
JESS McLEOD

*"THERE'S ALWAYS THE HUDSON" was produced in a developmental production by Goodman Theatre, Chicago in the New Stages Festival. Robert Falls, Artistic Director, Roche Schulfer, Executive Director*

*"THERE'S ALWAYS THE HUDSON" was developed, in part, at the 2017 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at the Sundance Resort with additional support from the Sundance Institute Time Warner Fellowship Program*

## CAST

Lola ..... Paola Lázaro\*  
Chase, Scott & Rudy ..... Elan Zafir\*  
T ..... Justin Weaks\*~  
Ernesto & Antonio..... Migs Govea  
Madeline & Isabella ..... Marilyn Torres\*  
u/s Lola ..... Bekah Zornosa  
u/s Antonio, Ernesto, Scott,  
Chase & Rudy..... Diego Maramba  
u/s T ..... John Floyd  
u/s Madeline & Isabella ..... Donna Davis

## OPENING NIGHT: MAY 14, 2022

Filming, recording, or taking photographs of this performance by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited. Please silence your cell phones and any other noisemaking devices.

## CREW

COVID Safety Manager ..... Carissa Gilson  
Production Assistant ..... Sarah McCarthy  
Wardrobe..... Felicia Hecker  
Lighting Programmer and Board Op..... Chris Stull  
Sound Board Op ..... Jeffrey Stanley  
Props Run Crew ..... Miranda Thompson  
Crew Swing ..... Jazzy Davis  
Production Sound Engineer ..... Nora Simonson  
Scenic Charge ..... Carolyn Hampton  
Properties Artisan..... Rooster Skylar Sultan  
Electricians ..... Chris Stull, Nolan Thompson,  
Zavar Blackledge  
Carpenters ..... Maria Bissex, Kirubell Seyoum,  
Will Maresco, Simone Schneeberg,  
Mitch Massaro, Sunny Cushing Spiller  
Audio Technician ..... Marion Ayers

\* Member, AEA // ^ Member, SDC // + USA Union Designers // ~ Woolly Company Members



Actor's Equity Association (AEA), founded in 1913, represents more than 45,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote, and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is associated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence. For more information, visit [www.actorsequity.org](http://www.actorsequity.org).

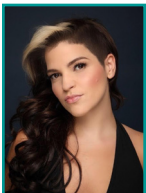


The Director of this production is a member of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.



The scenic, lighting, sound, and projection designers for this production are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.





**PAOLA LÁZARO** (*Playwright & Lola, she/her*) is a writer and actress from San Juan, Puerto Rico. Her plays include **Tell Hector That I Miss Him** (Atlantic Theatre Company; Drama League Nom., Outer Critics Circle Nom., John Gassner Playwriting Award) and **Contigo**. 2021 Steinberg Playwright Award, 2017 Sundance Institute Time Warner Storytelling Fellow. Paola was also the Van Lier Playwright Resident at the Public Theater from 2018-2020 and Atlantic Theatre Company's 2016-2017 Tow Playwright-in-Residence. She is a LAByrnth Theater Company member. As an actress: **Our Lady of 121st Street** (Signature Theater), **To the Bone** (Cherry Lane Theatre, Drama Desk Nom. for Outstanding Featured Actress), **Georgia Mertching Is Dead** (Ensemble Studio Theater). TV/Film Credits include *The Walking Dead* (Imagen Award nom., Best Supporting Actress in a Television Drama), *Lethal Weapon*, *SMILF*, *Wu Tang: An American Saga*, *Patty's Auto*, *Shelter*, *Pimp*, *Black Bear*. BFA in Dramatic Writing from SUNY Purchase College, MFA in Playwriting from Columbia University.



**JESS MCLEOD** (*Director, she/her*) is a director & social justice advocate specializing in risky, imaginative new work about America. Resident Director, **Hamilton** (Chicago); Artistic Associate, Broadway Advocacy Coalition; Artist Ambassador, NYCLU. Regional credits include Ryan J. Haddad's **Hi, Are You Single?** (Woolly/IAMA, co-dir. w/ Laura Savia); Michael Gene Sullivan's **The Great Khan** (San Diego REP); Idris Goodwin's **Hype Man** (ATL); Kate Hamill's **Pride and Prejudice** (Long Wharf); Stacy Osei-Kuffour's **Hang Man**, Hansol Jung's **Wolf Play**, (The Gift); Suzan-Lori Parks's **Venus** (Steppenwolf); Mara Nelson-Greenberg's **Do You Feel Anger?**, Abe Koogler's **Fulfillment Center**, **The Admiral (1492.0)** (A Red Orchid); Sharyn Rothstein's **Landladies** (Northlight); **Earth To Kenzie** (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Short Shakes! **Midsummer** (CST); and a reworked **Marry Me A Little** (Porchlight). Currently under commission at La Jolla Playhouse and Victory Gardens. Michael Maggio Directing Fellow, Goodman Theatre. @mcjessmc + www.jess-mcleod.com.

## CAST



**MIGS GOVEA** (*Ernesto & Antonio, he/him*) is thrilled to be making his Woolly Mammoth debut. Broadway: **A Man For All Seasons** (Roundabout Theatre Company). Off Broadway: **Dead Dog Park** (59E59), **Fantasy Artists** (LaMama), **Thicker Than Water** (Ensemble Studio Theater), **Ex- Antwone** (P.S. 122). Film credits include: *Ocean's 8*, *The Assistant*, *Motherless Brooklyn*, *Wanderland*, *Spy Intervention*. TV: *Inventing Anna*, *FBI: Most Wanted*, *City on a Hill*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *Law & Order: New Amsterdam*, *The Blacklist*, *Alternatino*, *Vinyl*, *Pan Am*, *How To Make It In America*.



**MARILYN TORRES** (*Madeline & Isabella, she/her*) hails from Harlem, New York. She has graced the stage in plays such as **Water by The Spoonful** at The Old Globe, **Breath Boom** at Yale Rep, **Agony of the Agony** at The Vineyard, **Bike America** at The Alliance Theater and Ma-Yi Theater. Ms. Torres was also part of The Tribeca Theater Festival in **Late Night, Early Morning**, produced by Robert De Niro. It went on to be produced at The HBO Comedy Festival where it won a Jury Award for Best Theater Piece. Film credits include *Maid in Manhattan*, *Lady in the Water*, *Bella*, *Bernard & Doris*, *The Arrangement*, *Musical Chairs*, *Home* and *The Big Sick*. She has had principal

roles on *Law & Order*, *Law & Order SVU*, *For Life*, *The Unusuals*, *Flight of the Concord*, *Third Watch*, and *The Chris Rock Show*. Her most recent roles include Marvel's *Daredevil*, *High Maintenance*, and *The King of Staten Island* with *Pete Davidson*.



**JUSTIN WEAKS** (*T, he/they*) is back home at Woolly Mammoth with **There's Always the Hudson**, after appearing in **Describe the Night**, **BLKS**, and **Gloria** at Woolly pre-pandemic. He was last seen in Studio Theatre's **FLOW** (virtual) and Arena Stage's short films **51st State** and **The Freewheelin' Insurgents**. Other area credits include work with The Kennedy Center, Ford's Theatre, Round House Theatre, Theater J, Mosaic Theater, and Theater Alliance. New York: The New Group NYC. Regional: Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Shakespeare & Company, Barter Theatre. Mr. Weaks is a two-time Helen Hayes Award recipient for **Word Becomes Flesh** at Theater Alliance and holds an additional five nominations for his work. Holdin' it down as a Woolly Mammoth Company Member since 2019! Education: BA in Theatre from Greensboro College (NC). jweaks.com. @keithweaks. For Haiti.



**ELAN ZAFIR** (*Chase, Scott, & Rudy, he/him*) is an actor and playwright based in New York. His acclaimed solo play **The Unaccompanied Minor** was presented at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival and subsequently produced at the Capital Fringe. He has performed in Theresa Rebeck's **Way of the World**, and **King John** (Folger Theatre), **Junk** (Arena Stage), **Everybody, Romeo & Juliet**, **Salomé** (Shakespeare Theatre Company), **Twelve Angry Men**, **Ragtime** (Ford's Theatre), **The Vagrant Trilogy**, **Eureka Day**, **Paper Dolls** (Mosaic Theatre), **Jumanji** (Adventure Theatre), **Tender Napalm** (Signature Theatre), **Venus in Fur** (Rep Stage). He worked with the critically acclaimed off-broadway theatre company BEDLAM on *BEDLAM: The Series*. He has appeared on the popular Netflix series *House of Cards*, *NBC The Blacklist*, *CBS FBI: International*, *AMC The Making of the Mob*. Upcoming: **The Winter's Tale** and **Hedda Gabler** in Rep (Bedlam). elanzafir.net



**DONNA DAVIS** (*u/s Madeline & Isabella, she/her*) is an actor, singer, artist, and street performer based in the DMV. Most recently she appeared as Mama Murphy with RCP. Donna has performed at the Kennedy Center's Page to Page Festival reprising her role as Lucille in **The Half Smoke**. Some of her favorite roles include Lillian Gish in **The Biograph Girl**, the title role in **Mamaleh**, and Linda Lodge in **Move Over Mrs. Markham**. Donna has hosted for the Fairfax Public Access Series *Scholar's Mate* and *The Square Circle* moderating political debates on a wide variety of issues related to immigration, national security, and international trade. She's sung all around the DMV as soloist for chorale groups and churches as well as in cabaret productions for the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop and the Audrey Herman Spotlighters. Donna loves boxing and MMA and can be seen on the Georgetown waterfront singing jazz, rock, and more.



**JOHN FLOYD** (*u/s T, he/him*) is a DC based actor. His work has been mostly seen at the Folger Theatre. Folger credit include **Timon of Athens** (Cupid), **Antony and Cleopatra** (Mardian) and **Macbeth** (Donalbain). His upcoming show will be **A Midsummer Night's Dream** (Flute) also at Folger Theatre. John has also created movement for **Timon of Athens** and **Antony and Cleopatra**. @iJohnFloyd





**DIEGO MARAMBA** (*u/s Antonio, Ernesto, Scott, Chase, & Rudy, he/him*) is a DC-based actor, producer, and playwright. He has performed on various area stages including: Synetic Theater (*Phantom of the Opera*), The Theatre Lab (*If/Then*), Capital Fringe Festival (*The Changeling Child*), and Silver Spring Stage (*Yellow Face*). He is currently co-producing *Closer* by Patrick Marber with his theater company, Cogent Theater Collective, and Silver Spring Stage. His playwriting credits include *Connection*, produced by Adventure Theatre MTC in 2021. Film credits, as both an actor and associate producer, include “*The Girl Who Left Home*—currently making its way around the festival circuit. He is a 2018 graduate of The Honors Acting Conservatory at The Theatre Lab School of the Dramatic Arts.



**BEKAH ZORNOSA** (*u/s Lola, she/her*) is a DC based actor and is so excited to be working with Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Recent credits include: *We declare you aterrorist...* (Round House Theatre), *ALIEN/NATION* (Williamstown Theatre Festival/The Forest of Arden), *Pipeline* (Everyman Theatre), *The Eulogy* (Rorschach Theatre), and *Jingle in July: A New Play Festival* (Adventure Theatre). Some of her American University credits include: *The Sins of Sor Juana*, *The Boy Detective Fails*, and *Miss You Like Hell*, Assistant Directing: *Let Me Just* at American University. Bekah is currently studying Musical Theatre, and Public Relations and Strategic Communications at American University (c/o 2023). [bekahzornosa.com](http://bekahzornosa.com) and [@bekahzornosa](https://www.instagram.com/bekahzornosa)

## CREATIVE TEAM

**RACHEL LEE FLESHER** (*Fight and Intimacy Choreographer, they/she/he*) is thrilled to be making their Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company debut with this incredible cast and creative team. Rachel is a certified Fight Director and Instructor with the Fight Directors Canada, a certified Intimacy Director and Coordinator with Intimacy Directors and Coordinators, and a gender and sexuality educator. They are passionately engaged in making safer sets and artistic spaces by helping produce best practices for intimate and hyper-exposed content in multiple areas of film, tv, theatre, and education—including the SAG-AFTRA Intimacy Coordinator Initiative. You can see their intimacy coordination featured on Amazon, Netflix, HBO, Hulu, and more. Select Intimacy Direction and Fight Direction credits include The Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Shakespeare Dallas, Timeline Theatre, and Steppenwolf for Young Adults.

**MISHA KACHMAN** (*Scenic Designer, he/him*) is a Woolly Company Member who has designed numerous Woolly shows, including *Fairview*, *Gloria*, *An Octoroon*, *Marie Antoinette*, *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*, *Oedipus el Rey*, *Grotesque Playground Injuries*, and *A Bright New Boise*. Misha has also worked at Arena Stage, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, Children’s Theatre Company of Minneapolis, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Cleveland Playhouse, Court Theatre, The Kennedy Center, Milwaukee Shakespeare, Olney Theatre Center, Opera Lafayette, Opera Royal Versailles, Pasadena Playhouse, Filarmónica de Jalisco, Portland Center Stage, Round House Theatre, Seattle Rep, Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center, Signature Theatre, Skylight Music Theatre, Studio Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Theater J, and The Wilma Theater, among many other companies in the United States and abroad. Misha is a recipient of the 2013 Helen Hayes Award for his design for *Chad Deity*. He serves as Professor and Head of MFA in Design at University of Maryland. For more information visit [www.mishakachman.com](http://www.mishakachman.com).

**EMILY ANN MELLON** (*Assistant Stage Manager, they/them*) is so excited to be debuting at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Recent DMV credits include: *Catch Me If You Can* (Arena Stage); *Souvenir* (Rep Stage); *A Doll’s House, Part 2* (Round House Theatre); *Girlfriend* (Signature Theatre); *Wig Out!* (Studio Theatre); and *The School for Lies* (Shakespeare Theatre Company). Additional regional credits include: *The Niceties* (Geva Theatre Center) and *The Upstairs Concierge* (Goodman Theatre). Television credits include: *Inside Edition* and *Good Day New York*.

**TOSIN OLUFOLABI** (*Sound Designer, she/her*) is a sound designer, deviser & performer. After graduating from the University of Richmond, she interned at Berkshire Theatre Group, Barrington Stage Company, and Olney Theatre Center. Her most notable sound designs include *A Wind in the Door* (Kennedy Center TYA); *The Thanksgiving Play* (Olney Theatre Center); *Ghost/Writer* (Rep Stage); *Distance Frequencies* (Rorschach Theatre); *Hi, Are You Single?* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company); *Loveday Brooke in the Mystery of the Drawn Daggers* (We Happy Few); *Head Over Heels* (Monumental Theatre Co.); *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* (Round House Theatre); *Gloria* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company); *Peepshow* (dog & pony dc); and *Lela & Co.* (Factory 449).

**CHELSEA RADIGAN** (*Dramaturg, she/her*) currently serves as Artistic Producer at Mosaic Theater Company of DC, where this season she cast and dramaturged the world premiere plays *Private* by Mona Pirnot and *In His Hands* by Benjamin Benne. Prior to her time at Mosaic, Chelsea enjoyed several years on staff at Woolly



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Mammoth, first as Literary Fellow, and then as Artistic Associate of New Work and Casting. Favorite projects at Woolly include: *For Black Trans Girls...* by Dane Figueroa Eddi, *Shipwreck* by Anne Washburn, and *What to Send Up When It Goes Down* by Aleshea Harris. Chelsea's direction has been seen locally at Mosaic, Keegan, Who What Where Theater Collective, Rorschach, Theater J, and Montgomery College, where she has appeared as a Guest Artist annually since 2015. Much love to this extraordinary team x.

**LEIGH ROBINETTE** (*Stage Manager, she/her*) is thrilled to be back at Woolly Mammoth. Previous credits include *Describe the Night, Gloria, Botticelli in the Fire, Familiar, The Arsonists, Hir, Baby Screams Miracle, An Octoroon,* and *Guards at the Taj*. Other DC credits include the World Premieres of *Change Agent, The Originialist,* and *Dear Evan Hansen* with Arena Stage, *Love Sick* and *The Jewish Queen Lear* with Theater J, and The Second City's *Love, Factually* at the Kennedy Center. She has worked Off-Broadway at Second Stage, with the Huntington Theatre Company in Boston, and the Hangar Theatre in Ithaca, NY. She is a graduate of Boston University.

**BARBARA SAMUELS** (*Lighting Designer, she/her*) is a queer lighting designer, organizer, and producer residing on unceded Wappinger and Munsee Lenape land. Barbara creates design-forward live events that prioritize generosity, equity, and representation. Working nationally and internationally, Barbara collaboratively constructs intimate and explosive lighting environments for new plays, opera, and dance, aiming to unearth the human condition and consciousness of our surroundings. Barbara's designs have been seen regionally at Bard Summerscape, Long Wharf, The Alley, A.C.T., Shakespeare Theater Company, Playmakers Rep, Trinity Rep, Pig Iron Theatre, and Kansas City Rep. New York credits include designs at Soho Rep, Ars Nova, Lincoln Center Theater (LCT3), New York Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, WP Theater, The Bushwick Starr, New Georges, and Clubbed Thumb. Barbara holds a BA from Fordham University and an MFA in Lighting Design from NYU. Proud member of USA Local 829. New Georges Affiliated Artist. [www.barbarasamuels.com](http://www.barbarasamuels.com).

**KAITLYN E.M. SAPP** (*Assistant Sound Designer, she/they*) is honored to have collaborated and supported this poignant production. When opportunities arise and the stars align just so, she thoroughly enjoys stepping out from behind a soundboard to utilize the creative, design-centric hemisphere of their brain. Select design credits include: *Pippin, Brigadoon, Dessa Rose, Kiss of the Spiderwoman, Children of Eden* (Applause Series: Olney Theatre Center). *TransAm: A World Premiere Rock Musical {2020}*; *From Gumbo to Mumbo {2020}* (StreamedLive at Keegan Theatre); *Next Stop: North Korea* (Next Stop Productions); *Or* (Theatre Prometheus). They are a graduate of Boston University, College of Fine Arts.

**IVANIA STACK** (*Costume Designer, she/her*) is proud to be a Woolly Mammoth Company member, where she has designed several productions including: *Fairview, Describe the Night, Botticelli in The Fire, The Arsonists, An Octoroon, HIR, Women Laughing Alone With Salad, Zombie: The American, Lights Rise on Grace, Boom, Full Circle, Bright New Boise, Detroit, The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (co-design w/ Misha Kachman), and *Oedipus El Rey* (associate design). Ivania has also designed for several other regional and DC area theatres including: Arena Stage, The Wilma Theatre, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Ford's Theatre, Signature Theatre, Everyman Theatre, Center Stage, The Contemporary American Theatre Festival, Imagination Stage, The Kennedy Center, Second City, Round House Theatre, Olney Theatre Center, Studio Theatre, Theatre J, Pointless Theatre, Syntetic Theatre, dog & pony dc, and Gala Hispanic Theatre. Ivania has an MFA in design from the University of Maryland.

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## LOBBY EXPERIENCE

In this illustration series, Justine Swindell illuminates how the search for belonging affects perceptions of the self. This reflection on self-acceptance mirrors Lola and T's search for belonging in *THERE'S ALWAYS THE HUDSON*. Throughout the play, Lola and T confront the traumas of their past and present, in turn demanding acknowledgement of the harm others have caused them. Both the play and Swindell's artwork pose questions about how we heal ourselves, our communities, and how we experience intimacy after trust has been broken. What does being seen mean to you?



### ABOUT THE ARTIST

**JUSTINE SWINDELL** illustrates and paints a world where her subjects are surviving and thriving in unexpected places, but for her, survival is also personal. Justine was born with a hole in her heart, and while she physically healed from her life-saving surgery she lives with an innate reminder, that life is precious, that it is ok to be broken, and that hope is one of the most powerful emotions someone can feel. Using her imagination, colorful organic shapes, and gritty textures, her art creates an oasis for hope in the midst of chaos.

Justine was raised in Washington D.C. in the 1980s and 90s by a family of artists that taught her how to draw and paint at a young age. During these years she soaked in street art and world-renowned paintings in museums that influence her taste to this day. In college she studied Graphic Design and Business Management, introducing her to digital art tools and a broader creative community. Her career started out in commercial post-production and graphic design; however, inspired by her formative experiences she obtained a MA in Sociology and dedicated over a decade to improving social and health outcomes of vulnerable populations.

Today she pours her life experience and training into her illustrations, paintings, and public art projects. Creating her own lane as an artist while helping people, brands, and authors tell their stories (especially those whose stories are not often seen or heard) has brought her passion and purpose together in ways she never expected.

## AN ODD COUPLE

### ADVANCING THE CANON OF SURVIVOR STORIES TOLD ONSTAGE THROUGH A BLENDING OF TWO TRADITIONAL, FILMIC GENRES

It isn't difficult to imagine the elevator pitch of *THERE'S ALWAYS THE HUDSON*, which stars two suicidal sex abuse survivors, including a reassuring, "...it's really funny though!" This seeming tonal clash is even interwoven into the play's own title—while its construction may winkingly conjure associations with a certain line from the legendary *Casablanca*, upon further examination, it reveals in high relief the increasingly inescapable pain of being alive for its two main characters.

Playwright Paola Lázaro's deliberate melding of generic extremes borrowed from popular film, the comedy and the tragedy—more specifically, the buddy-meets-caper comedy and the revenge melodrama—serves purposes both thematic and metatheatrical, all in an effort towards the initiation of healing, insistently told and experienced in three dimensions before a live audience. With the play's dual framings, audiences are gently acclimated by the familiar hallmarks they recognize from movies, only to then witness something entirely non-formulaic in its specificity and uniqueness. The ultimate underdogs laying excruciatingly bare the harms done to them, via the only vehicle they have—the simultaneous depth and levity of their friendship, rooted in equal parts humor and pain—mirrors and reveals the supposedly oppositional comedy and tragedy to be symbiotic parts of one continuum, one that holds the contradiction and fullness of abuse and survival.

At the center of the buddy comedy is, of course, the buddies: two protagonists, often misfits of sorts whose tie to one another is unlikely, stumbling together as they work towards a common goal. Their personalities and strengths are nearly opposite, though their otherwise incongruous union is tethered by the sharing of something deeply felt, in this case, their respective histories of abuse. From this shared experience, the plan for adventure—laced with acts that could be considered criminal, to be sure—is born and put into motion. 1982's *48 Hrs.*, starring Eddie Murphy and Nick Nolte, follows this formula and introduces another 'buddy' trope in the element of the race (see also: Zach Galifianakis' more recent *Due Date*). Typically unfurled episodically, the stakes of the buddy-caper comedy are typically heightened by some kind of time constraint within which the adventure must be completed. While Lola and T's pathways to recovery are extensive—an Odyssean journey of over twenty years of fighting for a sense of normalcy—the



events of the play take place over only twelve hours, with a particularly urgent and omnipresent countdown written in. Within these hours, the buddies must complete tasks together, their respective talents working in complement, until they reach a moment of separation, to face their ultimate and most personal obstacles, before coming back together to rejoice in completion. While Lázaro's character development and plot benefit from following the form, she recognizes the failure of the buddy comedy to ever represent Lola and T in their fullness of being.

These films also disappoint in their sidelining of meaningful discourse around romantic and/or sexual experience, rendering honest discussions of sexual abuse trauma virtually impossible. When romance enters the genre, it's often just another stop on the proverbial road trip, typically only encountered by one character and, if not treated with a male-dominant, ultimate casualness, portrayed as a spoil of success at the narration's completion (think: more White Castle cheeseburgers, less actualized romantic partnerships). The commercially successful comedy, by its own definition, never holds room to acknowledge the kind of darkness that buddies Lola and T journey through.

Darkness is, on the other hand, the very specialty of the revenge drama. 2000's *Gladiator* starring Russell Crowe can be viewed as a case study in the revenge tragedy. It elevates the conventions of the genre, by presenting a central character whose motivator is vengeance against someone who has wronged them; scenes of spectacle, blood, and gore; disguise; potential madness and supernaturalism; and soliloquies (in the immortal words of Corleone, "revenge is a dish best served cold."). Here is where room is allowed for protagonists' darkest histories and harms. *Promising Young Woman* comes to mind, though notably its acclaim is often harnessed to its novelty and bravery.

Where the genre fails the protagonist is in its inevitable insistence on the character's own degeneration. Their quest almost always kills them (RIP Carey Mulligan's character...). While there's something satisfying about complete resolution, another casualty of the framework is the opportunity to heal. The "after" moment; the moment where the story continues in spite of the journey through suffering, not culminates in a climax to it. In this structure, the harm remains systemic and the trauma inherited. In the wake of bloodshed, there is no healing of the bloodline, and thus the cycle continues to further harm and marginalize those who were already oppressed.

Perhaps thought impossible to stage—with over twelve locations across New York and New

Jersey, various depictions of sex and violence, and a combination of real-time narration and jump-cutting that moves episodically through a contracted number of hours—unlike the way time unfolds in classic adventure films and video games—, *Hudson* borrows storytelling constructs of popularized film. However, its insistence on existing as a piece of live theater works to crack open the thematic soul of the play: the reality of living with deeply rooted traumas and the desperate search for pathways to recovery. Neither comedy or tragedy, as they function polarly in either film or theatre, can provide the language and tools for communicating the absurdity of abuse, particularly for Lola and T. Their abuse comes at the hands of those who have more power than they do, whether in a dynamic based on race, gender, finances, or a combination of the above. These power structures, along with the institutions that uphold them—such as the 12-step program, the church, or the home and the family—fail the play's antiheroes at every turn, and marginalize their bodies and experiences to the point of rendering them the collateral damage of others' privilege and rage.

In *Hudson*, Lázaro's curating of disparate tones allows a way into the inner lives of her characters, and demands unmediated and continuous attention be paid to their humanity, in the way that only sitting before them within the same four walls of a theatre can. **THERE'S ALWAYS THE HUDSON** advances a woefully small canon of plays confront sexual abuse that includes theatrical titans such as Vogel's *How I Learned to Drive* and Shanley's *Doubt*, this time centering survivors who create their own rituals with the family they choose. Maybe the answer to a Father Flynn is, in fact, a Haitian immigrant who anoints with Coca-Cola, instead of holy water.

—Chelsea Radigan, *Production Dramaturg*

## TALKBACKS

**THERE'S ALWAYS THE HUDSON** is finally here! Join us after the show to explore the creative process and narrative themes of the play with the actors, playwright Paola Lázaro, Woolly staff, and Justyn Hintze (Sexologist, Educator, and Director of Women Who Tech).

**FRIDAY, MAY 27 | ASL interpreted**

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# BREAK OUT

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## ABOUT WOOLLY MAMMOTH

Woolly Mammoth creates badass theatre that highlights the stunning, challenging, and tremendous complexity of our world. Woolly is proud to be considered “a national champion of the new—and frequently provocative—American play” (*Washington Post*).

For over 40 years, Woolly has maintained a high standard of artistic rigor while simultaneously daring to take risks, innovate, and push beyond perceived boundaries. Woolly Mammoth was co-founded in 1980 by Roger M. Brady, Linda Reinisch, and Howard Shalwitz and is now co-led by Artistic Director Maria Manuela Goyanes and Managing Director Emika Abe. Located in Washington, DC, equidistant from the Capitol Building and the White House, this unique location influences Woolly’s investment in actively working our mission: To produce courageous and invigorating new work to radically redefine theatre as a catalyst for an equitable, creative, and engaged society.

One of the few remaining theatres in the country to maintain a company of artists, Woolly serves as an essential research and development role within the American theatre.

### Plays premiered here have gone on to productions at hundreds of theatres all over the world and have had lasting impacts on the field.

These include the world premiere productions of Danai Gurira’s *Eclipsed* in 2009 that later went on to be the first Broadway play with a cast & creative team of all Black women; Bruce Norris’ Pulitzer Prize-winner *Clybourne Park* in 2010; and Anne Washburn’s *Mr. Burns: a post-electric play* in 2012. Woolly produces theatre beyond our building by sending productions like Aaron Posner’s *Stupid F\*cking Bird* across the nation, bringing Aleshea Harris’s *What to Send Up When It Goes Down* to neighborhoods throughout DC, and launching a national tour of Madeline’s Sayet’s *Where We Belong*.

Woolly has built a reputation for innovation off the stage as well. Woolly values building relationships with its local community and resident artists in the DMV area. Our nationally-acclaimed Connectivity Department is one of the ways we accomplish this by linking Woolly to like-minded community organizations in order to generate mutually beneficial, impact and power-aware partnerships.

### We’ve earned our reputation by holding fast to our core values.

We are an anti-racist and radically inclusive community—across race, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical ability, socioeconomic background, and political viewpoint—in which all are encouraged to exchange ideas freely and reach for new understanding. We are a supportive home for creative risk-taking by our company and guest artists, staff, board, volunteers, audiences, donors, and colleagues. Through relentless inquiry and experimentation, we strive for world-class excellence and innovation in every aspect of our work.

### Our audience completes our mission.

Woolly attracts one of the youngest and most diverse theatre audiences in DC, and we’re committed to making our work widely accessible. Woolly was the first to pioneer Pay-What-You-Will tickets in the DMV, which are now available at every single performance. We also offer \$20 day-of-show Stampede Seats, \$20 tickets for all patrons 30 and Under, and a variety of discounts for educators, members of the military, and artists.

### Thank you to all of our donors, subscribers, and audience members. With your support, we will continue to find and produce the most innovative new plays in America.



Nikki Crawford, Samuel Ray Gates, Woolly company member Shannon Dorsey, and Chinna Palmer in Woolly’s production of Jackie Sibblies Drury’s *Fairview*. Photo by Teresa Castracane.



## WOOLLY LEADERSHIP



**MARIA MANUELA GOYANES** (*she/her*) is the Artistic Director of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Prior to joining Woolly, she served as the Director of Producing and Artistic Planning at The Public Theater, where she oversaw the day-to-day execution of a full slate of plays and musicals at the Public's five-theater venue at Astor Place and the Delacorte Theater for Shakespeare in the Park. Earlier in her career at The Public, she managed some of the theater's most celebrated productions, including *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Josephine & I* by Cush Jumbo, *Straight White Men* by Young Jean Lee, *Barbecue* by Robert O'Hara, and *Here Lies Love* by David Byrne and Fatboy Slim. While at The Public, Maria also held a position on the adjunct faculty of Juilliard and curated the junior year curriculum of the Playwrights Horizons Theater School at NYU. She has guest lectured at Bard College, Barnard College, Brown University, Columbia University, Juilliard, the National Theater Institute at The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, UCSD, the University of Texas-Austin, and Yale University, among others. Since 2015, Maria has also served as a member of the board of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre. From 2006 to 2008, she co-chaired the Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab with Jason Grote, and from 2004 to 2012, Maria was the Executive Producer of 13P, one of her proudest achievements. Maria is a first-generation Latin-American, born to parents who emigrated from the Dominican Republic and Spain. She was raised in Jamaica, Queens, and has a collection of hoop earrings to prove it. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in 2001 from Brown University.



**EMIKA ABE** (*she/her*) is the Managing Director of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. She started at Woolly in 2019 after three years as the Associate Managing Director of the Alliance Theatre (Atlanta, GA), the largest regional theatre in the Southeast. At the Alliance, Emika led a portfolio of projects that guided the theatre's organizational strategy, culture, and general management. These included stewarding the 70-person Advisory Board, co-chairing the Alliance's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee, and defining the theatre's mission, vision, and values. Emika was on the Advisory Board of Found Stages, she served as Mentorship Co-Chair of The League of Resident Theatre's EDI Initiative, and she is an alum of Leadership Greater Washington, LEAD Atlanta, Arts Leaders of Metro Atlanta, and Theatre Communications Group's Young Leaders of Color. Emika holds an MFA in Theater Management from Yale School of Drama, an MBA from Yale School of Management, and a BA in Theater from UCLA. At Yale, she was the recipient of the Morris J. Kaplan Award for Theater Management and Co-Chair of the Internship Fund. Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, Emika has previously held positions at Yale Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and the Palo Alto Children's Theatre, as well as fellowships at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Center Theatre Group, and Artists Repertory Theatre. Emika is passionate about the intersection of art and business, and the essential role that theatre can play in activating individuals and strengthening communities.

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Entrance to any performance at Woolly Mammoth requires proof of full vaccination, or, for those who are not vaccinated, proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within 72 hours of the event start time.

### Woolly Mammoth will accept ANY ONE of the following methods for proving vaccination:

- Physical vaccination card/print out of COVID-19 PCR test
- Photo of vaccination card/screenshot of negative COVID-19 PCR test results on a mobile device

Along with proof of vaccination or negative COVID-19 PCR test, audiences must provide a form of identification with a matching name.

### Woolly Mammoth will accept ANY ONE of the following forms of identification:

- Government-issued driver's license or ID card
- Student ID
- Credit card
- Library card

Woolly Mammoth is currently NOT accepting proof of vaccination through mobile or third party apps.

## MASK REQUIREMENTS

All audience and staff members are required to wear a face mask that fully covers your nose and mouth while inside the building. Additionally, all are encouraged to practice social distancing while in the lobby.

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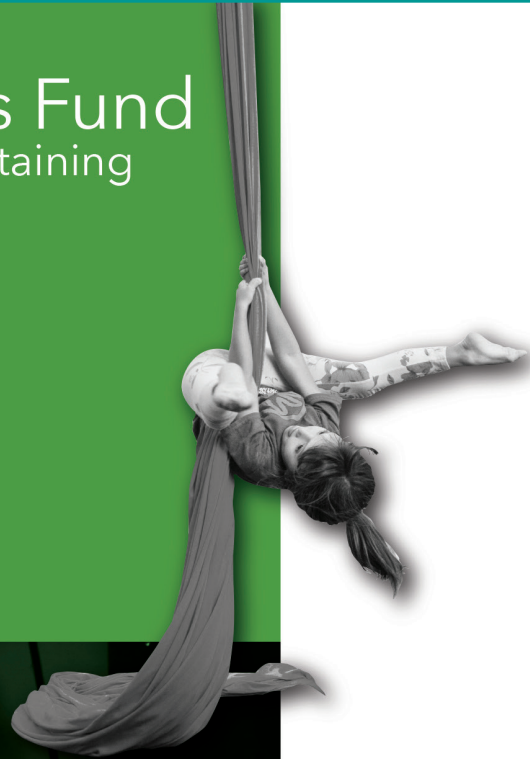
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To learn more about how to make a planned gift, please contact our Development Department by calling 202-312-5276 or email us at [development@woollymammoth.net](mailto:development@woollymammoth.net).

## CONNECTIVITY AMBASSADORS

The Ambassadors are a network of DC community leaders with connections to other arts and culture organizations, frontline service nonprofits, academic institutions, and policy think tanks who care deeply about Woolly, and work closely with the Connectivity Department to mobilize their constituencies.

Andrew Stoffel	Dwayne Lawson-Brown	Jay Forth	Natalia Gleason	Rachel Sauer
Caitlin Caplinger	Frankie V	Jon Jon Johnson	Otis Ramsey-Zoe	Robbie Champion
Clarence Fluker	Izetta Autumn Mobley	Justyn Hintze	Peter Danelski	Sherrita Merice
Cynthia Davis	Jade Flower Foster	Karen Lawrence	Phoebe Dillard	Tiffany Bryant
Deirdre Darden		Laurenellen McCann	Piper Hendricks	

If you are interested in becoming an ambassador, please contact Audience Engagement and Fellowship Manager Emily Lathrop at [emily.lathrop@woollymammoth.net](mailto:emily.lathrop@woollymammoth.net).





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