

**PORTLAND
CENTER STAGE
AT THE ARMORY**

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MEDIA RELEASE

**Live theater returns to The Armory!
Vanessa Severo's *Frida ... A Self Portrait* kicks off
Portland Center Stage's 2021-2022 Season**



Previews Begin Oct. 9 | Opening Night is Oct. 15 | Closes Nov. 7
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September 21, 2021 — PORTLAND, OR. Live theater returns to The Armory in October when *Frida ... A Self Portrait* kicks off Portland Center Stage's 2021-2022 season. Written and performed by Vanessa Severo, and directed by Joanie Schultz, *Frida ... A Self Portrait* begins preview performances October 9, opens October 15, and runs through November 7 on the U.S. Bank Main Stage. Tickets are on sale now, with special pricing available on September 28, during PCS's season-wide One Day Sale.

“I’m thrilled to launch the season of live performance on stage with this fierce, beautiful play,” Artistic Director Marissa Wolf said. “Vanessa Severo is magnetic in this role; from the moment she locks eyes with the audience, you understand that you’re on a gripping journey of the soul.”

Set on the eve of Frida Kahlo’s death, this intimate solo show plunges into the brilliant, nuanced world of Kahlo’s tumultuous, extraordinary life — but goes far beyond biography. Instead, Brazilian writer and performer Vanessa Severo cracks open a powerful portal between herself and the celebrated Mexican artist, bringing breathtaking physicality and raw honesty to this stunningly creative production. Ultimately, the play paints a portrait of two artists, blending Kahlo’s life with Severo’s own experiences as a child born with a congenital disorder to parents who were newly immigrated to the United States.

“We are drawn to self-portraits, memoirs, and other forms of autobiography; it makes us feel seen, and not so alone,” Director Joanie Schultz said. “This becomes even more important when we are those who disappear: women, people of color, people with disabilities, queer people, and trans people across the world look at Frida’s self-portraits and see themselves because they recognize the pain she articulates so well in her work.”

Frida ... A Self Portrait had its world premiere at the Living Room Theatre in 2014 and continued to evolve as Severo deepened her research on Kahlo, including journeying to Mexico City to visit La Casa Azul. In 2019, KCRep developed and produced the show at its OriginKC: New Works Festival. The script was featured on The Kilroys’ List in 2020 and has been further developed for its PCS debut. The KCRep creative team comes together once again for the Portland production.

Vanessa Severo’s acting credits include *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Sex with Strangers*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *August Osage County*, *Cabaret*, *Lot’s Wife* (KCRep); *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night* (Heart of America Shakespeare Festival); *The Revolutionists*, *Men*

on *Boats*, *Mother F***er with the Hat*, *Venus in Fur*, and *The Clean House* (The Unicorn Theatre). More information is available at vanessasevero.com.

Director Joanie Schultz (*A Doll's House* at WaterTower Theatre; *Venus in Fur* at Goodman Theatre) is joined by Scenic Designer Jacqueline Penrod (*Around the World in Eighty Days* at Lookingglass Theatre), Costume Designer Katherine Davis (*Dracula; a Song of Love and Death* with Kansas City Actor's Theatre), Lighting Designer Rachael Cady (*Of Mice and Men* at KCRep), Sound Designer Thomas Dixon, who also composed the original music (*A Doll's House* at Steppenwolf Theatre Company), and Stage Manager Janine Vanderhoff (most recently *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* at PCS).

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR *FRIDA ... A SELF PORTRAIT*

Gallery Exhibit: *Hard Feelings* by Angela Saenz

Oct 7 – Nov 15 • FREE

Portland Center Stage will host *Hard Feelings*, an art installation by Portland-based painter and muralist Angela Saenz that draws upon the artist's response to grief, intimacy, and community in the times of Coronavirus.

October First Thursday with Pablo Rivarola

Thu, Oct 7, 5 p.m. • FREE

October's First Thursday will feature the opening for the *Hard Feelings* art installation, with music by the Pablo Rivarola Trio. Rivarola will be joined by drummer Nick Morrison and keyboard player Anderson Donley. Complimentary beer provided by Deschutes Brewery.

Pre-Show Discussion: Emily Rapp Black in Conversation with Vanessa Severo

Wed, Oct 20, 6 p.m. • FREE

Emily Rapp Black, *The New York Times* bestselling author of *Frida Kahlo and My Left Leg*, will join Vanessa Severo to discuss how the life, art, and disabilities of Frida Kahlo have impacted their work.

Pre-Show Author Talk & Book Signing with Emily Prado

Sun, Oct 24, 1 p.m. • FREE

Emilly Prado, Chicana writer and Portland-based founder of Nocha Libre DJ collective, will read an excerpt from her book *Funeral For Flaca* that retraces her experience coming of age as a prep-turned-chola-turned-punk in this collection of essays.

Post-Show Interview with Vanessa Severo

Sun, Oct 24, 3:30 p.m. • FREE

Emilly Prado, Chicana writer and Portland-based founder of Nocha Libre DJ collective, will explore the themes of the play in a post-show interview with Vanessa Severo.

Pre-Show Music: DJ Mami Miami

Wed, Oct 27, 6:30 p.m. • FREE

DJ Mami Miami, aka Chicana writer Emilly Prado, will spin a mix of music that spans genres and geography, from cumbia and quebradita to dancehall and perreo.

TICKET AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

When: Oct. 9 – Nov. 7, 2021*

*Opening Night/Press Night: Friday, Oct. 15 at 7:30 p.m.

Preview Performances: Oct. 9, 10, 13, and 14 at 7:30 p.m.

Pay What You Will Performance: Oct. 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Where: On the U.S. Bank Main Stage at The Armory, 128 NW Eleventh Ave, Portland, OR.

To Purchase: Regular tickets range from \$25 to \$87. Tickets may be purchased at pcs.org/frida-a-self-portrait, 503.445.3700, or in-person from the box office. Ticket specials are listed at pcs.org/deals, including the One Day Sale, Rush Tickets, Arts for All, Active Duty or Military Veteran, Student, Under 30, The Armory Card, Groups of 10+, and more. *Prices vary by date and time and are subject to change.*

Please Note: This production is recommended for ages 13 and up. It contains adult situations and language, and depictions of drug use. Learn more by calling 503-445-3700.

Accessibility: Learn about our accessibility options at pcs.org/access.

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE

[Portland Center Stage](#) was established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and became independent in 1994. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Marissa Wolf and Managing Director Cynthia Fuhrman, the company produces a mix of classic, contemporary, and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high-quality education and community programs. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 28 world premieres, many of which were developed at its JAW New Play Festival. Portland Center Stage's home is The Armory, a historic building originally constructed in 1891. After a major renovation, The Armory opened in 2006 as the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, the first performing arts venue in the country, and the first building in Portland to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

Portland Center Stage is committed to identifying and interrupting instances of racism and all forms of oppression, through the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA). Learn more at pcs.org/idea.

[Portland Center Stage's 2021-2022 season](#) is funded in part by Season Superstars the Regional Arts and Culture Council and the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation; Season Supporting

Sponsors the Oregon Arts Commission, a state agency funded by the state of Oregon and the National Endowment for the Arts, and US Bank; and Season Producing Sponsors Ellyn Bye, Ray and Bobbi Davis, Ronni LaCroute, and Jess Dishman.

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