

**PORTLAND
CENTER STAGE
AT THE ARMORY**

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MEDIA RELEASE

**2022 Pulitzer Prize Finalist Kristina Wong Performs
her Award-Winning Solo Show, *Kristina Wong,
Sweatshop Overlord* in a Co-Production Between
Portland Center Stage and Boom Arts**



“Wong's larger-than-life stage persona is endearingly boisterous ... a celebration of ingenuity, community, and survival.” –*TimeOut*

Previews Begin Nov. 5 | Opening Night is Nov. 11 | Closes Dec. 18

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October 5, 2022 — PORTLAND, OR. Portland Center Stage and Boom Arts are partnering on their first co-production, Kristina Wong’s witty, tour-de-force look at the early days of the pandemic, [Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord](#). Written and performed by Kristina Wong, this

hilarious and poignant solo show was recently named a Pulitzer Prize finalist for drama. Director Chay Yew and a Tony Award-winning design team bring this show to life in Portland, following its West Coast premiere at La Jolla Playhouse. *Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord* begins preview performances on November 5, opens on November 11, and runs through December 18 in the Ellyn Bye Studio at The Armory. Tickets are on sale now.

Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord recounts Wong's adventures in gathering more than 800 volunteers, known as "The Auntie Sewing Squad," to sew masks during the pandemic — at a time when hate crimes against Asian Americans were drastically increasing. Nearly 350,000 masks were distributed across the country. They helped protect vulnerable, under-served populations, including indigenous communities, asylum seekers, houseless individuals, incarcerated people, and Black Lives Matter protesters. A book about these efforts, *The Auntie Sewing Squad Guide To Mask Making, Radical Care and Racial Justice*, was written by some of the "Aunties," with an introduction by Wong.

Wong initially developed *Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord* during the pandemic shutdown, through live virtual performances. In the fall of 2021, it premiered Off-Broadway at New York Theater Workshop. The production was a *New York Times* "Critic's Pick" and Wong received a Lucille Lortel, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Solo Performance, among other acclaim. In the spring of 2022, the play was announced as a Pulitzer Prize finalist — making Wong the first Asian American woman named as a finalist for drama.

Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord is currently on stage at La Jolla Playhouse, where *The San Diego Union-Tribune* said "buckle up for a wild pandemic ride," praising the show as "lively, fast-paced and very funny." Wong is no stranger to Portland audiences. Boom Arts presented her Portland premiere with *The Wong Street Journal* in 2017, about her volunteer work in Northern Uganda. Wong also had middle school and high school students laughing recently as a guest speaker for an AAPI Activism event at Northwest Academy.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Three days into the pandemic shutdown, performance artist Kristina Wong — driven to help make a difference in the world — began sewing masks out of bedsheets and bra straps on her

Hello Kitty sewing machine. Before she knew it, she had recruited hundreds of volunteers to join her as the “Auntie Sewing Squad.” With sharp humor and brilliant social commentary, this tour-de-force look at the early days of global change offers a guide for community building and an inspiring path back into a healing world.

SPECIAL EVENTS

[The People's Party: BIPOC Affinity Night for Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord](#)

Fri. Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m. • Sliding scale tickets w/ FREE pre- & post-show offerings

The People’s Party: BIPOC Affinity Nights are a mindful curation of an environment meant to center the experience of people who identify as part of the BIPOC community (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) — dedicated to generating a space for BIPOC individuals to engage with the performance in ways that are authentic to them.

PLAYWRIGHT KRISTINA WONG

Kristina Wong is a performance artist, actor, comedian, writer, and elected representative living in Koreatown, Los Angeles. Wong’s works have been presented across North America, the UK, Hong Kong, and Africa. She’s been a guest on late-night shows on Comedy Central, NBC, and FX. As a published writer, Wong has been included in Routledge’s *Contemporary Plays by Women of Color*. She’s had artist residencies at MacDowell, Hermitage, Montalvo, and Ojai Playwrights Festival. Wong’s work has been awarded with grants from Creative Capital, The MAP Fund, Center for Cultural Innovation, National Performance Network, a COLA Master Artist Fellowship from the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, nine Los Angeles Artist-in-Residence awards, Center Theatre Group’s Sherwood Award, and the Art Matters Foundation. She is currently developing a new work during her three-year artist-in-residence at ASU Gammage. Her projects include *Wong Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest*, *Going Green The Wong Way*, *The Wong Street Journal*, and *Kristina Wong for Public Office*. Other career highlights include the Visionary Award from East West Players, “Local Hero Of The Year” nominee from KCET/ PBS, Asian Pacific Honoree from Fuse TV, and “Best Of Arts” from *LA Weekly*.

DIRECTOR CHAY YEW

Chay Yew directed La Jolla Playhouse's production of *Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord*, along with their acclaimed production of *Cambodian Rock Band*. His credits include Off-Broadway productions at The Public, Playwrights Horizons, NYTW, Signature Theatre Company, Rattlestick, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Playwrights Realm, National Asian American Theatre Company, Ma-Yi Theatre. Regional: American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Rep, South Coast Rep, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Goodman Theatre, Denver Theater Center, Humana Festival, Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, Long Wharf Theatre, Hartford Stage, Seattle Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, Huntington Theatre, Portland Center Stage, Woolly Mammoth, Victory Gardens, East West Players, Writers Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Curious Theatre, Mosaic Theatre Company, Playmakers Rep, Round House, Teatro Vista, Laguna Playhouse, Geva Theatre, Empty Space, Cornerstone Theater, Singapore Repertory Theatre. Opera: Tanglewood Music Center, Los Angeles Philharmonic. Awards: Obie, Craig Noel, Drama-Logue.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

The design team from the La Jolla Playhouse production reunite for the Portland run. Director Chay Yew leads a team that includes Scenic Designer Junghyun Georgia Lee (*Vietgone* at Alley Theatre); Costume Designer Linda Cho (2014 Tony Award for *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, nominated for the 2017 Tony Award for *Anastasia*); Lighting Designer Amith Chandrasher (Off-Broadway, Houston Grand Opera, The Joyce Theater, CNN, NBC); Sound Designer Mikhail Fiksel (2022 Tony Award for *Dana H*), and Projection Designer Caite Hevner. In Portland, the team will be joined by Associate Director Miranda Cornell, Associate Scenic Designer Ant Ma, Stage Manager Amanda Vander Hyde, and Production Assistant Danny Rosales.

TICKET AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

When: November 5 - December 18, 2022*

***Opening Night/Press Night:** Friday, November 11, at 7:30 p.m.

Preview Performances: November 5, 6, 9, and 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Pay What You Will Performances: Sun., Nov. 6, at 7:30 p.m., and Thu., Dec 1, at 7:30 p.m.

The People's Party: BIPOC Affinity Night: Fri., Dec. 9, at 7:30 p.m.

Where: In the Ellyn Bye Studio at The Armory, 128 NW Eleventh Ave, Portland, OR.

To Purchase Regular Tickets: Prices range from \$25 to \$66.50 and tickets may be purchased at pcs.org/kristina-wong-sweatshop-overlord, 503.445.3700, or in-person from the box office.

Prices vary by date and time and are subject to change.

Ticket Specials: Visit pcs.org/deals to view ticket specials, including Rush Tickets, Pay What You Will, Arts for All, Active Duty, Military Veteran, Student, Under 30, The Armory Card, Groups of 10+, and more.

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

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

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE

[Portland Center Stage's](https://pcs.org) mission is to create transcendent theatrical experiences and community programs that break down the barriers separating people. We support our community in celebrating the full scope of humanity, appreciating difference, and fostering belonging. PCS 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 Interim Managing Director Liam Kaas-Lentz, 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. PCS'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 2022-2023 season](#) is funded in part by Season Superstars the Regional Arts and Culture Council and the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation; Season 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 Producing Sponsors Ellyn Bye, Ray and Bobbi Davis, Ronni Lacroute, Mark Spencer, Argyle Winery, and Deschutes Brewery.

BOOM ARTS

[Boom Arts](#) is a performing arts presenter and producer in Portland, Oregon. Our mission is to “imagine new social and political possibilities through live performance.” We spotlight diverse U.S. and international artists who create artistically adventurous, socially conscious, and globally connected work. Through performances and accompanying workshops, lectures, post-show discussions, community gatherings, and other events, Boom Arts is building cross-cultural bridges, sparking community conversations about important issues, connecting Portland performing artists with their national and international counterparts, and contributing to our city’s culture of compassion, curiosity, and creativity.

Boom Arts is committed to equity, inclusion, diversity, and accessibility through all aspects of our organization, and is continually re-examining and building our knowledge as we move toward radical inclusivity and anti-racist policies and programming. Through our leadership, staffing, programming, and audiences, Boom Arts advocates for the equity and representation of intersectional identities and underrepresented voices across race, ethnicity, color, nationality, age, language, gender identity & sexual orientation (LGBTQIA+), physical ability, body type, and socioeconomic background. Learn more at boomarts.org.

Pictured: Photo of Kristina Wong in La Jolla Playhouse’s production of *Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord*; photo by Jenna Selby.

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