



Supporting Women and Girls by Supporting the Arts
Women's. Action. Movement.

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WAM Theatre and Storefront Artist Project Present
The O Solo Mama Mia Festival
A Festival of Theatre and Art

From May 5-15, 2011, WAM Theatre will present a festival of solo works written and performed by women to benefit the training of at least one community midwife at Edna's Hospital in Somaliland. The Festival will run from May 5-8 in Troy, NY (James Meader Little Theatre) and May 12-15, 2011 in Pittsfield, MA (Storefront Artist Project's popup theatre).

From May 1-28, Storefront Artist Project will present an exhibition of works in all media by ten artists from the northeast and around the world. The exhibit will be on view at the Storefront Artist Project's gallery at 31 South Street, the same location where performances will be held mid-May. The works, from paintings and photography to video and installations, explore themes of motherhood, identity, history and female empowerment.

"We are thrilled to be collaborating with Storefront Artist Project on this festival of theatre and art," state Kristen van Ginhoven and Leigh Strimbeck, co-Artistic Directors of WAM Theatre, "We are proud to be presenting this festival of theatre in our two regions, the Capital Region of NY and the Berkshires of MA, and are delighted to share the work of these talented women theatre artists. Their work covers such a range of topics: from Paris in the 1890's, to group therapy, coming out, overcoming bullying and Hurricane Katrina. And, in keeping with WAM's double philanthropic mission, a portion of every single ticket sold will go to train a community midwife in Somaliland, a country with one of the worst maternal mortality rates in the world."

"We have a dream to train 1,000 community midwives", says Edna Adan Ismail, founder and director of Edna's Hospital, "Our Community Midwives training program saves the lives of women in villages. We are grateful that WAM Theatre has chosen Edna's Hospital and our program as their beneficiary for the *O Solo Mama Mia Festival*. Their help will get us one step closer to achieving our dream."

This festival marks Storefront Artist Project's first venture as a performing arts venue for WAM Theatre productions. "*O Solo Mama Mia* celebrates women through all media, and I'm excited that Storefront can be a home for both visual and performing arts simultaneously," explains Julia Dixon, Storefront Artist Project Director. "This collaboration is a real joint effort to support women and artists here and around the world. What an amazing cause for Storefront and our friends at Emporium to be involved in." Emporium, a retail store that shares space at 31 South Street with Storefront Artist Project, will be offering light refreshments along with snacks available for purchase during the performances in Pittsfield.

WHERE:*Art Exhibit*

May 1-28, 2011, Storefront Artist Project, 31 South Street, Pittsfield, MA
(Monday-Saturday: 10am-5pm plus during Pittsfield performance times)

Theatre Festival

May 5-8, 2011, James L. Meader Theatre, Russell Sage Campus, Troy, NY
May 12-15, 2011, Storefront Artist Project, 31 South Street, Pittsfield, MA

TICKETS:*Art Exhibit:*

Free

Theatre Festival:

\$25 adults/\$15 students*

*Price is for a double bill, which equals two solo shows

\$40 Festival Pass-this is good for all 5 solo shows, to be seen in either location at any point throughout the festival.

To purchase by phone for both locations: 1-800-838-3006

To purchase tickets for Troy, NY:

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/168086>

To purchase tickets for Pittsfield, MA:

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/169090>

To purchase a festival pass:

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/170009>

THEATRE FESTIVAL SHOWS AND TIMES:

TROY, NY

Thursday, May 5:

7:30-My Salvation has a First Name: A Wienermobile Journey + Performing Therapy

Friday, May 6:

7:30-My Salvation has a First Name: A Wienermobile Journey + How to be a Lesbian in 10 Days or Less

Saturday, May 7:

2:00-Paris 1890-Unlaced! + How to be a Lesbian in 10 Days or Less

Saturday, May 7:

7:30-Performing Therapy + Paris 1890-Unlaced!

Sunday, May 8:

2:00-Performing Therapy + Paris 1890-Unlaced!

PITTSFIELD, MA

Thursday, May 12:

7:30- My Salvation has a First Name: A Wienermobile Journey + How to be a Lesbian in 10 Days or Less

Friday, May 13:

7:30-Performing Therapy + Stories of Hell and High Water

Saturday, May 14:

2:00-How to be a Lesbian in 10 Days or Less + Performing Therapy

Saturday, May 14:

7:30-Stories of Hell and High Water + My Salvation has a First Name: A Wienermobile Journey

Sunday, May 15:

2:00-My Salvation has a First Name: A Wienermobile Journey + Performing Therapy

Featured in *The O Solo Mama Mia Festival* are the following theatre pieces:

My Salvation has A First Name: A Wienermobile Journey

Based on the true story of an insecure goody-goody who overcomes years of bullying and finds redemption and her true voice behind the windshield of the Wienermobile. Using music, video and photo footage from her life on the hot dog highway, comedian Robin Gelfenbien tells the story of her transformation from underdog to “one of the most notorious Wienermobile drivers of all time.” (Time Out New York). “4 stars” (Time Out New York) “The highlight of next month’s Fringe Festival” (New York Magazine) Written and performed by Robin Gelfenbien. (An excerpt from this show was part of WAM Theatre’s inaugural April 2010 event, ‘A WAM Welcome’)

How To Be A Lesbian in 10 Days or Less

Not a coming out story, but not not a coming out story, ‘How To Be A Lesbian in 10 Days or Less’ is a dynamic workshop led by teacher and motivational speaker Butchy McDyke that will help you become the “best lesbian you can be!” Writer and performer Leigh Hendrix links unique characters, personal story, and a Reba McEntire song in a mostly funny and sometimes earnest exploration of how you can learn to confidently shout, “I’ m a big ‘ ol dyke!”

Performing Therapy

This one-woman, group-therapy comedy about depression is a sideways safari through loss, displacement, dementia, depression and the surprise healing nature of upstate New York. A ‘depressively experienced’ actress turned therapist leads group therapy in an attempt to provide helpful advice and therapeutic modalities to other ‘stressfully afflicted’. Art Therapy with Balloon Animals, Affirmations on Post-it notes and Primal Humming are some of the hopeful remedies. Written by Camilla Schade and Kira Lallas, and performed by Camilla Schade.

FROM May 5-8 IN TROY, NY ONLY:

Paris 1890-Unlaced!

Join actress Anne Undeland on a quick and saucy romp through Paris in the Belle Epoque — a glittering world of infamous courtesans, imperious grandes dames, and clueless but ambitious cancan dancers. Costume, accent and character changes keep the pace lively as Paris 1890 – Unlaced! delivers laughs, heart and, of course, a little risqué business. Paris 1890 – Unlaced! was originally commissioned and produced

by Ventfort Hall Mansion and Gilded Age Museum, Lenox Massachusetts, in collaboration with Shakespeare and Company. Written by Juliane Hiam, directed by Sarah Taylor, performed by Anne Undeland.

FROM May 12-15 IN PITTSFIELD, MA ONLY:

Stories from Hell and High Water

Hell and High Water or When the Sky Falls is a fantasia on the theme of security in America. It is a sharply satiric account of playwright Jamuna Yvette Sirker's experience surviving the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The play follows Teacher Alice, a Latina school teacher's struggles through the abyss of an American apocalypse. *Stories from Hell and High Water* is a one-woman, solo version of Ms. Sirker's full-length play. In it, actor Richarda Abrams embodies Teacher Alice along with six residents from her flooded New Orleans neighborhood: a nurse, a jazz singer, a photographer, an out of work actor and the spirit of a bag lady. This quirky and surprisingly funny work holds resonance for anyone who knows loss, tragedy, or the illusive nature of "security".

For more information please go to www.wamtheatre.com

About WAM Theatre:

WAM Theatre is a theatre company based in the Berkshires of Massachusetts and the Capital Region of New York State. Inspired by the book 'Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide' by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, WAM Theatre was founded in 2009 by professional theatre artists Kristen van Ginhoven and Leigh Strimbeck. WAM's philanthropic mission is two-fold; first, producing theatrical events for everyone, with a focus on women theatre artists and/or stories of women and girls; second, to donate a portion of the proceeds from those events to organizations that benefit women and girls. www.wamtheatre.com

About Storefront Artist Project:

The Storefront Artist Project is a non-profit arts organization active since 2002. Operating in a gallery/office space in the heart of Pittsfield, it brings art to diverse members of the community by presenting innovative art exhibitions and installations, providing non-traditional, visually accessible studio space to artists and connecting artists with the public through education, opportunities and exposure. Its programs include storefront artist residencies, the Mentor and Intern Programs, monthly exhibitions, artist salons, and Open Studios. Visit <http://storefrontartist.org> for more information.

About Emporium:

Emporium is a unique gift store with an ever growing range of locally designed and produced clothing, accessories, books, cards, toys and home wares. Their products are quirky, well designed, and well made. They strive to source products that can not be found just anywhere. In January of 2011, Emporium moved their gift shop to Park Square at 31 South Street. The current space is shared with Storefront Artist Project, allowing for creative collaboration in the heart of downtown Pittsfield. Formerly known as The Lenox Old Country Store, Emporium initially relocated from Lenox to North Street in Pittsfield in 2009.

Photographs (Art and Theatre) available upon request to kristen@wamtheatre.com

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