

PRESS RELEASE

STUDIO
THEATRE

1501 14TH ST NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

202.232.7267
STUDIOTHEATRE.ORG

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
DAVID MUSE

CONTACT:

Mike Fila
202.232.7267 x615
mfila@studiotheatre.org

DATE: January 22, 2020

**STUDIO THEATRE PRESENTS THE DC PREMIERE OF ANTOINETTE NWANDU'S
INCENDIARY *PASS OVER*; LAUNCHES 5-SITE COMMUNITY TOUR**

Pass Over

Written by **Antoinette Nwandu**

Directed by **Psalmayene 24**

March 4 – April 5, 2020

Press performance: March 8, 2020 at 2pm

“Searing, daring, blazingly theatrical, and thrillingly tense.”

—*The New York Times* (Best Plays of 2018)

After explosive premieres in Chicago and New York, Studio Theatre will present the **DC premiere of *Pass Over***, playwright **Antoinette Nwandu**'s visceral and absurdist observation of race in America, beginning **March 4, 2020**. The production will be directed by **Psalmayene 24**. This collision of novelist Samuel Beckett's existential masterwork *Waiting for Godot* and the Exodus saga follows Kitch and Moses, friends waiting on a contemporary street corner. Or is it an 18th century plantation? Or maybe, they're in Egypt in the 13th century BCE under the rule of the Pharaoh. The difference doesn't really matter to the two young men, who spend their days dreaming about what they'll do, who they'll be, what they'll eat, and who they'll see when they get off the block—when they “pass over”—an event that seems perpetually out of reach. As they bide their time, Kitch and Moses face constant interference, interrogation, and intimidation from Mister and Ossifer, two white men who encroach upon their space.

Pass Over began to coalesce for Nwandu in 2013. She was inspired by the friendship of two male students in her classroom at Manhattan Borough Community College and the 2012 death of Trayvon Martin. Over 97 drafts of the play, she pursued the fundamental question of how to dramatize violence and racism against young Black men.

Studio will also launch a *Pass Over* Community Tour, presenting complete dramatic readings of the play at five sites across the Washington, DC metro area, paired with facilitated talkbacks to help process the work. These events will target intergenerational audiences and delve deeper into the context of the play. The *Pass Over* Community Tour will take place at:

- Duke Ellington School of the Arts (3500 R St NW)—April 1, 2020
- Howard University's Environmental Theatre Space (2455 6th Street NW)—April 8, 2020
- Anacostia Neighborhood Library (1800 Good Hope Rd SE)—April 15, 2020

- Shaw Neighborhood Library (1630 7th Street NW)—April 16, 2020
- Joe’s Movement Emporium (3309 Bunker Hill Road, Mount Rainier, MD)—April 18, 2020

About *Pass Over*

Kitch and Moses seem stuck on their street corner, but it don’t matter. They joke, dream, and throw down about the promised land they’re heading to just as soon as they get up off the block—what they’ll eat, who they’ll see, whether today’s the day they’ll pass over. Allegorical and immediate, humorous and chilling, Antoinette Nwandu’s collision of the Exodus saga and *Waiting for Godot* probes the forces that have marooned these young Black men in a cycle of violence, as they yearn for the promised land.

About Antoinette Nwandu

Antoinette Nwandu is a New York-based playwright, who was born and raised in Los Angeles. Her play *Pass Over* received its New York debut at LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater. A filmed version of the Jeff Award-winning Steppenwolf production, directed by Spike Lee, premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival and at SXSW, and is currently streaming on Amazon Prime. Victory Gardens produced the world premiere of her play *Breach: a manifesto on race in america through the eyes of a black girl recovering from self-hate* in February 2018. Antoinette is a MacDowell Fellow, a Dramatists Guild Fellow, and an Ars Nova Play Group alum. Honors include the 2018 Whiting Award, the 2017 Paula Vogel Playwriting Award, the Lorraine Hansberry Playwriting Award, the Negro Ensemble Company’s Douglas Turner Ward Prize, a Literary Fellowship at the Eugene O’Neill Playwrights Conference, and spots on the 2016 and 2017 Kilroys lists. Her work has been supported by the Sundance Theatre Lab, Space on Ryder Farm, Ignition Fest, the Cherry Lane Mentor Project, the Kennedy Center, Page73, PlayPenn, Southern Rep Theatre, The Flea Theater, Naked Angels, Fire This Time, and The Movement Theatre Company. Antoinette has a bachelor’s degree in English, magna cum laude, from Harvard College; an MS from The University of Edinburgh; and an MFA from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. Antoinette is a writer on the second season of Spike Lee’s *She’s Gotta Have It* for Netflix, and is under commission from Echo Theater Company, Colt Coeur, Ars Nova, and Audible.

About *Psalmayene 24*

Psalmayene 24 is an award-winning director, playwright, and actor. Directing credits include *Native Son* by Nambi E. Kelley at Mosaic Theater Company, *Words Become Flesh* (recipient of five 2017 Helen Hayes Awards, including Outstanding Direction of a Play) by Marc Bamuthi Joseph at Theater Alliance, and *The Shipment* by Young Jean Lee at Forum Theatre. He has received commissions from the African Continuum Theatre Company, Arena Stage, Imagination Stage, the Kennedy Center, Theater Alliance, Solas Nua, and Mosaic Theater Company. His one-man play, *Free Jujube Brown!*, is published in the anthology, *Plays from the Boom Box Galaxy: Theater from the Hip-Hop Generation* (TCG).

INFORMATION

Where: Studio Theatre’s Metheny Theatre, 1501 14th St NW, Washington, DC 20005

Performances: Tuesday-Saturday at 8pm, Saturday and Sunday at 2pm, and Sunday at 7pm

There will be no matinee performance on March 7 or April 11 and no evening performance on March 8, April 7-10, or April 12.

Tickets: \$60 – \$90

Runs March 4 – April 5, 2020

Press performance: March 8, 2020 at 2pm

STUDIO THEATRE

Studio Theatre is Washington’s premier venue for contemporary theatre, “where local audiences will find today’s edgiest playwrights” (*Variety*). One of the most respected mid-sized theatres in the country, Studio produces exceptional contemporary drama in deliberately intimate spaces. Drawing inspiration from great ensembles—where people work together with a spirit of generosity and professional rigor—Studio brings characteristic thoughtfulness and daring to its work onstage and off, through its new work incubator and engagement, education, and workforce training initiatives. Studio serves nearly 75,000 people each year, including more than 1,000 youth and young adults through community engagement initiatives. Founded in 1978, the quality of Studio’s work has been recognized by sustained community support, as well as 72 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in professional theatre.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Location: 1501 14th Street NW (northeast corner of 14th and P Streets)

Parking: Studio has a parking partnership with Washington Plaza Hotel at 10 Thomas Circle NW, three blocks south of Studio; patrons who park at the hotel’s parking garage can purchase a \$13 voucher at the box office. Street parking is extremely limited; arrive early to increase your options.

Metro Stops: Red Line: Dupont Circle, Orange/Blue Lines: McPherson Square, and Green/Yellow Lines: U Street/Cardozo

Accessibility: Studio’s theatres are all wheelchair accessible; seats are available by reservation. Assistive listening devices are available for all shows at the Box Office. Call the Box Office at 202.332.3300 for more information.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Tickets and Subscriptions: 202.332.3300

Administration: 202.232.7267

Website: studiotheatre.org

E-mail: info@studiotheatre.org

###