

# VENUS THEATRE



## For Immediate Release

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Venus Theatre presents **FUR** by Migdalia Cruz

Directed by Deborah Randall

Featuring: Deborah Randall, Grant Cloyd and Karin Rosnizeck

March 17 - April 10, 2016 | Thursday, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8PM and Saturday and Sunday at 3PM

Fur is the story of Citrona, a hirsute young woman who is purchased by Michael at a sideshow to be his bride. Michael has a fetish for animals and runs a pet shop in post-apocalyptic Los Angeles which has become a giant sand pit. He hires Nena, an animal trapper to catch and bring food to the caged Citrona. But Citrona falls in love with Nena who's in love with Michael. A tragi-comic triangular retelling of the Beauty & the Beast where the beast wins.

History of FUR by Migdalia:

"FUR was written while I was a student of Maria Irene Fornés at INTAR's Hispanic-Playwrights-in-Residence Laboratory, having its world premiere at Latino Chicago Theater Company in 1995, directed by Ralph Flores.

It has had 13 stagings in the U.S., one in Puerto Rico at the Ateneo Puertorriqueño, one in Greece at the Experimental Wing of the National Theater of Greece in Athens, and one in Scotland at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival through Monarch Theatre in NY.

Possible readings occurred in Turkey & Egypt—Permission was given for 2 women's groups to get together and read the play.

Never heard back after that... "

Migdalia Cruz is one of the best playwrights of this generation. She is a writer of plays, musical theatre and opera in the U.S. Her works have been produced in venues as diverse as Playwrights Horizons in New York City, the Old Red Lion Theatre in London, Miracle Theatre in Portland, Oregon, and Houston Grand Opera.

Cruz is the recipient of numerous awards including the National Endowment for the Arts playwriting fellowship (in 1991 and 1995). In 1999, she was named the first Sackler Artist in the School of Fine Arts at the University of Connecticut and was commissioned to write a play about children in war. Her research took her to Cambodia, Tibet, and Bosnia where she sought out stories by interviewing children.

In December 2013, Cruz was awarded the New York Community Trust/Helen Merrill Distinguished Playwright's Award. She is a recipient of the Kennedy Center's Fund for New American Plays award for *Another Part of the House* (1996). In 1994, she was the PEW/TCG National Artist in Residence. She was a McKnight Fellow in 1988.

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## CREATIVE TEAM

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DEBORAH RANDALL (**Citrona**) first fell in love with the characters of Migdalia Cruz around 1994 when she auditioned with monologues from *Miriam's Flowers* and had the extreme honor of working with casting director Jerry Manning (formerly of Arena Stage and many other area theatres including Studio Theatre where Deb picked up a role for a John Guare series). In 2005, Deb called Migdalia's agent Peregrine and inquired about current scripts. The promenade attic staging of *Cigarettes and Moby Dick* at the Warehouse Theatre followed. Another decade has passed by and Deb could not resist the opportunity to produce and direct Migdalia again. To perform *Citrona*, was a later development that has been nothing but a blissful ride. Deb directed her first college play in 1985 and she went on to train as an actor at UMBC graduating in 1994 under Xerxes Mehta, Wendy Salkind, Lewis Shaw, Sam McCready, Alan Kreizenbeck, and Alice Robinson. Deb is a published playwright (*Molly Daughter*), and has toured four solo shows through five states. She began acting professionally in Washington in 1994 and also did film and television and political satire at that time. She wanted to be more challenged by material and, well...welcome to woman-empowering script #55...the rest is herstory. Deb extends special love and thanks to her husband Alan who is always telling her to keep going. And to her best-gurl Jasmine who remains very confused as to why the person was in the cage and the dog was not.

KARIN ROSNIZECK (**Nena**) is thrilled to be back at the shack after playing Beatrice in *Virus Attacks Heart* in 2014. She was recently seen as Emcee and Marlene Dietrich in *Kabarett - Cabaret* (In-Series) and as Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* (Chesapeake Shakespeare Company). She has worked with WSC Avant (*Lulu, Gnaediges Fraulein*), Scena Theatre (*Salome, The Marriage of Maria Braun*) among others and will next be seen in *Phaeton* with Taffety Punk. Karin is a company member of Factory 449 (*4:48 Psychosis, The Ice Child*) and force/collision (*Nautical Yards, Shape, Trust Me*) and holds an MA in English and French Literature.

GRANT CLOYD (**Michael**) returns to Venus having previously appeared in *A Girl Named Destiny, Looking for the Pony, and Helen of Sparta*. Local credits include *BLUE* with Imagination Stage, *Belleville* with Studio Theater (u/s), *Barrymore* with Rep Stage, *Cymbeline* with Chesapeake Shakespeare Company, and *Agents of Azeroth* with The Washington Rogues, of which he is a company member. He has also performed internationally with Bareback Ink as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Additionally, he tours multiple solo performances around the Baltimore region in conjunction with the Jewish Museum of Maryland. Grant received his MFA in acting from Catholic University in 2015 and holds a BA in Theater from SMCM.

MIGDALIA CRUZ (**Playwright**) is an award-winning playwright, lyricist, translator, & librettist of more than 55 works including: *El Grito Del Bronx, Salt, Lucy Loves Me, Fur, Miriam's Flowers, Frida, & Lolita de Lares*; produced in the U.S. & abroad in venues such as BAM, CSC, Mabou Mines, National Theater of Greece/Athens, Old Red Lion/London, Houston Grand Opera, Ateneo Puertorriqueño, Teatro Vista,

CollaborAction, & Latino Chicago Theater Company where she was a writer-in-residence. An alumna of New Dramatists, she was named the 2013 Helen Merrill Distinguished Playwright, & was nurtured by Sundance, the Lark's México/US Word Exchange, & by Maria Irene Fornés at INTAR. Migdalia was born in the Bronx where she wrote her first play at age 6. In 2016: *FUR* will be featured in the Festival Irene at Hero Theatre in L.A. in April; *Lolita de Lares* will be staged by Urban Theater Company of Chicago in June; and she will be teaching a week-long Fornésian Writing Workshop for Notre Dame & the Fornés Institute/Latina/o Commons with Anne Garcia-Romero in Chicago this August. She is delighted to be back at the Venus! Thank you, Deborah...

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

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The brilliance of Migdalia Cruz lies in her musicality. It's difficult to talk about or dissect that in anyway because as soon as we begin down some literal path we are excluding something nearly impossible to qualify. I love the dramaturgical journey of her scripts because she is a woman so in love with literature. From Melville to Shelley her writing is always inspired by other great writing and so when you work on it it has a kind of ethereal/eternal energy around it.

*Fur* is partially inspired by *Beauty and the Beast*. She writes at the beginning of her script just under the title:

*"I shall not let you die! cried Beauty. You shall live and I shall be your wife.  
I know now that I love you and I cannot bear to lose you.  
Scarcely had she spoken than there was a sudden flash of brilliant light;  
an there before her stood a handsome young prince."*

This reference led us to the original Cupid/Psyche tale and if you look in the lobby, you'll see a 100 year old copy on the counter. Feel free to gently flip through it (the pages are frail).

There are many other references and inferences in the language. And once it gets moving on its feet everything shifts and changes then too.

As it stands, if I have to describe this, I'll just call it a modern day, newly generated parable. A feminist parable that looks at how women are identified and labeled and then goes well beyond that to extremes that create a surreal and hopefully comic existence. Within this, we have the male experience as well in terms of feminism. The man who is automatically deified for simply existing while the women still have so much to prove.

I am in love with all three of these characters because they never give up. And then, the play ends. I hope you enjoy the ride. Thank you so much for buying a ticket to the House-That-Love-Built. We hope you enjoy this first installation of our 16th year, welcome to woman-empowering script #55.

(also, please keep the entrances and exits clear and respect the sound and lighting design by not adding to it.)

A Million Thank You's!  
deb.



Venus is a 501c3 nonprofit organization committed to setting flight to the voices of women with theatre for a lifetime. Venus is the only woman run theatre company in the state of Maryland and among the longest running women's theatre's on the globe.



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