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## Tennessee Williams Festival Announces Special Guest Scholar for 2017

The Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival is pleased to announce Felicia Hardison Londré, professor of theater at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, as the special guest scholar at the sixth annual Tennessee Williams Institute (TWI), an immersive University-level symposium offered during the Festival from Sept. 20-24, 2017.

Londré, who specializes in Shakespearean dramaturgy as well as 19th and 20th-century American, French, and Russian theater history, will provide a rich and valuable perspective for graduate student scholars enrolled in TWI. Londré will attend performances alongside students, as well as lead and participate in discussions of this year's theme - Tennessee Williams and Shakespeare - in a workshop setting.

"We are thrilled to welcome Professor Felicia Londré to this year's Institute," says Festival Literary Director and TWI Coordinator Thomas Keith. "Her expertise as both a Shakespeare scholar and a Williams scholar is a perfect combination for our performance-based seminar. Felicia's decades-long experience as a dramaturg and Shakespeare advisor in the professional theater make her an invaluable asset to the participants of TWI."

This year's Festival will afford Londré the chance to study and discuss the intersections of Williams and Shakespeare plays in a week-long seminar environment. Londré says that she has not previously had the opportunity to do this, but anticipates some rich conversation. As poets and playwrights, Londré says, Williams and Shakespeare were "both very conscious of life's trajectories - ups and downs, success and failure, and getting old as time passes. They were both obsessed with these themes."

In the intensely personal writing of Williams, tracking these themes is "complicated by the author's tendency to revise his writing over long periods of time," Londré explains in her essay "A Vast Traumatic Eye": Culture Absorbed and Refigured in Tennessee Williams's Transitional Plays, published in Brenda Murphy's *The Theatre of Tennessee Williams* (2014).

Londré writes that Williams' "perennial obsessions and concerns are seen developing throughout his work, from 1936 to 1983. Seen in this context, his recognizable tropes and themes take on a resonance and depth that it is impossible to see if one only looks at the great plays he wrote between 1944 and 1961." These include "entrapment and escape ... the plight of the artist, the bohemian, the romantic, and the misfit in contemporary America; the search for God, the gnawing of guilt, and the drive toward atonement; [and] the struggle with sexuality and gender identity."

Londré adds that she visited Provincetown a decade ago, at which point she became aware of the Festival, which at the time was just beginning. Her visit in September will be a long-awaited opportunity to return to the seaside village for a week of theater and discussion. "What could be better than going to the theater every evening?" she says. "I would go to the theater three times a day, if I could. I'm insatiable!"

About Dr. Felicia Londré:

Londré is a theatre historian specializing in American, French, and Russian theatre, as well as a recognized Oxfordian scholar in the field of Shakespearean authorship. She has published over 60 scholarly articles, 25 journalistic publications, 100 book and theatre reviews, and 14 books. These include *Tennessee Williams* (1979), which Maurice Yacowar reviewed in the journal *Modern Drama* as “lively” and “effective because Professor Londré deals with small effects as well with the large themes. She prods us to respond to those fine details of staging that have always been important in Williams.” Londré has also published *Tennessee Williams* (1985) and *Tennessee Williams: Life, Work, and Criticism* (1989).

For 22 years (1978-2000), Londré was dramaturg and literary manager for the Missouri Repertory Theatre (now the Kansas City Repertory Theatre). She is an honorary co-founder of the Heart of America Shakespeare Festival, and she served as dramaturg for the Nebraska Shakespeare Festival from 1990 to 2009. She was the founding secretary of the Shakespeare Theatre Association of America, and has served as president of the American Theatre and Drama Society.

In 1998, Londré received a University of Montana Distinguished Alumna Award, having earned her B.A. in French there. She earned her M.A. at the University of Washington, and her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin. In 1999, she was inducted into the College of Fellows of the American Theatre at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.

In 2001, she was elected to the National Theatre Conference. That year she also received the Association for Theatre in Higher Education’s national award for 2001 as Outstanding Teacher of Theatre in Higher Education. Ten years later, she received the 2011 Betty Jean Jones Award for Outstanding Teacher of American Theatre and Drama.

Dr. Londré has held visiting professorships at Hosei University in Tokyo and at Marquette University in Milwaukee. She has lectured internationally, including Beijing, Nanjing, Tokyo, Osaka, Venice, Rouen, Caen, Paris (Sorbonne), Brussels, Moscow, and a lecture tour of Hungary.

About the Tennessee Williams Institute (TWI):

Now in its sixth year, TWI is an immersive University-level symposium for graduate and doctorate level students offered in conjunction with the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival. Students attend a wide array of performances from across the globe, participate in private seminars with scholars, and interact with theater professionals.

TWI was initially developed by Thomas Keith, Williams editor and scholar, who is the Literary Director for the Festival, and Charlene Donaghy, the Festival’s Producing Director as well as a playwright and educator, in collaboration with Mark Charney, Chair of Texas Tech University’s Department of Theatre and Dance.

Past TWI scholars have included:

- Michael Paller, dramaturg and Director of Humanities for The American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco
- Annette Saddik, Professor of English and Theatre at ***New York City College of Technology***
- Tom Mitchell, Associate Head of the Department of Theatre at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- David Savran, Distinguished Professor of Theatre and the Vera Mowry Roberts Chair in American Theatre at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York

Past TWI artist participants have included:

- Lee Breuer, playwright, theater director, academic, educator, filmmaker, poet, lyricist, and a founding co-artistic director of Mabou Mines Theater Company in New York City
- Maude Mitchell, Obie Award-winning actress, dramaturg, and producer
- Laurie Sansom, former artistic director of National Theatre of Scotland
- Fred Abrahamse and Marcel Meyer, co-founders of Abrahamse Meyer Productions in Cape Town, South Africa

About the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival:

The Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival was founded in 2006 in Provincetown - the birthplace of modern American theater - where Williams worked on many of his major plays during the 1940s. The TW Festival is the nation's largest performing arts festival dedicated to celebrating and expanding an understanding of the full breadth of the work of America's great playwright. Each year, theater artists from around the globe perform classic and innovative productions to celebrate Williams' enduring influence in the 21st century, hosted by venues throughout the seaside village. For more details, visit [twptown.org](http://twptown.org) and follow the Festival on Facebook.

This Festival is funded in part by Mass Humanities and Provincetown Tourism Fund, and is presented by Sage Inn & Lounge.