

Planet Earths Arts New Play Festival

Planet Earth Arts was founded in 2014 out of our conviction that environmental and racial/social justice are the most urgent issues of our time, and our belief that the arts, in collaboration with the sciences and humanities, must play a leading role in transforming the human presence on our planet from a destructive role to one that is mutually beneficial to the entire community of life.

We collaborate with actors, playwrights, directors, photographers, choreographers, dancers, musicians, writers and visual artists. **Planet Earth Arts** supports them by commissioning, presenting and showcasing their powerful transformative work – confronting and illuminating climate change, mass extinctions, threats to oceans, habitat loss, sea rise and the struggles for environmental justice.



That same year we launched the **Planet Earth Arts New Play Festival** at Berkeley Rep and at Stanford University, in collaboration with PlayGround and the National Center for New Plays at Stanford, to inspire playwrights to create bold new works for the stage that explore issues of planetary sustainability as well as environmental and social justice.

For the past nine years **Planet Earth Arts** has worked with more than 75 playwrights from PlayGround's Writers Pool in the Bay Area and Los Angeles.

The **Planet Earth Arts New Play Festival** has generated a living library of more than 200 short plays. PlayGround and **Planet Earth Arts** have co-commissioned 12 new original full-length or one-act plays – several of which have had World Premiere Productions in San Francisco at the Potrero Stage: PlayGround Center for New Plays. Each year at least one or two **Planet Earth Arts** plays have been included in the Best of PlayGround. We are thrilled to resume collaborating with PlayGround on the **2023 Planet Earth Arts New Play Festival** and look forward to supporting the new visions and voices of the Chicago and New York Writer Pools.



From the Greeks to Shakespeare through to Lauren Gunderson, August Wilson and Dominique Morisseau in our own time, theater has always been one of civilization's most powerful art forms for exploring the human condition and mirroring the burning issues each generation faces. In an interview in 2014 playwright Tony Kushner described climate change as "without question the greatest danger that the human race has ever faced and everything that is good about humans will need to be summoned into this fight."

The Plays Include:



Reading Babar in 2070

Millie DeBenedet, Stephanie Prentice and Michael Barrett Austin in *Reading Babar in 2070* by Rachel Bublitz

In the slightly distant future parents reading this beloved children's classic to their young daughter are forced to come to grips with the devastating consequences of their own environmental apathy.

Just As It Is Today

Angel Adedokun and Caleb Cabrera in "Just As It Is Today" by Tom Bruett.

A pair of nesting birds on a Pacific Island are forced to face the terrifying reality of sea rise.



Bright Shining Sea

Lisa Morse and Stacy Ross in Julianne Jigour's poetic "water play", *Bright Shining Sea*.

Set in drought plagued California six characters find their lives intertwined as they face fear, loss, grief and a world that will never be the same.

Monarchs In Space

Morgan J. Booker, Michelle Ianiro, Nicole Apostol Bruno and David Cramer in *Monarchs in Space* by Nicole Jost.

Elena, a Mexican-American astronaut on the International Space Station, discovers that the subjects of her experiments share her powerful longing for home.



The Universe on Ice

Rebecca Schweitzer and Michael Barrett Austin in *The Universe on Ice* by Maury Zeff.

Polar explorers Rear Adm. Robert E. Peary and Sir Ernest Shackleton find themselves in a frozen surreal dream world where penguins and polar bears talk.

OR: or, The Play of Light

Liam Vincent, David Cramer, Nicole Apostol Bruno, Michelle Ianiro, Margaret Booker and Robyn Grahn in *OR: or The Play of Light*, by Jerome Joseph Gentes.

This evocative dance-theater piece muses on the mysterious birth of life in the universe 13.8 billion years ago, with a cast of characters comprised of physics particles.



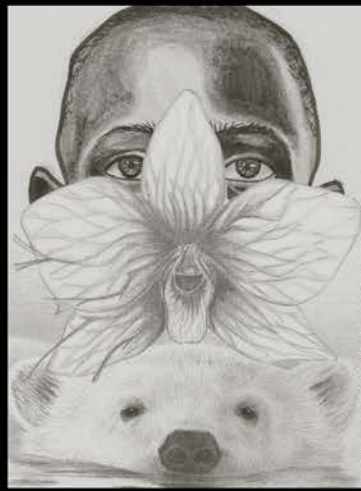
La Vida Lobo

Jed Parsario, Livia Gomes Demarchi and Caleb Cabera in Linda Amayo-Hassan's bi-lingual play *La Vida Lobo*.

Blocking crucial wildlife corridors, "Trump's Wall" on the American-Mexican border, frustrates two young Grey wolves' amorous pursuits.

POLAR BEARS BLACK BOYS & PRAIRIE FRINGED ORCHIDS

BY VINCENT TERRELL DURHAM



“Black boys need to be put on the endangered species list.”



This incendiary provocation, spoken by the white lover of a Black Lives Matter activist at a Harlem cocktail party, encapsulates the issues of race, class, sexual identity, biological extinction and police violence against Black bodies that are explored so powerfully in the acclaimed new play *Polar Bears, Black Boys and Prairie Fringed Orchids*. With a perfect blend of biting wit, pathos and humor, the play speaks to some of the most profound and urgent issues at the heart of America’s reckoning with race.

In 2016 [PLANET EARTH ARTS](#), in collaboration with PlayGround, commissioned Los Angeles playwright Vincent Terrell Durham to develop a play about the explosive encounter between white environmentalists and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Polar Bears, Black Boys and Prairie Fringed Orchids was first produced as part of our Environment and Social Justice Festival at Stanford University in 2019. Since then, the play has had professional staged readings in Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Houston, Seattle, Tampa, San Diego and Albany. The play also inaugurated PlayGround’s Juneteenth Justice Project, and a national live stream on Zoom raised \$150,000 for the Fund for Black Theater in the U.S.

The reason that I wrote the play is that I wanted audiences to spend an evening getting to really know the full, rich, complicated inner life of a Black man - not just what we see on the TV news.

- Vincent Terrell Durham, Playwright

