

## **PLACAS: The Most Dangerous Tattoo by Paul S. Flores**

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Washington, DC - **GALA** Hispanic Theatre continues its 38th anniversary season with the Washington, DC premiere of **PLACAS: The Most Dangerous Tattoo** by Paul Flores, a playwright, performance artist and poet from San Francisco, **on March 14 and March 15, 2014** at 8 pm. **PLACAS: The Most Dangerous Tattoo** is a National Performance Network Creation Fund project; co-commissioned by **GALA**, the San Francisco Arts International Festival, Pregones Theater (Bronx, NY), Su Teatro (Denver, CO), and MACLA (San Jose, CA). Flores and the cast will be in residency at **GALA** Theatre, 3333 14th Street, NW, for one week and will participate in a number of community engagement initiatives.

In **PLACAS: The Most Dangerous Tattoo**, Fausto, a Salvadoran immigrant and former gang member, is paroled from prison after he removes his gang tattoos – a cleansing of the skin in a hopeful effort to reunite his family and break a lifetime of violence, war, forced migrations and street crime. And so begins the journey of healing between Fausto and Edgar, his teenage son who is now vulnerable to the appeal of gang life.

PLACAS features **Ric Salinas**, who originated the role of Fausto. Other company members are **Sarita Ocón**, **Luis “Xago” Juarez**, **Xavi Moreno**, **Carolyn Zeller** and **Fidel Gomez**. Salinas, Ocón and Gomez are members of Actors Equity Association.

PLACAS was originally commissioned by the Central American Resource Center-San Francisco and SFIAF, and was developed as a community response to the issue of transnational gang violence, presenting positive elements of Central American culture in the context of a hostile anti-immigrant political environment. As part of the development process, playwright Flores interviewed 100 gang members, parents and intervention workers in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles and El Salvador. The play is loosely based on the life of Alex Sanchez, an ex-gang member who founded the non-profit Homies Unidos. Sanchez worked closely with Flores to arrange the interviews with gang members. Mr. Sanchez will travel from San Francisco to be part of the programs in DC.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS**

The residency by Flores and the cast include several community engagement activities.

A free panel discussion program on the experiences of Alex Sanchez and the issues addressed in the play and facing young Latino males will be held on Thursday, March 13 from 7 to 9 pm. The panel discussion will be moderated by Luis Cardona, Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, and will include Flores, Sanchez and cast members. It will be held in the Ellsworth Room of the Silver Spring Civic Building at 1 Veterans Plaza, Silver Spring, Maryland. There is ample parking in the garage across the street and only four blocks from the metro station.

A free Youth and Family Workshop will be held at the GALA Theatre on Saturday, March 15 from 2 pm to 4 pm in collaboration with the Columbia Heights Shaw Family Support Collaborative. The workshop will be conducted by Flores.

Special post-performance discussions with Flores and the artists will be held on March 14 and March 15. For more information, call 22-234-7174.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

[Paul S. Flores](#) is a published poet, performance artist and playwright. His work explores the intersection of urban culture, Hip-Hop and transnational identity. Among his works are *You're Gonna Cry* directed by Brian Freeman; *Representa!* directed by Danny Hoch, which premiered at the Hip Hop Theater Festival and toured to

17 cities, including GALA in Washington, DC; and *Placas* directed by Michael John Garcés. Flores also has produced events and performed in at the Galeria de la Raza, Mission Cultural Center, Red Poppy and Dance Mission in the Bay Area. A highly respected youth arts development specialist, he is a co-founder of Youth Speaks, Inc with James Kass and Marc Bamuthi Joseph, which has introduced spoken word to thousands of youth throughout the country. Flores manages the Latino Men & Boys Program at the Unity Council in East Oakland, and teaches Hip-Hop Theater and Spoken Word at the University of San Francisco.

**Michael John Garcés** (Director) is the Artistic Director of Cornerstone Theater Company, a community- engaged ensemble based in Los Angeles, where he has directed *Café Vida* by Lisa Loomer, *Someday* by Julie Marie Myatt, *attention* by Page Leong, and *The Falls* by Jeffrey Hatcher (at the Guthrie Theater). He also writes

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