

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 8, 2025

## **ITSAZOO and Pacific Theatre Present World Premiere of Provocative Exploration of Human Connection & Sexuality in – Meeting –**

***Inspired by her background in psychology, renowned actor and emerging playwright Katherine Gauthier's immersive writing debut investigates the power of radical empathy***

**Vancouver, BC – ITSAZOO and Pacific Theatre** (with support of **Newworld Theatre**) present a visceral, unflinching examination of group therapy in the world premiere of ***Meeting***, taking place **May 14 to June 7, 2025** in a real-life meeting room at the Chalmers Heritage Building (1440 W 12th Ave) – home to Pacific Theatre. Marking the playwriting debut of actor and writer Katherine Gauthier, *Meeting* invites audiences to join five participants of the support group, 'Co-Dependents, Love and Sex Addicts Anonymous' in an immersive, fly-on-the-wall experience, as the group grapples with the dark corners of stigma, trauma, and trust.

"*Meeting* offers a peek behind the curtain at the challenging, nuanced, and, at times, horrifying, realities of people seeking therapy to deal with their sexual deviances," says Sebastien Archibald, ITSAZOO's Co-Artistic Producer, who also plays group member Rob. "An exercise in extreme vulnerability and transparency, *Meeting* drops audiences into the deep end of community care, as a shocking revelation from one of the participants forces the group to question whether everyone is deserving of acceptance and healing."

Adds Kaitin Williams, Pacific Theatre's Artistic Director, who also plays group member Dawn: "A deeply personal exploration, *Meeting* is informed by Gauthier's studies in counselling psychology and experience as an advocate for sexual abuse survivors. We were immediately drawn to this script for its ability to delve deep into some of life's toughest questions with empathy and compassion, in an effort to expose and heal cycles of trauma for the benefit of all – from the oppressed to the oppressor."

Directed by multi-award-winning director and Artistic Director of Newworld Theatre, Chelsea Haberlin, *Meeting* opens in an empty church activity room, where five people share their stories, struggling to connect in light of their wildly disparate experiences with love, sex, and desire. When the group's newest member exposes their most vulnerable revelation, the group must evaluate the limits of their tolerance, trust, and acceptance.

To safely and accurately reflect an authentic group therapy experience, Gauthier worked with three dramaturgical consultants in the creation of this work: Julie Lumsden, Métis artist/Indigenous advocate from Treaty 1 (Winnipeg), who consulted on the inclusion and creation of the Land Acknowledgement; Kimberley Rampersad, a Winnipeg-based theatre artist who consulted on the play through an IBPOC lens; and Dr. James Cantor, world-renowned psychologist and sex researcher who served as a psychological consultant. Gauthier also worked with two psychological consultants, Dr. Hillary McBride and Dr. Marla Buchanan, who vetted the script for accuracy from a psychological and neurological lens.

The production of *Meeting* will offer a series of trauma-informed practices in order to support and protect the cast and creative team, as well as audience members. These support practices include the

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engagement of Intimacy Director Aryn Mott, Canada's first certified Mental Health Coordinator working within film, television, and theatre; alongside a certified Mental Health First Aid Attendant being on-site at every performance to offer on-the-spot care to those needing support. A post-show 'Talk Forward' series will take place throughout the entirety of the performance run, hosting facilitated discussions with guest speakers on topics such as sexual health, addiction, and trauma.

In partnership with the UBC Department of Theatre and Film, with funding from CUES (Community-University Engagement Support Fund), UBC researchers will observe and document ITSAZOO and Pacific Theatre's series of trauma-informed practices in order to better equip students, teachers, professionals, and leaders at UBC and within the broader Vancouver theatre community in creating safe spaces for actors to do their work in a culture of care.

*Meeting* will feature a cast of luminary local actors: **Carmela Sison, Marcus Youssef, Chris Lam, Sebastien Archibald, and Kaitlin Williams.**

The creative and production team includes: **Chelsea Haberlin** (Director), **Paige Louter** (Assistant Director), **Jasmin Sandhu** (Stage Manager), **Melicia Zaini** (Production Designer), and **Stephanie Wong** (Production Designer).

The production will close Pacific Theatre's 2024/25 season. Tickets and information at [pacifictheatre.org](http://pacifictheatre.org)

*AUDIENCE ALERT: This production contains explicit discussions about sex, sexual behaviour, childhood sexual abuse and trauma, and pedophilia. It is recommended for ages 19+. Contact [hello@itsazoo.org](mailto:hello@itsazoo.org) for more detailed content guidance.*

#### **About ITSAZOO Productions ([itsazoo.org](http://itsazoo.org))**

ITSAZOO Productions creates dynamic theatre events for daring audiences – whether it's a fly-on-the-wall immersive experience, or a participatory, site specific event. The company formed in 2004 and is operated today by Co-Artistic Producers: Sebastien Archibald and Paige Louter. Through five core values – immersion, challenge, fun, integrity, and community – ITSAZOO creates absorbing, all-encompassing worlds for audiences to experience. Whether it's a fly-on-the-wall, immersive experience or a participatory, site specific event, the company creates theatre for anyone, anytime, anywhere. They don't want audiences to just watch the story. They want audiences to experience the world of the story; to live through it.

#### **About Pacific Theatre ([pacifictheatre.org](http://pacifictheatre.org))**

Founded in 1984 on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, Pacific Theatre aspires to delight, provoke, and stimulate dialogue by producing theatre that rigorously explores the spiritual aspects of human experience. With over 150 productions ranging from established classics to original premieres, our theatre engages top talents from Vancouver and beyond, aiming to inspire dialogue and reflection. Behind the scenes, Pacific Theatre's reach stretches far beyond the plays we produce. We are also committed to nurturing emerging artists and cultivating new works, providing a creative haven for novices and seasoned practitioners. Through our apprenticeship program, young theatre talents receive training, shadow professionals and contribute to mainstage events, often springboarding them to successful careers

#### **LISTING INFORMATION**

#### **ITSAZOO and Pacific Theatre present *Meeting***

Dates:

May 14 to June 7, 2025

Previews: May 14 & 15

Opening: May 16 at 8pm

Showtimes: Wednesdays & Thursdays at 7:30pm  
Fridays & Saturdays at 8pm  
Saturdays & Sundays at 2pm (no show May 18)

Address: Chalmers Activity Room, Pacific Theatre  
1440 W 12th Ave, Vancouver, BC

Ticket prices: \$20-\$40

Website + Tickets: [pacifictheatre.org](http://pacifictheatre.org)

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