

CUSTOM MADE THEATRE CO.

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July 3, 2022

Dear Colleague:

Welcome to The Custom Made Theatre Company! We are extremely thrilled to present to you the third production of our 2022 season, ***References to Salvador Dalí Make Me Hot*** by José Rivera, directed by Katja. Please join us again in September 2022 for our next production of the season, ***Zac & Siah, or Jesus in a Body Bag*** by Bay Area playwright Jeffrey Lo, directed by Adam L. Sussman.

About References:

References to Salvador Dalí Make Me Hot is a strange and surreal drama set in the desert of Barstow, California. Gabriela, the wife of career soldier Benito, dives into a dreamlike fantasy world during her husband's prolonged absences. José Rivera's award-winning play celebrates the confusion that grows out of trying to understand not only the one you love, but yourself as well.

"Jose Rivera's play is brilliant. Characters speak in dense prose with a lyrical beauty, without their dialogue ever feeling dishonest or pretentious. Rivera anthropomorphizes the moon, Gabriella's cat, and a libidinous coyote, making each represent a compelling fragment of Gabriella's imagination, though each is intriguing in their own right. These surrealistic fragments interact with one another, and the result is fascinating."

— *Chicago Theater Review*

If you have any questions about the production or about Custom Made in general, please do not hesitate to contact me. We hope you enjoy the show!

Included in this press kit, you will find our company mission, production history, and additional articles of interest.

If you have any questions about the production or about Custom Made in general, please do not hesitate to contact me. We hope you enjoy the show!

Best wishes,



Brian I. Katz

Executive Artistic Director

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The Custom Made Theatre Company: Our Mission and History

The Custom Made Theatre Company (CMTC) is committed to producing plays that awaken our social conscience, focusing on the strength of the ensemble and creating an intimate theatrical experience.

Custom Made was founded on principles of accessibility; specifically, a commitment to true color-conscious and other non-traditional casting, and engaging a financially, ethnically, racially, and age diverse audience.

CMTC was founded in 1996 in Boston, Massachusetts, then relocated to San Francisco in 1998. Custom Made managed The Custom Stage @ Off-Market for four years, and kicked off its 2009/10 season with a move to a home at The Gough Street Playhouse (formerly the Next Stage, attached to the Trinity Church,) In 2015, Custom Made took over the 2nd floor, 99-seat theatre at 533 Sutter St (the same building as the Shelton Theatre. Finally, we are proud to be a resident theatre at the Phoenix Theatre, which started in January of 2022 and will continue for at least the next two seasons.

Biography: José Rivera



José Rivera is a recipient of two Obie Awards for *Marisol* and *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot*, both produced by the Public Theater. Other plays include *Cloud Tectonics* (Goodman Theatre), *Sonnets for an Old Century* (Nuyorican Poet's Café, Steppenwolf Theatre); *Brainpeople* (ACT/San Francisco); *Adoration of the Old Woman* (Sundance

Theatre Lab, INTAR, La Jolla Playhouse); *School of the Americas* (Public Theater); *The Maids* (INTAR); *The Kiss of the Spiderwoman* (Menier Chocolate Factory, London); *Each Day Dies with Sleep* (Circle Rep, Berkeley Rep, Orange Tree Theatre, London); *Lovesong (Imperfect)* (14th Street Y, directed by the author); *The Street of the Sun* (Mark Taper Forum); and *The House of Ramon Iglesia* (Ensemble Studio Theatre). His screenplay *The Motorcycle Diaries* was nominated for 2005 Best Adapted Screenplay Oscar—making him the first Puerto Rican writer ever nominated for an Academy Award—as well as a BAFTA and Writers Guild Award and received top screenwriting awards in Argentina and Spain. Other films include *On the Road*, *Trade* and *The 33*. Rivera co-created and produced *Eerie, Indiana*, (NBC) and was a consultant and staff writer on *Penny Dreadful: City of Angels* (Showtime). He has written 18 episodes of the Netflix series based on *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Rivera wrote and directed the short films *The Fall of a Sparrow* and *The Civet*. His latest screenplay is *A Song for the Recycled Orchestra*. He has served on the boards of TCG and the Sundance Institute and was a Creative Advisor at Sundance Screenwriting Labs in Utah, Jordan and India. Rivera recently completed directing a zoom film production of *Sonnets for an Old Century* for Paula Vogel's *Bard at the Gate*.

Jose Rivera and Magical Realism

By Jay Michaels | Jan 21, 2020

Rivera has become the chief interpreter of Colombian novelist and short-story writer, Gabriel Garcia Marquez's ideology known as **Magical Realism**.

This term is gaining great popularity today as our world gets more and more unbearable.

This term — seen in live theatre and film & television — integrates elements of fantasy into otherwise realistic settings. In Marquez's 1967 novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, depicting a century in the lives of a family in the fictional Latin American town of Macondo where one might find magic carpets and ghosts amid the palpably real story.

"The magic works best when the realism in magic realism smells and feels and performs like the quotidian reality of our actual lives," says Jose Rivera.

Marquez and Rivera share citizenship in the fiction town of Macondo as Rivera wrote the show bible for the Netflix adaptation of *100 Years of Solitude*. Rivera explains it as "Magic realism works when the otherworldly magic in the storytelling complements perfectly the gritty realism of the world as we know it. Magic isn't a contradiction to reality. It's the invisible layer, the crown of energy, surrounding it."

Could Jose Rivera and his contemporaries be offering up new parables of how we can survive the fast and fearful movement of time that we call our world?

Catharsis

Rivera has employed magical realism throughout his career. His Obie Award-winning play, *Marisol*, talks of a young Puerto Rican woman, attacked on a subway, only to learn her guardian angel (the winged kind) informs her that she must quit being her protector because she's been drafted into a heavenly war that seems to be a clash with an old out-of-touch God "taking the rest of the universe with him."

Not much finessing needed to show how that is parable of our government for as many years as we all can remember? Would we feel better knowing that maybe there will be a new God who will eventually take over?

References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot — another Obie Award-winner of his — allows a wife of a career soldier to analyze her own miseries (and that of her husband) through rituals with (personified) coyotes, cats, and the moon.

Sounds pretty fantastical, huh?

Well, maybe. Maybe it's magically real. And maybe we can look at our lives a bit better if we allow a little "other-world" to pervade. Death is illegal? Over the years, I've had friends that have had to make crowdfunding campaigns to just be able to afford to bury loved ones. Feel better knowing that death is not allowed? Trees grow lights — maybe then we would support climate change as the only trees we really care about usually have lights and presents. Ghosts loving the living? The parables there are legion.

So, finding a love that last forever even in its imperfections?

Rivera is but one example of how we can view the world through the magic realism lens.

Mister Rogers used it. Daniel, the tiger, seemed to live through things even his host was unable to deal-with. We giggle at cosplay at fantasy and superhero conventions but maybe we — ourselves — can deal with life better if we could just be a Jedi or Kryptonian for just a few hours.

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Maybe if we thought there were angels or wizards able to help us, we might stand up a little sooner and speak out a bit quicker? If we thought that time can be altered and maybe ghosts of those we loved are still here to guide us we might care a bit more?

Netflix series, *Messiah*, offered up a logic second coming. *The Shape of Water* allowed us to consider that the monster might end-up getting the girl. And Rivera's *Cloud Tectonics* gave us a romance between the sun and the moon.

Maybe we should watch Rivera's works more ... and closer. Maybe we will find our own salvation in these parables. Maybe we will accept the world and fight to make it better if we — even deep in our heads and told no one — that we had an angel or talking animal or spaceman to help us.

Maybe Jose Rivera is on to something that might save the world?

Currently, we're in a world where a reality star is president; you can order everything from food to your mate online and maybe never meet until your wedding day; have 5000 friends who you've never met; even go to virtual lawyers and doctors. They've recently created a living robot. There are even places where you can marry a computer program ... you know that entire world that is on your wrist or in your pocket?

Again, I hear detractors. They might want to seek solace in the Bible.

You know where seas parted, bushes and snakes spoke, and birth just kinda happened?

Hey, maybe Jose Rivera and his colleagues are updating the Bible?

NOOOO, that just can't be real.

But it can be magically real.

Reference: <https://medium.com/méliès/jose-rivera-and-magical-realism-b15727ebea49>

About Barstow (California)

Location: The City of Barstow is located in the Inland Empire North region of San Bernardino County, midway between Los Angeles and Las Vegas. [Latitude/longitude at City Hall is 34 degrees, 53 minutes, 30 seconds latitude, 117 degrees, 1 minute, 0 seconds longitude.] Barstow is centrally located in the western Mojave at the entrance to the Mojave National Preserve and is home to the U.S. Army National Training Center at Ft. Irwin; Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow; NASA's Goldstone Deep Space Network; Veterans Home of California, Barstow; and BNSF's classification yard.

With Interstates 15 and 40, and highways 58 and 247 all converging in Barstow, the city is a major transportation corridor with more than 60 million people in 19 million vehicles traveling through Barstow each year. The city is home to an Amtrak depot at its Historic Harvey House.

Catering to the tourists is Barstow Outlet and the Outlets at Barstow which together boasts more than 100 outlet stores. Barstow offers all the major conveniences of small town living with the resources of major metropolitan areas only a short drive away.

Size:

- City limits encompass 40 square miles

Elevation:

- Median (city hall): 2,300
- Low (near MCLB): 2,000
- High (near Outlet Center Drive): 2,600

Founding:

Founded in 1886 and incorporated as a city in 1947

Population (as of 2022): 23,828

Barstow Demographics:

- White: 49.43%
- Black or African American: 16.76%
- Two or more races: 15.11%
- Other race: 11.26%
- Asian: 2.72%
- Native American: 2.42%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 2.31%

Reference: <https://www.barstowca.org/residents/about-barstow>