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Contact: Sarah Mills Bacha
614.563.1066
smbacha@earthlink.net

CATCO and the Arts Council Announce 2017 Playwright Fellowship Recipient

Reading of *Skinny* by local playwright Lauren Wilkens set for June 24, 2018

CATCO, in partnership with the Greater Columbus Arts Council (Arts Council), announced today Dublin playwright Lauren Wilkens is the recipient of the 2017 Playwrights Fellowship program for her work, *Skinny*.

Wilkens receives a \$5,000 fellowship and a reading of her play, which will be presented Sunday, June 24, 2018, 6 p.m., at the Studio Three Theatre, Vern Riffe Center, 77 S. High St. Admission is free. CATCO Associate Producing Director and Playwright Fellowship Coordinator Joe Bishara will direct the production.

Wilkens, the owner of the Dublin Theater Academy, teaches improv and acting classes for students age 8 through adults. The Chicago native pursued an acting career in Chicago and New York before moving to Dublin in 2000, where she lives with her husband, Matt, and their three children.

Skinny, which is set in the present and features a cast of five, explores the national obsession with weight through the perspective of two women in their 30s and their exploration of what is “skinny.”

As in previous years, submissions for the 2017 fellowship explored a wide range of topics and included dramas, as well as comedies, Bishara said. “CATCO looks forward to working with Laura and local actors to perform a reading of her play in June.”

“The Greater Columbus Arts Council’s Individual Artist Fellowship program was established in 1986 to recognize outstanding local artists, and since that time we’ve continued to grow our program by engaging partners to increase the numbers and types of fellowships we offer,” said Tom Katzenmeyer, President and CEO of the Arts Council. “We are delighted to work with CATCO and Laura Wilkens to bring *Skinny* to the stage.”

Selection criteria for the fellowship included originality, likelihood of future productions, clarity of voice and general interest in the subject matter. Interested artists were asked to submit a cover letter and the following:

- Breakdown of characters with brief descriptions
- Up to 10 pages of sample dialogue
- Brief synopsis (one or two paragraphs) of the play to be considered
- Cover page that provided the playwright’s name, address and contact information. (Plays were considered without the playwright’s information attached to ensure impartial selection.)

About CATCO

CATCO is central Ohio's professional Equity theatre company, providing quality theatre and educational programs for all ages. The theatre organization has adopted an innovative strategy, building creative alliances that can sustain growth and development. For more information, visit catcoistheatre.org. Together, CATCO and CATCO is Kids provide quality theatre and educational programs for all ages. The theatres have adopted an innovative strategy, building creative alliances that can sustain growth and development.

CATCO's 33rd season is sponsored by support from The Ohio Arts Council, which helps fund the theatre with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, education excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans, and supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The theatre organization also appreciates the support of the James W. Overstreet Fund of The Columbus Foundation, assisting donors and others in strengthening our community for the benefit of all of its citizens, and the Greater Columbus Arts Council, supporting the city's artists and arts organizations since 1973. Other supporters include The Shubert Foundation Inc. and Nationwide Foundation.

CATCO's and CATCO is Kids' season sponsor is L Brands; season partner is the Columbus Metropolitan Library. Media Sponsor is WOSU Public Media.

For more information, visit catcoistheatre.org.

About the Greater Columbus Arts Council

Through vision and leadership, advocacy and collaboration, the Greater Columbus Arts Council supports art and advances the culture of the region. A catalyst for excellence and innovation, the Arts Council funds exemplary artists and arts organizations and provides programs, events and services of public value that educate and engage all audiences in our community. The Arts Council thanks the City of Columbus and the Ohio Arts Council for their continued support.

CATCO Mission Statement

Theatre is a shared experience that illuminates the mysteries of our humanity. Its magic has the power to transform us whether on stage, in the classroom or in our diverse communities. CATCO creates theatre that delights, challenges, and transports.

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