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Mixed Blood Theatre
presents the world premiere of
Mark Valdez's and Ashley Sparks'
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOME...MAYBE

Zebras in Drag as People Facilitating A Housing Policy Forum!
Performed at SpringBOX in St. Paul, a former Ford dealership

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOME...MAYBE – conceived, developed, written, and directed by Ashley Sparks and Mark Valdez - takes audiences on a journey through time and space, revealing truths about housing policies of today, yesteryear, and into tomorrow. Hosted by a torch song singing zebra (yes, a zebra—and her dazzle) the performance is an immersive, sumptuous, and participatory experience, demanding everyone's full imagination as they collectively envision the most beautiful home, in the most beautiful future...maybe.

With sets and costumes by Nephelie Andonyadis, media design by Jake Pinholster, and music by Victor Zupanc, the play's structure mirrors a process for policy change: begin with a look at root causes; examine present day needs; and then, with that information, imagine the change you want to see. Nerdy and raucous, audacious and simple, **THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOME...MAYBE** juxtaposes housing data, cabaret, and personal stories to connect the housing policy dots, revealing a future where everyone is guaranteed a home.

Contending that theatre can drive the mounting need for complex solutions to America's national housing crises, this production was developed over a two-year period of conversations and workshops with housing advocates, service providers, activists, developers, policy makers, and artists. In those sessions, advocates revealed their frustration with the increasing lack of imagination in policy. As the problem grows, the imagination to see new solutions diminishes.

In **THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOME...MAYBE**, empathy and understanding through art and narrative will bring together those with the wherewithal to effect policy change and those for whom policy change is most needed. The sensurround 90-minute experience is joyous, eye opening, and a celebration of art and story.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOME...MAYBE is performed in Springboard for the Arts' new home: SpringBox, a former car dealership on University Avenue in St. Paul. The production will then be performed in Los Angeles and Syracuse, NY. There will be organizing events before, during, and after the runs in each city.

THE PROJECT

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOME...MAYBE is multi-platform project that lives both in the digital realm and in real life. The project goal is to positively influence housing policies using theater and the tools of artmaking (i.e. imagination, meaning making, consensus building, rehearsing, etc.) Combining workshops, actions, civic dialogue, and performances into an organizing structure, we believe that if we want to change policy, then we must change culture. If we want to change culture, then we must change the hearts and minds of individuals. We can do that through art and story.

CREATIVE TEAM

ashley sparks (co-creator) is a southern theatre maker, engagement strategist, facilitator, certified coach and organizational consultant. ashley has worked in both urban and rural communities across the US in places like New Orleans, Detroit, Los Angeles, Baltimore, Atlanta, Honolulu, Stuarts Draft, Milton-Freewater, Lost Hills and Eureka. She was A Blade of Grass Fellow (2017) for “Good Old Boys,” a play and conversation for parking lots. Her long terms policy collaborations include the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Network for Energy Water and Health in Affordable Buildings (NEWHAB). She was the project director for the Network of Ensemble Theaters MicroFest USA event series a festival/think-tank series highlighting the impact art has in revitalizing communities. She was an ensemble member with ArtSpot Productions and has worked with Cornerstone Theater Company and PearlDamor. She is currently a member of the Guild of Future Architects.

Mark Valdez (co-creator) is an artist, cultural organizer and consultant who partners with communities, organizations, civic institutions, and others using theater and creative tools to address community needs and to lift up community voices and stories. His work has been seen at the Alliance Theatre, Cornerstone Theater Company, Mixed Blood, Trinity Rep, and others. Recent projects include Lisa Loomer's play, “Roe,” his adaption of Gary Soto's book, “Chato’s Kitchen,” and the animated short film, “Sit In.” Mark is the recipient of various grants and awards including the 2019 Johnson Fellowship for Artists, Transforming Communities. He is a Board member of Double Edge Theatre and Cornerstone Theater and a former Board member for Theater Communications Group (TCG).

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOME...MAYBE previews October 28 and opens October 29 at SpringBOX, 262 University Avenue West in St. Paul. **Admission is free and admission can be reserved at mixedblood.com** or on a first-come-first-served basis at SpringBOX. Audience members will be asked to demonstrate proof of vaccination or negative test results. Rapid tests will be provided to audience members who cannot show either a vaccine card or proof of a negative test.

October 28	7PM	November 3	7PM
October 29	7PM	November 4	7PM
October 30	7PM	November 5	7PM
October 31	2PM	November 6	7PM
		November 7	2PM

For Further Information, contact nouf saleh at nouf@mixedblood.com