

# Kennedy Theatre



UNIVERSITY of HAWAI'I at MĀNOA

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 4, 2016**

**Japanese Superstition Flares onto O'ahu**  
*Fire Horse* opens in the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Department of Theatre + Dance closes its student-directed 2015/16 Late Night Theatre series with *Fire Horse*, an original script written by MA candidate Jennifer M. Yoo. Performances will take place in the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre on April 15, 16, 22, and 23 at 11:00pm.

Directed by MFA Theatre for Young Audiences candidate Aubrey Grace Watkins, *Fire Horse* tells the story of three generations of women whose lives are affected by superstition's ill omens. This play explores the issues surrounding the Japanese superstition of the Fire Horse and what damage it can cause to women and their families. *Fire Horse* follows the lives of three women in different timelines which are portrayed concurrently. Each of these women is, in some way, affected by this superstition: Keiko, a woman living in 1966, is pregnant and contemplating aborting her child in fear of the possibility of her child being a girl; Ayako is a Fire Horse Woman living in the 1940s and is struggling with the discrimination commonly directed at women like her; and Emi is an Asian-American Fire Horse living in Hawai'i in 1991 who, in many ways, represents the young women of our generation.

*Fire Horse* explores themes of cultural superstitions, feminism, relationships, and generational conflicts between mothers and daughters. It is believed in several Asian countries that women born during the year of the Fire Horse will bring increasingly bad luck, spell nothing but devastation for their families, and bring about the premature death of their fathers and spouses. During the last year of the Fire Horse, 1966, the birth rate in Japan plummeted and the number of induced abortions skyrocketed due in part to the inability to reliably determine fetus gender. While not everyone may necessarily believe in this superstition, fear of

the persecution and discrimination against Fire Horse Women is so high that families would still rather avoid having daughters during these years.

Watkins and Yoo both share a common passion for women's issues and hope to bring to light the current problems surrounding this superstition as well as many other issues women still face today. This fight for conversation and controversial material aligns with the Late Night Theatre mission: to explore, to entertain, and to excite. The student-run organization is dedicated to the production of challenging work, and strives to present theatre that is not otherwise available to Honolulu audiences. Late Night Theatre invites controversy and innovation in pursuit of excellent student-driven performance.

Tickets for *Fire Horse* will go on sale at the box office one hour before show time each performance night. Latecomers may be admitted at the discretion of the House Manager once the performance has begun, at their own risk. For more information, please visit [manoa.hawaii.edu/liveonstage/firehorse/](http://manoa.hawaii.edu/liveonstage/firehorse/) or call the theatre at (808) 956-7655. For information on accessibility accommodations, please call the theatre.

**EVENT:** *Fire Horse*

**PRESENTED BY:** Late Night Theatre, UHM  
Department of Theatre and Dance

**WHEN:** April 15, 16, 22, and 23 at 11 p.m.

**WHERE:** UHM's Earle Ernst Lab Theatre, 1770  
East-West Road, Honolulu, HI, 96822

**TICKET PRICES:** \$10 general admission, \$8  
seniors / military / UH Faculty and staff / student,  
\$5 UHM students with valid UHM photo ID

**PURCHASE INFO:** Tickets will be on sale at the  
Kennedy Theatre box office one hour before  
showtime on performance nights.

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