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The Forest of Everywhere: Bricolage remounts and reimagines their enchanted sensory-friendly children's immersive

Known for risk-taking adventurous theater, Bricolage sets out to break accessibility barriers

The Forest of Everywhere runs May 17 - June 3

PITTSBURGH, PA (March 1, 2018) — In stark contrast to their secretive 2017 production *DODO*, Bricolage's latest immersive endeavor, *The Forest of Everywhere*, is a whimsical sensory-friendly children's experience based on their 2016 production, *Welcome to Here*. Originally commissioned by the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust for the EQT Children's Theater Festival, *Welcome to Here* was designed to welcome children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families. Building on the success of its predecessor, *The Forest of Everywhere* will enjoy a much longer, three-week run and will feature an expanded open-world forest environment along with new characters and experiences. Bricolage is proud to premiere this production in conjunction with the [2018 EQT Children's Theater Festival](#) as a recommended show.

Autism Spectrum Disorder [affects around 1 in 68 children](#) in the U.S. and can manifest as sensory sensitivities, repetitive behaviors, or difficulties with attention, social interaction, and motor coordination. With these symptoms, traditional theater staples such as bright lights, heavy sound, and sudden or unexpected movements on stage become particularly problematic. Recent efforts have been made by theaters across the country to welcome patrons with social and cognitive disorders such as ASD by adapting existing productions to make them "sensory-friendly," employing reductions in light and sound, and featuring designated quiet areas. Bricolage took a different approach by building *The Forest of Everywhere* specifically for the ASD community from its inception. By building the show with this community in mind, the creative team focused not on how to make children better fit into the show, but how to make a show that better fits all types of children. The result was an environment that allows all children to be themselves, without fear of judgment or restriction.

Ilyssa Ringold, the mother of a child with ASD who helped beta test the first iteration, explains her experience with the Forest, "We could tell that the forest would be different when we first arrived. The entire theater was transformed into a space meant for every type of sensory exploration and the thought process was clear behind every interaction

and 'scene.' The cast were the supporting actors, and our kiddo was the lead explorer in this choose-your-own-adventure-style immersive sensory experience.”

Along with parents like Ilyssa, Bricolage worked with Arts for Autism’s Carolyn Hare, and autistic self-advocate, Grayson Rumsey, in order to create a piece that would truly resonate with the ASD community. Mr. Rumsey, who will rejoin the cast in *The Forest of Everywhere*, helped influence the direction, themes, and development of the show based on his own experiences with autism. “Working on this production has been an incredible opportunity for me to share my knowledge and advocate for my community,” says Mr. Rumsey. “There isn’t often a chance to articulate my everyday experiences as autistic and use that knowledge to help create something specifically designed to accommodate the needs of my community. Taking this opportunity has been an amazing experience for me, and I am very excited to be a part of an inclusive performance such as this.”

SHOW DESCRIPTION

A colossal storm has rearranged the entire globe, causing whole cities to change locations! Swept up from all across the world, our furry and feathered animal friends have found refuge in a beautiful enchanted Forest. Help Don Key the dancing burro, Esther the singing ostrich, and Simon the napping Alpaca adjust to their new home as you dig for bugs, play instruments, and make your mark in the chalk cave.

This fully accessible experience takes your kids out of their seats and into a real-life adventure. They’ll explore an open-world environment, have one-on-one interactions, and play without the restrictions and rules of traditional theater. Sitting is not a requirement. Being quiet for long periods of time is not a requirement. *The Forest of Everywhere* was built with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families in mind and is a place where all kids can be themselves.

BOX OFFICE

Tickets for *The Forest of Everywhere* will go on sale in late March and can be purchased at BricolagePGH.org or by calling 412-471-0999.

For more information about the EQT Children’s Theater Festival (May 17-20, 2018), taking place in Pittsburgh’s Cultural District, please visit www.TrustArts.org/PGHKIDS.

CAST AND CREW

Director/Writer: Tami Dixon

Performers: David Bielewicz, Parag S. Gohel, Missy Moreno, Kelsey Robinson, & Grayson Rumsey (more to be announced)

Stage Manager: Katelyn Colwell

Scenic Designer: Stephanie Mayer-Staley

Assistant Scenic Designer: Tucker Topel

Technical Director: Hank Bullington

Costume Designer: Madison Hack

Sound Design Team: District 5 Sound (Sarah Pickett, David Gotwald, & Chris Evans)

Lighting Designer: Jenna Ferree

Assistant Lighting Designer: Jacob Wesson

Master Electrician: Piper Clement

The original version of this production was created in collaboration with Jackie Baker, David Bielewicz, Siovhon Christensen, Parag S. Gohel, Missy Moreno, Gayle Pazerski, Grayson Rumsey, and Stephanie Mayer-Staley

ACCESSIBILITY

Bricolage's production *The Forest of Everywhere* is mindful about sensory sensitivities. There are no loud noises, bright lights, or abrupt surprises. If your child is ever feeling overstimulated, a comfort zone is available at all times. Bricolage's space at 937 Liberty Avenue is designed for wheelchair access and features accessible all-gender restrooms. Bricolage also provides accommodations such as audio description through its Immersive Companion program. Bricolage is committed to providing an environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all patrons. We encourage patrons to identify any specific accommodations that would make their experience more enjoyable, or any other requests in the comments section when purchasing tickets, by calling us at 412.471.0999, or by emailing Fred at fred@webbricolage.org.

SUPPORT

Support for *The Forest of Everywhere* has been provided by The Edith L. Trees Educational and Charitable Trust Fund, FedEx Ground, The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, and District 5 Sound

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BRICOLAGE MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

Bricolage envisions theater not as a passive experience, but as a vehicle for heightened involvement for artist and audience alike. By combining different artistic mediums, nourishing local talent, producing provocative work, and facilitating audience engagement, Bricolage seeks to revitalize live performance for a new era.

The word Bricolage means "making artful use of what is at hand." What excites this company is the connection and interaction between seemingly disparate elements, and the potential for these components to resonate as one cohesive event. "What's at hand" is Pittsburgh's changing landscape, its plentiful human and material resources, and the salient political, cultural, and ethical issues they encounter and react to each day.

Their approach encourages artists to take the creative risks necessary to create full-blooded, high-quality theatrical experiences that challenge audiences to engage in new ways, react, and express openly their opinions about our work – to have a stake in the creative discussion.

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