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*Bay Area Premiere of*  
**THE ROOMMATE**

**By Jen Silverman**  
**Directed by Becca Wolff**

**Press Opening: Saturday, May 27, 2017, 8pm**

May 23 through July 1, 2017  
Tues, Wed, Thurs 7pm / Fri, Sat 8pm / Sat 3pm, Sun 2pm  
*Preview Performances: May 23, 24, 25, 26 at 8pm*

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA** (March 2017) – **San Francisco Playhouse** (Bill English, Artistic Director; Susi Damilano, Producing Director) continue their fourteenth season of transformation with ***The Roommate***, a bold new play by one of the most dynamic and highly acclaimed emerging playwrights on the scene today, **Jen Silverman**.

Can a person really change? And, once they break the mold, can they ever stop? These questions are tackled in *The Roommate*, a funny and dark comedy that had its world premiere at the 2015 Humana Festival. The Los Angeles Times calls *The Roommate* “an *Odd Couple* story that takes a sly shift toward *Breaking Bad*.”

The story is set in Iowa and follows Sharon. She’s sensible, an empty-nester, curious and very, very talkative. For the first time in her life, at age 54, she takes in a roommate to make ends meet. That’s where Robyn comes in, a new arrival from the Bronx who is hiding a lifetime of secrets. But Sharon has a way of getting to the truth—the fascinating, shocking truth. This intriguing play proves it’s never too late to shake things up—for better or worse.

How women are perceived has been a driving force for many of Jen Silverman’s plays. She has stated, “As women, once you’re out of your 30s, in this particular society in America, you become slightly invisible... So I really wanted to write a play for badass women in their 50s.” She wanted the women to be able to take on very active, vibrant and dangerous lives. Sharon and Robyn “make decisions that require a lot of boldness and recklessness, out of both desperation and desire for life,” Silverman adds.

## SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE

### *The Roommate*

*Continued:*

Under the **direction of Becca Wolff**, the cast will feature San Francisco Playhouse co-founder **Susi Damilano\*** and **Julia Brothers\***, who last appeared at the Playhouse together in *Abigail's Party*.

San Francisco Playhouse's production of *The Roommate* is made possible by the generosity of Executive Producer **William J. Gregory**, Producers **Betty Hoener** and **John Trout**; and Associate Producers **Betty & Clifford Nakamoto**, **Deborah Dashow Ruth**, and **Nancy Thompson & Andy Kerr**.

**Jen Silverman** (Playwright)'s work has been produced in New York by Clubbed Thumb (*Phoebe in Winter*) and the Playwrights Realm (*Crane Story*), and regionally at Actor's Theatre of Louisville (*The Roommate*, Humana 2015; *Wondrous Strange*, Humana 2016), Yale Rep (*The Moors*), InterAct Theatre in Philadelphia (*The Dangerous House of Pretty Mbane*, Barrymore Award, Steinberg Award citation). She has productions upcoming at Woolly Mammoth (World Premiere of *Collective Rage: A Play in Five Boops*), The Playwrights Realm @ The Duke (New York premiere of *The Moors*), South Coast Repertory Theatre, and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park (World Premiere of *All the Roads Home*), among others. She is a member of New Dramatists, a Core Writer at the Playwrights Center in Minneapolis, and has developed work with the O'Neill, Williamstown, New York Theatre Workshop, Playpenn, SPACE on Ryder Farm, Portland Center Stage, the Cherry Lane Mentor Project, SCR's Pacific Playwrights Festival, The Ground Floor Residency at Berkeley Rep, and the Royal Court in London among other places. She's a two-time MacDowell fellow, recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts grant, the Helen Merrill Fund Award for emerging playwrights, and the Yale Drama Series Award for STILL. She is the 2016-2017 Playwrights of New York (PoNY) Fellow at the Lark. She currently has a two-book deal with Random House for a collection of stories and a novel. Education: Brown, Iowa Playwrights Workshop, Juilliard.

**Becca Wolff** (Director) is a California based, cross-media director committed to developing new forms and attracting new audiences to the theater. She is currently developing new work with Giovanni Adams (*Love is a Dirty Word*, Pacific Resident Theater), The Kilbanes (*Weightless*, Encore Productions/Z Space & *Eddie the Marvelous/Theatreworks*), Annie Saunders of Wilderness (*Antigone*, SF Playhouse/Getty Villa) & Ken Robinson (*Flying Easy*). This spring, Becca is directing the second installment of SCOTUS Theater: *Pena-Rodriguez v. Colorado* (presented in association with Word for Word/Z Space ) and *Promiscuous Cities*, a new play written by Lachlan Philpott in collaboration with, and performed by, the students of the ACT Conservatory. Recent Bay Area productions include *Casa Valentina* (NCTC, Bay Area Premier), *Night Vision* (Word for Word/Z Space, world premiere), *The Kid Thing* (NCTC, West Coast premiere) and *Hookman* (Z Space/Encore Productions, world premier). LA premieres include *The Last Days of Mary Stuart* (world premiere, Son of Semele/Tilted Field) & *Sixty Miles to Silver Lake* (West Coast premiere, IAMA Theatre Company). Past work in NYC includes *No*

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### *The Roommate*

#### *Continued:*

*Static at All* (Tilted Field Productions/NYC Fringe--world premiere, winner Outstanding Solo Performance) & *Usher* (NYC Fringe—world premiere, winner Outstanding Musical). She is co-founder of Tilted Field Productions (LA/NYC/SF, Featured in Weekly's Best of LA issue) & Artistic Director Emeritus IAMA Theatre Company (Ovation award for Outstanding Ensemble, Intimate Theatre, Los Angeles). Becca teaches writing and directing for film at Berkeley City College and Pixar U. MFA Yale School of Drama, Directing. [www.beccawolff.net](http://www.beccawolff.net)

Founded by Bill English and Susi Damilano in 2003, **San Francisco Playhouse** has been described by the New York Times as “a company that stages some of the most consistently high-quality work around, and deemed “ever adventurous” by the Bay Area News Group. Located in the heart of the Union Square Theater District, **San Francisco Playhouse** is the city's premier Off-Broadway company, an intimate alternative to the larger more traditional Union Square theater fare. San Francisco Playhouse provides audiences the opportunity to experience professional theater with top-notch actors and world-class design in a setting where they are close to the action. The company has received multiple awards for overall productions, acting, and design, including the SF Weekly Best Theatre Award and the Bay Guardian's Best Off-Broadway Theatre Award. KQED/NPR recently described the company: “San Francisco Playhouse is one of the few theaters in the Bay Area that has a mission that actually shows up on stage. Artistic director Bill English's commitment to empathy as a guiding philosophical and aesthetic force is admirable and by living that mission, fascinating things happen onstage.” **San Francisco Playhouse** is committed to providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theater lovers converge to create and experience dramatic works that celebrate the human spirit.

#### FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: Sharon is practical, from Iowa. Robyn is a Bronx-born vegan. Both are “badass” women in their 50s dealing with isolation, aging and identity. They remind us that second chances are possible and transformation can grow beneath peals of uproarious laughter.

SHOWS: **May 23 through July 1, 2017**  
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*Preview Performances:* May 23, 24, 25, 26 at 8pm  
No matinees 5.27 or 5.28

WHERE: 450 Post Street, San Francisco, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of the Kensington Park Hotel.

TICKETS: For tickets (\$20-\$125) or more information, the public may contact the San Francisco Playhouse box office at 415-677-9596, or <http://sfplayhouse.org/sfph/2016-2017-season/the-roommate/>