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CATCO and the Arts Council Announce 2014 Playwrights Fellowship Recipient

Reading of *Sticks & Stones* by Columbus playwright Cory Skurdal set for June 28

CATCO, in partnership with the Greater Columbus Arts Council (Arts Council), announced today Columbus playwright Cory Skurdal is the recipient of the 2014 Playwrights Fellowship program for his work, *Sticks & Stones*.

Skurdal receives a \$5,000 fellowship and a reading of his play, which will be presented June 28, 2015, at 6 p.m. at the Studio One Theatre, Vern Riffe Center, 77 S. High St. Admission is free.

"I'm very excited to work with CATCO and Columbus theatre artists to share my play with the central Ohio community in a staged reading," Skurdal said.

Skurdal's first play, *Catspaw*, won the Jewel Box Theatre playwriting award in 1999, and was later produced by the Jewel Box Theatre in Oklahoma City in 2001. His full-length play, *The Present Moment*, was produced by Evolution Theatre Company in Columbus in 2013. His short play, *Consider the Source*, was selected for the Evolution Theatre shorts Festival and produced by Evolution last year.

"Individuals choose how to name and identify themselves. Society, however, often dictates different labels. *Sticks & Stones* is about the struggle to have chosen names and identities recognized as true and valid," said Skurdal about his play.

In *Sticks & Stones*, Janice, an older arts critic, writes an unfavorable review of the works of Kyle, a young transgender artist. Kyle responds with a blog post outing Jane as a closeted lesbian; she threatens to sue for defamation. In conversations with their attorneys, and with ghosts from their pasts and each other, Janice and Kyle battle age barriers, gender, culture and politics as they seek to comprehend each other and their very different lives and identities.

"Once again this year, our reading selection committee was impressed with the number and quality of submissions we received," said Joe Bishara, CATCO associate producing director and playwright fellowship coordinator. "We are excited to work with Cory to bring his thought-provoking play to life."

"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 of the Arts Council. "We are delighted to work with CATCO and Cory Skurdal to bring *Sticks & Stones* 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 30th season is sponsored by support from the Greater Columbus Arts Council, supporting the city's artists and arts organizations since 1973, and 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.

CATCO also appreciates the support of the Grace K. and Robert L. Roche and James W. Overstreet Funds of The Columbus Foundation, assisting donors and others in strengthening our community for the benefit of all of its citizens. Other supporters include The Shubert Foundation Inc., Nationwide Insurance Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

CATCO's season sponsor is L Brands; the season partner is the Columbus Metropolitan Library. 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 provide 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. The Arts Council has been recognized as one of the "5 NonProfits to Watch" in 2014 by The Columbus Foundation.

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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