

PRESS RELEASE
Thursday 28 March 2019

SARAH HANLY AWARDED THE 2019 PINTER COMMISSION



Sarah Hanly, Lady Antonia Fraser & Vicky Featherstone (Credit: Royal Court Theatre)

Playwright Sarah Hanly received the 2019 Pinter Commission yesterday (Wednesday 27 March 2019) – an award given annually by Lady Antonia Fraser, Harold Pinter’s widow, to support a new commission at the Royal Court Theatre.

The Pinter Commission, now in its eighth year, supports a playwright to write a new play for the Royal Court Theatre. There are no restrictions on the award which can be given to any playwright from a first time, unproduced writer to one already established.

Previous Pinter Commission winning playwrights include Alistair McDowall (2018), Cordelia Lynn (2017), Brad Birch (2016), Molly Davies (2015), Rory Mullarkey (2014), Nick Payne (2013) and Anders Lustgarten (2012).

Commenting on being awarded the commission Sarah said:

“I feel very grateful and extremely humbled to be awarded the Pinter Commission. This is a career changing opportunity for me and I hope to write a play that is worthy of the Royal Court’s renowned reputation and that honours such a prolific playwright as Harold Pinter. As an emerging playwright, it is a blessing to be building a relationship with the Royal Court.”



Vicky Featherstone, Artistic Director of the Royal Court, added:

“The Pinter Commission, inspired brainchild of Lady Antonia Fraser, is the most perfect way of giving concrete form to Harold’s enduring presence in our theatre and influence on succeeding generations of playwrights.

This year’s recipient, Sarah Hanly, is a writer of extraordinary potential. She has a completely distinctive theatrical voice and engages with the darkness in our world in a fierce way.

I can’t wait to see what this year’s commission leads to.”

Lady Antonia Fraser commented:

“I believe that the Pinter Commission is exactly what Harold would have wanted. Because he had experienced the devastating rejection of his early work, he knew the true value of encouragement. New writing was always intensely important to Harold and Sarah Hanly is a welcome recipient of the 2019 Award.”

-ENDS-

For more information or images please contact Anoushka Warden on anoushkawarden@royalcourttheatre.com

Notes to Editors:

Sarah Hanly (Writer/Performer)

Theatre includes: **Purple Snowflakes & Titty Wanks (Leicester Square Theatre/Southwark/Above the Arts Theatre/Theatre N16).**

HAROLD PINTER AT THE ROYAL COURT THEATRE

Harold Pinter had a long association with the Royal Court Theatre, both as a writer, and director, but also as an actor, starting his career there as an understudy in 1958 on two NF Simpson plays – *A Resounding Tinkle* and *The Hole*. In 1960, his first play *The Room* transferred to the Royal Court in a double bill with *The Dumb Waiter*. His other productions at the Royal Court included *Mountain Language*, directed by Katie Mitchell, *The New World Order*, which he wrote and directed as well as directing David Mamet’s play *Oleanna* in 1993. His play *Ashes to Ashes*, which he also directed, was the first play to open the Theatre Upstairs at the Ambassadors Theatre in the West End when the Royal Court Theatre closed for refurbishment in 1996. In 2005, as part of the 50th anniversary programme, Pinter returned to the stage as an actor, performing Beckett’s play *Krapp’s Last Tape*, directed by Ian Rickson, then Artistic Director of the Royal Court.

Alongside his work on stage, Pinter maintained a close relationship with the Royal Court, throughout his career, supporting and encouraging the new writers coming up, as well as working with writers from all over the world at the Royal Court’s international residency each year.

