

PRESS RELEASE
Tuesday 26 October 2021

MIRIAM BATTYE AWARDED THE 2020 PINTER COMMISSION



Vicky Featherstone, Lady Antonia Fraser & Miriam Battye (Credit: Royal Court Theatre)

Playwright Miriam Battye received the 2020 Pinter Commission yesterday (Monday 25 October 2021) – an award given annually by Lady Antonia Fraser, Harold Pinter’s widow, to support a new commission at the Royal Court Theatre. Initially scheduled in March last year, the awarding of the 2020 Pinter Commission had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Pinter Commission, now in its ninth 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 Sarah Hanly (2019), 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 playwright Miriam Battye said;

“I’ve had a year to come to terms with the fact that I’ve been awarded this and it still feels wild. I’m so grateful. I’m really buzzing to write this play. Thank you.”

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.

We are thrilled that Miriam Battye is the recipient of the 2020 Pinter Commission. Miriam Battye is a writer of extraordinary talent whose world vision and capacity to harness it in a play is unlike any other. She is ferociously funny and also breaks your heart. I cannot wait to see what Miriam writes.”

Lady Antonia Fraser commented:

“It gives me great joy to celebrate the exciting project that the Royal Court Theatre, especially its Artistic Director Vicky Featherstone, has made of the Pinter Commission since the inaugural award in 2012. Particularly welcome, seeing as this is the 2020 award, but we had to postpone our celebrations until now.

When Harold died on Christmas Eve 2008, I cast around for what I could do to commemorate him. I believe that the Pinter Commission for new writing was exactly what he 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.

Miriam is the welcome recipient of the 2020 Award – we wish her all the luck in what will no doubt be a glittering career.”

-ENDS-

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

Notes to Editors:

Miriam Battye (Writer)

Theatre for the Royal Court: **Living Newspaper; Scenes with girls.**

Theatre includes: **Find A Partner! (National Theatre Connections), Trip the Light Fantastic (Bristol Old Vic); All Your Gold (Theatre Royal, Plymouth); Electricity (NYT/Arcola); Balance (Royal Exchange, Manchester).**

Miriam was the 2018 Sister Pictures Writer-in-Residence.

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.



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