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The Provincetown [Tennessee Williams](#) Theater Festival has announced that Michael Paller, author, dramaturg and educator, will be a participating scholar at the [Tennessee Williams](#) Institute (TWI) held during this year's Festival, [Tennessee Williams](#)' Circle of Friends, September 25 - 28, 2014.

Michael Paller is the author of *Gentlemen Callers: [Tennessee Williams](#), Homosexuality and Mid-20th Century Drama* and *[Tennessee Williams: the Playwright in Context](#)*, as well as several essays on Williams's work. He is also a dramaturg and Director of Humanities for the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, and teaches in their MFA acting conservatory.

Paller dramaturged the Russian premiere of [Tennessee Williams](#)'s *Small Craft Warnings* directed by American [Richard Corley](#) at the Sovremennik Theater in Moscow. Mr. Corley will also be attending TWI and the two will discuss their work together. Paller will lead a workshop to develop a script inspired by *Mother Yaws*, a late short story by Williams. The adaptation is by Randall Rapstine, who was a student at TWI last year.

Now in its third year, TWI is a University-level Symposium for graduate level students offered in conjunction with the four-day Provincetown [Tennessee Williams](#) Theater Festival. In addition to experiencing a wide array of performances from across the globe, TWI students participate in private seminars with scholars who specialize in [Tennessee Williams](#). Paller will be joining well-known Williams scholars [Thomas Keith](#) and Annette Saddik at the Institute this year.

TWI was initially developed by [Thomas Keith](#), a Williams' editor and scholar who is the Creative Consultant to the Festival and Charlene Donaghy, TW Festival Producing Director, playwright and teacher, in collaboration with Mark Charney, Chair of Texas Tech University's Department of Theatre and Dance.

Charney welcomed the opportunity to engage his students in the experiential learning experience that the Festival offered. This will be the third year he brings his graduate students to the Festival. He says, "The last two years have been wonderful. The program bridges the gap between scholarship and production in theater. It has been opening up new ideas, inspirations and opportunities."

[David Kaplan](#), Curator of the Festival, spoke of the connection between the Festival and the Institute. "Each year eye-opening performances at our Festival celebrate [Tennessee Williams](#) as a creative force, a playwright who continuously experimented, rather than rest on the achievement of his famous classics, such as *The Glass Menagerie*. In many ways he was ahead of his time and was dismissed for it. We work to reconfigure how Williams is spoken about, thought about, and staged. Our performances offer exciting and pioneering approaches to his work that turn plays thought impossible to stage or to understand into theatrical excitement that audiences embrace."

Two Williams plays that were dismissed in his lifetime and recently presented at the Festival are *The Mutilated*, (TWP Fest 2013) which went on to New York and was nominated for a Drama League Award, and *Kingdom of Earth* (TWP Fest 2012 & 2013) from South Africa that went on to win many awards there.

Kaplan continued, "The [Tennessee Williams](#) Institute is meant to educate future generations of critics and dramaturgs in reconsideration of Williams work, especially the texts written by Williams that were in advance of the criticism written during his lifetime. We give a platform -literally - for theater artists to reconfigure new artistic approaches to staging Williams texts. More, the social relationships developed at the Festival -- and the shared experience of seeing a week of Festival performances -- braids the two understandings - artistic and scholarly -- together."

Charney added, "My students find the program enlightening and enriching. They see groundbreaking productions, gain insights from the best Williams' scholars in the world, and get to talk with performers after having experienced their shows, adding an even deeper layer of understanding."

Charney says that the festival experience has developed into a semester-long class which has led to creative work and potential scholarship, "This year one of our MFA directing candidates, Randall Rapstine, will create a piece based on the short story, "Mother Yaws" and develop it in workshop with the scholars."

Jef Hall-Flavin, Executive Director of the Festival says, "TWI is an important part of claiming Williams from a lifeless 'poet under glass' to a living, breathing experimental playwright for today. We are proud to have premiered ten new plays by [Tennessee Williams](#) over the last eight years, and sent many productions with their roots in Provincetown to other cities and countries. The Festival is a catalyst for the reexamination of

Williams' work around the globe. Through performance, our aim is to transform the way our great American playwright is perceived - by audiences and scholars alike."

As one student, [Rebecca Wright](#), put it, "The seminar was an eye-opening experience that will influence the way I look at Williams for the rest of my life."

[Thomas Keith](#) is the Creative Consultant for the Provincetown [Tennessee Williams](#) Theater Festival and Coordinator of the [Tennessee Williams](#) Institute. Since 2001 he has edited over a sixteen volumes by [Tennessee Williams](#) for New Directions Publishing, including three collections of previously unpublished one-acts, as well as Williams' last full-length play, *A House Not Meant to Stand*, for which he wrote the introduction. Keith has written articles and chapters for *American Theater Magazine*, *Tenn at One Hundred*, *The Later Plays of Tennessee Williams*, *Tennessee Williams Review*, *Tennessee Williams* and *Europe*, and *The Tennessee Williams Encyclopedia*, among others. Along with Peggy L. Fox he is co-editing *The Selected Letters of Tennessee Williams* and James Laughlin for publication by W.W. Norton in 2015. He was the Creative Producer for the Drama League-nominated Off-Broadway revival of [Tennessee Williams](#)' rarely produced comedy *The Mutilated* in 2013. Keith He serves as an advisor to the [Tennessee Williams](#)/New Orleans Literary Festival.

Annette J. Saddik is Professor of English and Theatre at New York City College of Technology and the CUNY Graduate Center Doctoral Program in Theatre. Her area of specialization is twentieth- and twenty-first-century drama and performance, particularly the work of [Tennessee Williams](#). She is the author of *Contemporary American Drama* (2007), a history of the postmodern performance of American identity on the stage since World War Two, and *The Politics of Reputation: The Critical Reception of Tennessee Williams' Later Plays* (1999), and has edited and introduced a collection of Williams' previously unpublished later plays, *The Traveling Companion and Other Plays* (2008). Dr. Saddik's most recent book on Williams, [Tennessee Williams](#) and the Theater of Excess: *The Strange, The Crazy, The Queer* will be published by Cambridge University Press in early 2015, and has forthcoming essays on the work on [Sam Shepard](#) and [John Patrick Shanley](#). She serves on the editorial boards of the journals *Theatre Topics* and the [Tennessee Williams](#) Annual Review.

Michael Paller joined the [American Conservatory Theater](#) (A.C.T.) as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005. Since then, he has dramaturged over 50 productions and workshops, and also teaches in A.C.T.'s MFA program in acting. He began his professional career as literary manager at Center Repertory Theatre (Cleveland), then worked as a play reader and script consultant for Manhattan Theatre Club, and has since been a dramaturg for [George Street Playhouse](#), the Berkshire Theatre Festival, [Barrington Stage Company](#), [Long Wharf Theatre](#), Roundabout Theatre Company, and others. He dramaturged the Russian premiere of [Tennessee Williams](#)'s *Small Craft Warnings* at the Sovremennik Theater in Moscow. Last year he adapted Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* for concerts by the San Francisco Symphony conducted by [Michael Tilson Thomas](#). He is the author of *Gentlemen Callers: Tennessee Williams, Homosexuality, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Drama* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and [Tennessee Williams](#) in an Hour (Smith & Kraus 2010).

The Provincetown [Tennessee Williams](#) Theater Festival was founded in 2006 in the birthplace of American Modern Theater where Williams worked on many of his major plays during the 1940s. The TW Festival is the nation's largest performing arts festival dedicated to celebrating and expanding the understanding of America's great playwright. Theater artists from around the globe perform classic and innovative productions to celebrate Williams' enduring influence in the 21st Century. It will take place in various venues in the seaside village of Provincetown from Thursday, September 25 through Sunday, September 28, 2014. For more visit [www.twptown.org](http://www.twptown.org) and Facebook

The Festival is funded in part by the Provincetown Tourism Fund and Provincetown Cultural Council and presented by the Crown and Anchor.

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