

An interview with Jonathan Spector

When did you write your first play? What was it about & how do you feel about it now?

It was written for a playwriting class while I was studying for a year at Trinity College in Dublin. I don't remember what it was called and it's long been lost, but I know it was built of scene intercutting between different members of a family and then maybe they all came together at dinner? I'm sure it was terrible. But I do remember writing it in this very workman-like fashion where each night I would write another scene or half a scene until it was done. I wish I still had that kind of discipline. Of course I was living in a house with no no internet, so anything was possible.

Do you have an established writing process or do you approach each project differently?

It's different for each project. I wrote the first draft of SIESTA KEY over a couple of days, which is a little unusual for me. It was maybe four months after the 2016 election and I had gotten together with a couple of other writers to do a kind of bake-off thing. I think it was some sort of purge.

What has been your most ambitious undertaking as an artist?

Hopefully whatever I'm working on next.

What was the most productive aspect of being a PF Resident Playwright?

By far the most valuable aspect was being part of that community of writers.

What is your favorite play written by another playwright?

The last play I saw that really blew me away was Jackie Sibblies Drury's FAIRVIEW, which is a work of genius. The thing I read most recently that knocked my socks off was Anna Moench's MOTHERS.

Which of your plays would you most like to see produced?

I have a play I've been tinkering with for a couple years - its title keeps changing, which is probably an indication of my inability to quite wrestle it to the ground, but I also can't seem to let it go. It's currently called What Comes Next, and it's sort of a black mirror-ish tech dystopia family drama, set at Sea Ranch.

What was your catalyst for writing *Siesta Key*?

Right after the 2016 election, for some reason I started reading a bunch about the Nazi occupation of France. I guess I was thinking that boning up on stories of resistance might prove useful. That led me down a bunch of other rabbit holes.

Which other #BAPF2019 play are you most excited to see? And why?

I haven't had a chance to read any of the others yet, so I don't know. But Chris Pena picked up my bar tab at Chili's a few weeks ago, so his play is no doubt outstanding.

What's next?

I've got three productions of my play EUREKA DAY this fall, one right after the other in NYC, Philadelphia and DC. I've never had a play have multiple productions, let alone in rapid succession, so am super excited to get to see how it lands in different cities and with different artistic teams. I expect I'll learn a lot. And ride the Acela train a lot.

What's a favorite memory of your time in theatre?

I believe it was a production of Peter Pan in Tuscaloosa, Alabama when I was four or five. It must have made a big impression, because when we adopted a stray cat a few weeks later, I insisted we name it Peter.