



FORT WORTH OPERA

NEWS RELEASE

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INTERNATIONALLY-RENOWNED MEXICAN ARTIST LAURA ANDERSON BARBATA ANNOUNCED AS PRODUCTION DESIGNER OF FORT WORTH OPERA'S WORLD PREMIERE, *COMPANIONSHIP*

FORT WORTH, TX — Fort Worth Opera (FWO), is proud to announce a new collaborative partnership with Mexico City-born artist Laura Anderson Barbata, for the world premiere of composer-librettist Rachel J. Peters's savagely funny dark comedy, *Companionship*. Last seen by local audiences at Amphibian Stage Productions's 2018 presentation of her one-woman play *The Eye of the Beholder*, the Brooklyn-based artist, performer, and author has lovingly constructed the fantastic world of obsessed baker Lesley Sinclair and her colorfully dysfunctional family. In *Companionship*, a quest to create the perfect baguette takes a turn for the wickedly wondrous when the 207,345th comes to life. When the opera premieres on May 1, Barbata's pièce de résistance will finally be revealed – the tyrannical Dough, her Mate, and a children's choir of twelve, wild and unruly dough offspring. *Companionship* runs May 1, 3, 5, at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Auditorium during the company's 2019 Festival (April 26–May 12).

Since 1992, Barbata has worked primarily in the social realm and has initiated projects in the Amazon of Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, Mexico, Norway, and the USA. Among them is her ongoing project *The Repatriation of Julia Pastrana*, initiated in 2004, about the famed, 19th-century indigenous Mexican woman exhibited in life and death for her excessive hair. She is also known for her project *Transcommunitality* (ongoing since 2001), with traditional stilt dancers, The Brooklyn Jumbies, from New York, West Africa, the Caribbean, and Los Zancudos de Zaachila, from Oaxaca, Mexico. Barbata's work is featured in various collections private and public, among them: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; El Museo de Arte Moderno, México D.F.; and Landesbank Baden-Württemberg Gallery, Stuttgart, Germany.

"I've been fortunate to work in Fort Worth many times, and am always so impressed by the outstanding quality and a vast number of arts organizations," says Barbata. "As the production designer for *Companionship*, I have the wonderful privilege of being able to think of all the physical design elements as one, to bring to life the beautiful libretto and music by Rachel Peters from a compelling adaptation of Arthur Phillips' short story.

Director Beth Greenberg and I have taken inspiration from Bauhaus, the Ballets Russes, and artist Kansai Yamamoto. We looked at Picasso's *Guernica* and the way he was able to visually represent an emotional landscape. We feel it's important to not be too literal. Instead, we want to access the main character's interior world – her emotional and psychological universe – with respect and sensitivity. I can't wait for audiences to see and respond to the way we are animating objects and illustrating the interior life of our central character and the people in her life and imagination."

ABOUT FORT WORTH OPERA: Founded in 1946, Fort Worth Opera is the oldest continually-performing opera company in Texas, and one of the 14 oldest opera companies in the United States. The organization has received national acclaim from critics and audiences alike for its artistic excellence. Beginning in 2017, Fort Worth Opera launched the second phase of its landmark, 10-year *Opera of the Americas* initiative with *Noches de Ópera (Nights of Opera)*, a groundbreaking campaign which introduces powerful operas, each reflecting the diverse cultures of American audiences.

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