**WORD FOR WORD**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Word for Word** <http://www.zspace.org/aboutwordforword/>
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**Word for Word’s First Production of the 2020 Season**

**Retablos: Stories from A Life Lived Along the Border**

**by Octavio Solis**

**Cast Named For Retablos Featuring Actors - Maria Candelaria\*, Edie Flores,**

**Carla Gallardo, Gendell Hernandez\*, Gabriel Montoya, Regina Morones,**

**Ryan Tasker\*, Brady Morales-Woolery\*.\*AEA**

**The Production Includes Stories From Renowned Playwright**

**Octavio Solis’ Memoir Of Growing Up In El Paso**

**Directed by Sheila Balter and Jim Cave**

**Cultural Consultant Carolina Morones; Dramaturg Karina Gutiérrez**

**February 22- March 15**

 **Press Performance February 22 & 23**

(previews Feb. 19-21)

 **Z Below, 470 Florida St.**

**Word for Word’s first production of the 2020 Season is Octavio Solis’s Retablos: Stories from A Life Lived Along the Border from his same titled memoir of growing up in El Paso. Retablos: Stories from A Life Lived Along the Border runs February 22 -March 15, in the Z Below Theater in San Francisco. The production is directed by Sheila Balter and Jim Cave and opens with press performance February 22 & 23, Saturday 8 PM & Sunday 3 PM** (previews Feb.19- 21)**.**

**The cast for Octavio Solis’s Retablos: Stories from A Life Lived Along the Border features actors Maria Candelaria\*, Edie Flores, Carla Gallardo, Gendell Hernandez\*, Gabriel Montoya, Regina Morones, Ryan Tasker\*, Brady Morales-Woolery\*. \*Actors Equity Association.The production designers include:** Scenic Design by Nina Ball, Original Music and Sound by

David R. Molina, Lighting Design by Jeff Rowlings, Costume Design by Callie Floor with Dramaturgy by Karina Gutiérrez**.**

**Retablos, Stories from a Life Lived Along the Border** has been named one of the year's Best Books by Buzzfeed and recommended three times by the New York Times. The stories in the book are a memoir about growing up brown at the U.S./Mexico border - seminal moments, rites of passage and crystalline vignettes. In his uniquely framed memoir, playwright Octavio Solis channels his youth in El Paso, Texas. Like traditional retablos, the rituals of childhood and rites of passage are remembered as singular, dramatic events, self-contained episodes with life-changing reverberations.

**February 27 - Word for Word presents An Evening with Octavio Solis**

A post-show conversation and book-signing with Retablos' author Octavio Solis.

**Author of over 20 plays, Octavio Solis is considered by many to be one of the most prominent Latinx playwrights in America**. With works that both draw on and transcend the Mexican-American experience, he is a writer and director whose style defies formula, examining the darkness, magic and humor of humanity with brutal honesty and characteristic intensity. His imaginative and ever-evolving work continues to cross cultural and aesthetic boundaries, solidifying him as one of the great playwrights of our time.

Mr. Solis’ relationship with Word for Word extends back twenty years, when he directed their production of “Slaughterhouse” by Greg Sarris. In 2010, he adapted John Steinbeck’s “The Pastures of Heaven” (which was one of the five NEA Distinguished New American Plays) for a Word for Word collaboration with Cal Shakes. Mr. Solis is a member of Word for Word’s Authors’ Council.

**Directors:**

**Sheila Balter** is a Charter Member of Word for Word who last directed Holiday HighJinx ; short works by Damon Runyon, Joseph Mitchell, and E.B. White. Other directing with the company includes stories by Tobias Wolff, Daniel Handler, George Saunders (OTP reading), Andrew Sean Greer (LitQuake/France tour), Sandra Cisneros (school tour). and Woody Allen ( City Arts & Lectures). She has also directed for Encore Theatre Company, Brava for Women in the Arts, and California Shakespeare Theater. Sheila also works as a Bay Area actress, teacher and coach.

**Jim Cave** has directed and designed plays, dance, dance-theater, opera, new music theater and site-specific spectaculars. His directorial credits include work with Word for Word Performing Arts Company (including the recent *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*), Darvag Iranian Theatre, Anna Halprin and the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop, the Blake Street Hawkeyes, Deborah Slater Dance Theatre, Erling Wold Fabrications, and Oliver DiCicco and Mobius Operandi. He has designed lights for more than twenty Word for Word productions. His work has been seen through the Bay Area and has won many awards.

**Actors:**

**Maria Candelaria\*, Edie Flores, Carla Gallardo, Gendell Hernandez\*, Gabriel Montoya, Regina Morones, Ryan Tasker\*, Brady Morales-Woolery\*.\*AEA**

**Maria Candelaria** is a Bay Area actor. She has acted in world premieres for such playwrights as Luis Valdez and Octavio Solis and in theatrical adaptations of groundbreaking literary works like Junot Diaz’s Pulitzer Prize novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao.* She has had the pleasure of working with Aurora Theatre, California Shakespeare Festival, Campo Santo, Intersection for the Arts, Thick Description, Shotgun Players, San Diego Repertory Theatre and El Teatro Campesino. She is honored to be working again with Word for Word having performed in several past productions. She has a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of California at Davis in Acting.

**Edie Flores'** recent on stage productions include *The Little Mermaid* @ Pacific Repertory Theatre, *La Pastorela* @ El Teatro Campesino (Bato), & *RENT* @ Cabrillo Stage. Edie is also a Guitar Teaching Artist with Santa Cruz Arts Council. Mr. Flores has worked for programs such as AVID and Migrant Ed upon his graduation from Watsonville High in 2015, working with elementary/high school groups. He has received three A.A. degrees in Theatre Arts, Music, & Liberal Arts He has accompanied several local artists and been part of orchestra bands for musicals.

**Carla Gallardo** is a Bay Area native and actor, and a proud member of the Ubuntu Theater Project. Her most recent credits include : *Romeo & Juliet* (Ubuntu Theater Project), *In The Heights* (Custom Made Theater), *Hamlet* (Ubuntu Theater Project), *Where The Boys Are* (FaultLine Theater), *To The Bone* (Ubuntu Theater Project).

**Gendell Hernandez** was born in Havana, Cuba and raised immersed its dynamic theatrical community. He is proud to have called the Bay Area home since 1997, working as an actor, director and teaching artist. As an actor and director he has collaborated with Word for

 Word, Campo Santo, Theaterworks, Berkeley Rep, San Jose Rep, Center Rep, New Pickle Circus, Teatro Vision, and Teatro del Juglar. Some productions include *Oedipus El Rey, Around The World In 80 Days, Arctic Requiem, The Cook, Blood Wedding, Oil!, Food Stories, Beatbox: A Raparretta, The House on Mango Street, References to Salvador Dali Make Me Ho*t, and *Demetrius Unbound*. Gendell has also brought theater education to classrooms, libraries, and jails in the Bay Area, partnering with Berkeley Rep, San Jose Rep, Word for Word, SF Shakes, TheaterWorks, Alphabet Rockers, and Theater of Yugen. He is He is currently an Associate Artist of Word for Word and part of the Alphabet Rocker crew.

**Gabriel Montoya** is excited to be making his debut with Word for Word. He's appeared on Bay Area stages for Berkeley Rep, Magic Theatre, Custom Made Theatre Co, SF Playhouse, Brava Theater, SF Shakespeare on Tour, Beverly Hills Playhouse SF, Theater Madcap and Boxcar Theatre. Gabriel and his wife Robin's production house, The Department of Badassery, made theatre history at Pianofight in 2015 with the onstage and virtual reality world premiere of Ben Fisher's "Don't Be Evil.”

**Regina Morones** is a native Bay Area actor, singer, educator, a resident artist at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and a company member at Ubuntu Theater Project. She is thrilled to make her Word For Word debut in *Retablos* by Octavio Solis! Most recently, Regina was seen as Rosalind in SF Shakes 2019 musical adaptation of *As You Like It*. Regina is committed to creating theater that uplifts the voiceless, empowers the youth, and promotes social change. [www.reginamorones.com](http://www.reginamorones.com)

**Ryan Tasker** is an Associate Artist with Word for Word, and has appeared in their productions of *Three on a Party* and *You Know When the Men Are Gone*, as well acting and directing for their Off the Page series. He has recently worked with Marin Theatre Company, American Conservatory Theatre, and Livermore Shakespeare Festival, among others.

**Brady Morales Woolery** is a SF Bay Area based film and theatre actor, he has appeared on stage in theaters around the Bay Area. Favorite roles include: Andrej in *Once* (42nd Street Moon), Josh Watson in *The Watson Intelligence* (Shotgun Players), Paul in *Bright Shining Sea* (SF Playground), and Paul in *Barefoot in the Park* (Willows Theatre Company). He also originated the role of Mario Savio in *FSM*, a musical about the free speech movement at UC Berkeley, which was produced by Stagebridge and workshopped at Berkeley Rep's Groundfloor. On screen he has appeared in *Quitters, Pushing Dead* and *The Internship*. He holds a B.A. in Theatre from U.C. Berkeley. [www.Bradymwoolery.com](http://www.bradymwoolery.com)

**Choreographer/Cultural Consultant** **Carolina Morones** is an Actor and Bilingual Teaching Artists focused on theatre that empowers through poetry and movement. She returns to the Bay Area after 7 seasons in residence at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. She is a graduate of Santa Clara University with a BA in Theatre & Performance, Kent State University with an MFA in Acting and a Teaching Certificate from the Great Lakes Michael Chekhov Consortium.

**Expanded Background/Bio Octavio Solis**

**Octavio Solis** is a playwright and director whose works , *Mother Road, Quixote Nuevo, Hole in the Sky, Alicia’s Miracle, Se Llama Cristina, John Steinbeck’s The Pastures of Heaven, Ghosts of the River, Quixote, Lydia, June in a Box, Lethe, Marfa Lights, Gibraltar, The Ballad of Pancho and Lucy, The 7 Visions of Encarnación, Bethlehem, Dreamlandia, El Otro, Man of the Flesh, Prospect, El Paso Blue, Santos & Santos,* and *La Posada Mágica* have been mounted at the California Shakespeare Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Yale Repertory Theatre, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, the Dallas Theater Center, the Magic Theatre, Intersection for the Arts, South Coast Repertory Theatre, the San Diego Repertory Theatre, the San Jose Repertory Theatre, Shadowlight Productions, the Venture Theatre in Philadelphia, Latino Chicago Theatre Company, Boston Court and Kitchen Dog Theatre, the New York Summer Play Festival, Teatro Vista in Chicago, El Teatro Campesino, the Undermain Theatre in Dallas, Thick Description, Campo Santo, the Imua Theatre Company in New York, and Cornerstone Theatre. His collaborative works include Cloudlands, with Music by Adam Gwon, Burning Dreams, cowritten with Julie Hebert and Gina Leishman and Shiner, written with Erik Ehn. Solis has received an NEA 1995-97 Playwriting Fellowship, the Roger L. Stevens award from the Kennedy Center, the Will Glickman Playwright Award, a production grant from the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays, the 1998 TCG/NEA Theatre Artists in Residence Grant, the 1998 McKnight Fellowship grant from the Playwrights Center in Minneapolis, and the National Latino Playwriting Award for 2003. He is the recipient of the 2000-2001 National Theatre Artists Residency Grant from TCG and the Pew Charitable Trust, the United States Artists Fellowship for 2011 and the 2104 Pen Center USA Award for Drama. Solis is a Thornton Wilder Fellow for the MacDowell Colony, New Dramatists alum and member of the Dramatists Guild. He is working on commissions for the Arena Stage, SF Playhouse and South Coast Repertory Theatre. Mr. Solis is a member of Word for Word's Authors Council, and directed the company's *Slaughterhouse* (Greg Sarris)

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**CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

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**Z Below, 470 Florida St. 94110**

**Press Nights February 22 & 23 Sat. 8 PM and Sun. 3 PM (previews Feb. 19-21)**

**February 27 Word for Word presents An Evening with Octavio Solis**

**A conversation with Mr. Solis following performance Tickets $53-63**

**Z Below, 470 Florida St.**

**At:** Z Below, Z Space's second venue, at 470 Florida St..

**Performances;** Wednesday-Thursday 7 pm, Friday-Saturday 8 pm, Sunday 3 pm

**Ticket prices:** Tickets range $20-50. with no additional fees. Tickets:415-626-0453 or at [www.zspace.org](http://www.zspace.org)

**An Evening with Octavio Solis Tickets $53-63**

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