

Theatre UAF is pleased to announce "No Exit", directed by one of the department's most visionary students, Ben Coffroth, for his Student Directorial Thesis Production. First performed in France after liberation from the Nazis, Sartre's existentialist masterpiece contains three recently deceased strangers: a man (Garcin) and two women (Inez and Estelle), find themselves in hell, which for them is spending it with each other in one room for eternity. What emerges is an intricate web of mental torment as each tries to escape the prying eyes of the others.

The playwright-philosopher dramatized that one must assume responsibility for one's life.

Within "No Exit" each of the characters needs the other two in order to create some illusion about himself. Since existence, for Sartre, is the will to project oneself into the future--to create one's future--the opposite of existence, where man has no power to create his future, is hell.

Each person is attracted to someone else: Garcin to Inez, for her strength, vitality (if it's possible to use that word on someone who's dead) and power over him; Inez to Estelle, because Estelle would be, with her weak personality, easily dominated by Inez's strong personality; and Estelle to Garcin, because he is the only man and, as a woman who is weak, she requires a masculine approval to validate her existence.

Of "No Exit", dramaturge Mark Poklemba writes: "the lifeline between the actor and spectator is fused with the stage. Three characters in hell stand in judgment of one another. They pace like tigers in a cage, each unfolding the dirty laundry of the past, defending innumerable sins." Sartre makes this point in one of the last few lines of the play: "Hell is--other people!"

Wanting to maximize the playing spaces at Theatre UAF Coffroth combines the mainstage performance of "No Exit" with a simultaneous Butoh performance "Huis Clos" in the Lab Theatre - an area usually considered 'backstage' during shows happening in the Salisbury Theatre. A huge metal wall that normally keeps the areas distinct from each other will be wide open thus anyone attending either performance will be able to experience layers of theatre including watching another audience watching another play.

Both "No Exit" and the performance art of Butoh are an artistic response to the violence and change of the mid twentieth century. Since 1995 Coffroth has been shaping a troupe of Butoh dancers who in this performance will embody Sloth, Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Envy, Pride and Wrath. The images of these twisted failings mirror the story of "No Exit" but can be watched as an independent show.



Butoh movement piece "Huis Clos" performs in conjunction with "No Exit" this weekend at Theatre UAF
Photo by Paula Daabach



Left to right: Craig Brookes, Jenny Schlotfeldt and Anna Gagne-Hawes in "No Exit" this weekend at Theatre UAF
Photo by Kade Mendelowitz

All productions of "No Exit" will take place in the Lee H. Salisbury Theatre in the Fine Arts Complex located on the UAF Campus. "No Exit" will run September 28th, 29th, October 5th, and 6th at 8:15 PM and Sunday October 7 at 2 PM.

The student-directed Theatre UAF production stars Michael Schaeffer as the Valet, Craig Brookes as Garcin, Jenny Schlotfeldt as Inez, and Anna Gagne-Hawes as Estelle. Set and lighting by Kade Mendelowitz, costumes by Paula Daabach with assistant Fiona Zachel, and sound design by Matt Krell. Choreographed by Jey Johnson and stage managed by Andrew Cassel.

Tickets are available at the UAF Wood Center or at the Theatre UAF Box Office, 474-7751. The Theatre Box office is open M-F 12-5 and two hours prior to a performance. Admission for "No Exit" is \$15 with discounts of \$12 for seniors, military, and UAF Employees, and \$7 for students with ID. Ticket stubs for "No Exit" will be accepted for entry into "Huis Clos". Tickets for "Huis Clos" alone can be purchased for \$6 or \$3 for students with ID.

Additional information is available online at www.uaf.edu/theatre/season.