

COMING SOON TO

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ALMOST, MAINE

JUNE 2-11, 2016

By John Cariani

As the northern lights hover in the star-filled sky above, residents of Almost, Maine find themselves falling in and out of love in unexpected and often hilarious ways.

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from LETTER BOX
the editor

Worthy Provocation

Provocative. A word that can make us uncomfortable at times, but will always result in a reaction. Art indubitably has the power to shock and oftentimes interrupt the conversation, the norm. A provocative book might get people talking about a controversial idea or stimulate a new direction of thought. Some of our most heated social topics have been first presented in books or on stage. Art truly imitates life.

Provocative art arouses strong feelings, whether because of the subject matter or technique. Artists have confronted issues of sexuality, race, politics and religion many times, resulting in strong criticism from the community. They are brave and bold. However, when you look back in history, what raised eyebrows in the 19th century is now commonplace. In the mid-late 19th century, Gustave Courbet introduced paintings that combined incongruent imagery with modern painting techniques. In the 20th century, Marcel Duchamp challenged what constituted art by including everyday objects in sculptures or as art objects themselves. Of course, there were Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs in the 1970s.

In 1968, *Hair* arrived on Broadway and pushed every hot-button imaginable, from the Vietnam War to the generation gap. Although there were protesters outside the theater in the 1960s, when the show was revived in 2009 there was barely a conversation. We do have our topics of debate, such as *Book of Mormon*. What limits are acceptable or barriers to be moved?

Why this conversation about provocation? In this issue we have two community favorites being featured: SNAP! (page 25) and The Orlando Fringe (page 16). SNAP! has a history of presenting photography that stimulates dialogue, while the Fringe celebrates 25 years of unjuried, uncensored theater in Central Florida. Both have been referred to as provocative — I would argue to the betterment of our art community and to the growth of our comfort zone. Are you willing to interrupt the conversation and open your mind to different cultures, beliefs or just plain orneriness? If so, this time of year is ripe with offerings. Here's to reaching for new things!



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