

# Shari Watts and Amie Bjorklund to Lead Reading of THE FLORA & FAUNA in Mesa

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The Bridge Initiative: Women in Theatre will feature Amie Bjorklund and [Shari Watts](#) in a development workshop and public reading of new play *The Flora & Fauna* by Los Angeles-based scribe Alyson Mead. The play offers two tour-de-force roles for local actresses who will have the rare professional opportunity to participate in the launch of a new piece.

*The Flora and Fauna* introduces terminally ill Adele as she requests a mermaid tale and suicide pills from her best friend, Ginnie. The play then flashes back through scenes spanning three decades of a fierce, loyal friendship until, in the final minutes of the piece, the audience finally witnesses the moment their bond originated.

New York-based director Stefanie Sertich, a specialist in new play development, will be in residence at Mesa Community College, February 20-25th, to helm the workshop process. With insights gleaned from Sertich and the actresses, as well as local dramaturg Laurelann Porter and other support staff from The Bridge Initiative, Mead will rewrite and polish her play throughout the week.

Mesa Community College hosts the first public reading of this new work on Saturday, February 25th, at 2:00 p.m. at the MCC Theatre, 1833 West Southern Avenue, Mesa, AZ 85202. The reading is free and open to the public, and will be followed by a talkback with the actors, director, and playwright. The play will then move in the coming months to readings at sister theatres InProximity Theatre in New York City; Magnolia Theatre Company in Dayton, OH; and WAM Theatre in the Berkshires, MA.

The Bridge Initiative is an Arizona nonprofit working to identify and empower female artists in the Southwest region, with the aim of gender parity across all theatrical disciplines. Its mission also includes bridging the gap between academia and the professional world to encourage students to envision a clearer path to becoming lifelong artists. Visit [bridgeinit.com](http://bridgeinit.com) for more.