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**In *Can I Hold You,* Stanford Artists Stage the First Play on the West Coast to Explore Asexuality**

**Production dates: February 1-11, 2018**

**Stanford and San Francisco, CA**--In a culture seemingly obsessed with sex, what is it like not to experience sexual attraction? For many asexuals--those who make up the A on the LGBTQIA spectrum--it’s a question they deal with every day, and a new play in the Bay Area, *Can I Hold You: An Aromantic Comedy,* asks just that*.*

The first play on the West Coast to feature out asexual characters, *Can I Hold You* tells the story of Sammie and Alma, two roommates with a love for knitting and overthrowing the patriarchy. What happens when the asexual Alma meets Phoebe, the sexual, saxophone-playing woman of her dreams? Can Phoebe and Alma manage a romantic relationship when one likes sex and the other doesn't? Can Alma and Sammie hold their friendship together when romance threatens to tear it apart? This new comedy explores queer relationships and friendships, emphasizing the power of intimacy that refuses to meet society's expectations.

As an identity and sexual orientation, asexuality has slowly started to gain attention in the popular eye, in large part thanks to the internet and to the work of the AVEN, the Asexual Visibility and Education Network. [Studies](http://www.cnn.com/2004/TECH/science/10/14/asexual.study/) estimate that around 1% of the population is asexual, many of whom have never had access to a label to describe their sexualities. In the push for asexual visibility, the Bay Area has been a hub for [asexual community and activism](https://sites.google.com/asexualitysf.org/main/).

“When you don’t see asexuality represented in art and media, it’s easy to feel as if there’s something wrong with us,” says the playwright and director, Kari Barclay, who identifies as queer and asexual. “It’s exciting to be a part of queer theater history, providing much-needed representation and using humor to start important conversations.”

Barclay started writing the play during his PhD in Theater and Performance Studies at Stanford University, and the performance features current students and alumni. The play will appear at the Nitery Theater at Stanford on Feb. 1-3 at 7:00 pm as part of the department’s Graduate Student Repertory before moving up to the San Francisco Mime Troupe Studio in the Mission Feb. 10-11 at 7:30 pm.

During this time of the #MeToo and Time’s Up movements, *Can I Hold You* also highlights the importance of consent for people of all sexual orientations. Asexuality necessarily sparks discussions about the roles of sex, physicality, and romance in all our lives--things that should be spoken about and not taken as a given.

“The play is not only for asexual and queer folks,” says Barclay, “it’s all about how we relate to each other and think about intimacy--conversations important for any relationship, romantic or otherwise.”

**Details:**

**Performance Schedule:**

February 1-3 at 7:00 at the Nitery Theater, Stanford University (514 Lasuen Mall, Stanford, CA)
February 10-11 at 7:30 at the San Francisco Mime Troupe Studio (855 Treat Ave, San Francisco, CA)

**Tickets:**

Free at Stanford

Free with $10 suggested donation at San Francisco Mime Troupe Studio

[kari-barclay.com/can-i-hold-you](http://kari-barclay.com/can-i-hold-you)

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Images available upon request.