From the Dramaturg

A Chronicler of Her Time

The term “chronicles” comes from the late 9th century and is defined as a non-literary account in order of time, in prose or verse, which provides information about historical events and the political and cultural attitudes of their writers and their medieval audience. In her episodic play, The Heidi Chronicles, playwright Wendy Wasserstein uses the structure of the chronicles to describe the political and cultural changes of America in the late 1950s to the 1980s.

Both Wasserstein and the play’s protagonist, art historian Heidi Holland, lived as part of this era of the Baby Boom, the generation that extended from the return of service men and women at the end of World War II until the beginning of the 1960s. During their lifetime, the Baby Boomers have experienced the Korean and Vietnam wars, the hippie and counterculture movements, the Civil Rights and Women’s Liberation movements, Watergate, and the AIDS epidemic, all events that touch the lives of Heidi and her friends in ways both significant and tangential. It is a generation that has grappled with matters on both an idealistically political scale and in intensely individual, some might say even self-absorbed, dimensions. Heidi Holland finds herself at times in the flow or even buffeted by the events around her while trying to find and maintain a personal path to meaning and connection in the world.

Of the voices struggling to be heard in this era, the many “outsiders” looking for a place at the table, Wasserstein’s focus was on the lack of women’s voices and power in the arts. This is the prism she uses for Heidi’s passion and avocation as both she and Heidi excavate and re-discover great female artists from the past who were overlooked and excluded from the canon, while forging a new path for future female artists.

—Lisa A. Wilde

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About the Playwright

BIOGRAPHY

Wendy Wasserstein (1950-2006) followed in the footsteps of her grandfather, Simon Schliefer, who was a prominent Polish Jewish playwright. She graduated from Mount Holyoke College and the Yale School of Drama. Her first production, *Uncommon Women and Others*, displayed her signature wry, comical style. Other plays include *The Sisters Rosensweig*, *An American Daughter and Third*. Her 1989 play, *The Heidi Chronicles*, won a Tony Award for best play and a Pulitzer Prize for Drama. She was named for the Wendy in Peter Pan.

Through her plays and other writings, Pulitzer prize-winning playwright Wendy Wasserstein provided a voice for so many women paving their way on one or more of the multiple paths that the 1960's and 70's and modern-day feminism opened up to them. She had attended Broadway plays as a child and wondered why there weren’t more women represented. “She was known for being a popular, funny playwright, but she was also a woman and a writer of deep conviction and political activism,” André Bishop, artistic director of Lincoln Center told Charles Isherwood of The New York Times. “In Wendy’s plays women saw themselves portrayed in a way they hadn’t been onstage before—wittily, intelligently and seriously at the same time. We take that for granted now, but it was not the case 25 years ago. She was a real pioneer.”

Nancy Franklin writes “In some ways that are fairly obvious, Wasserstein’s work is lifted directly from her life. She often uses the names of friends and relatives for her characters. (Heidi Holland, of the eponymous “Chronicles,” is named after two people: the set designer Heidi Landesman, a friend of hers from Yale, and David Hollander, her former lawyer; the surname of the sisters Rosensweig comes from the chef Anne Rosenzweig; Scoop, an unsuitable suitor of Heidi’s, is the nickname of one of Wasserstein’s nephews.) Wasserstein graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1971; Mount Holyoke in 1972 is the setting of “Uncommon Women and Others.”

But the appeal of Wasserstein’s plays lies not so much in their attention to real-life details as it does in their attention to the big picture. Wasserstein’s characters have a lot of questions about identity and self-determination, questions that women used to ask silently, if at all: What should my life be like? What if I do this? If I do this, can I still have that? What do I want? And do I really want it, or am I just supposed to want it? And if I don’t want it, what do I do then?” At the beginning of Act II of “The Heidi Chronicles,” Heidi, an art historian, is teaching a class in a lecture hall at Columbia University. Comparing two portraits of women, she says, “What strikes me is that both ladies seem slightly removed from the occasions at hand. They appear to watch closely and ease the way for the others to join in. I suppose it’s really not unlike being an art historian. In other words, being neither the painter nor the casual observer, but a highly informed spectator.” Likewise, Wasserstein’s sense of herself as an outsider runs deep. In an essay about winning the Tony which appears in “Bachelor Girls,” she wrote that “having fashioned a life based on anticipated exclusion—my date left with the blond; they gave the prize to the boy; the woman in the Anne Klein suit and the legs got the job—it came as a genuine surprise, a shock, when, for the first time ever, the winner was me.”
On The Heidi Chronicles
“I wrote this play because I had this image of a woman standing up at a women’s meeting saying, ‘I’ve never been so unhappy in my life.’ Talking to friends, I knew there was this feeling around, in me and in others, and I thought it should be expressed theatrically. But it wasn’t. The more angry it made me that these feelings weren’t being expressed, the more anger I put into that play.”

On Humor:
“Is there a New York humor? Yes, but I think it’s a different kind of humor than one thinks, I think it’s not definitely that euphemism for ethnic humor, be that Jewish, Italian, African American, Korean. I think what it is a worldly humor, it’s a sort of “gotcha” humor.”

On The Theater Community:
“When you work on Broadway still there is this whole community of people who are working on Broadway, and you go to Sam’s Restaurant and there are all the people from the shows, all the chorus people and that’s what they do. You know, you see each other. For me as a playwright, you write a play, you’re alone in a room for a year or whatever and then, suddenly, downstairs are the wig people and the set people and all of that. And it’s extremely different than working on movies. It’s a much tighter community. It’s also the history of Broadway and who else has been in your theater and what other play has been there and who’s across the street. My first play on Broadway was “The Heidi Chronicles” and across the street was Jerome Robbins’s “On Broadway,” and I thought, “This is extraordinary!” That was great. And the day our play closed, “A Few Good Men” was playing across the street and I remember they hung out a sign across the window to say goodbye to us and I thought: This is like this whole community that’s going on there. There you are in New York and here’s this whole legend and it’s this street that’s throbbing.”

On Opportunities For Women In New York:
“This has been the place where you could come as a woman and have an independent life. You could come here for whatever reason. You could come and be a playwright, you could come and marry a millionaire, you could come here and be a secretary, you could come and work for a fashion magazine; it was a place where you could come and at least be a person. When I was growing up I’d always look—is there a woman in this picture? Is there somebody that you could say, “Oh, I’d like to be like that.” And I think in New York there was always that somebody. I was reading this illustrated history of Brooklyn and there was the first African-American female doctor in Brooklyn Heights in the turn of the century and I thought: Who was this? How did she do this? This is really interesting.”
The Play

Structure and Themes

CHRONICLES

Chronicles are a detailed and continuous register in order of time, in prose or verse, usually without literary ambition. They not only give us information about events in the past, they also convey the historical, political and cultural attitudes of their writers and their medieval audience. One of the most famous examples is the Old English Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. It was originally compiled in the late 9th century at the court of King Alfred the Great, drawn from a variety of earlier written sources, including Bede’s Historia ecclesiastica and now lost annals. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle provides the basis for our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon history.

Each act of The Heidi Chronicles begins with Heidi giving an art history lecture in the present, then jumps back to episodes from various decades in her life, providing snapshots of the events in her life, cultural movements and political struggles and the development—not always progressive—in her relationships with Susan, Scooter, and Peter. With episodic structure, the audience is able to consider events more rationally as they are not swept up in the emotional build of a climactic and causal development.

The first lecture focuses on Renaissance artists and would echo the first part of the semester with an out of place intrusion by the nineteenth century Spencer. The second lecture replicates the second part of a semester and of Heidi’s life with a focus on “fuzzier” Impressionists and the strange interruption of Artemisia.

WOMEN’S RIGHTS

1300 Christine de Pizan struggles against attempts to restrict female inheritance.

1769 American colonies write that “the very being and legal existence of women is suspended during marriage.”

1792 Mary Wollstonecraft writes A Vindication of the Rights of Woman.

1875 Supreme Court declarers that states can prohibit women from voting.

1920 American women are granted the right to vote.

1966 The National Organization of Women is founded to promote equality for women.

2017 Despite being 51 percent of the population, American women have never seen a woman elected president, only 19 percent of Congressional seats are held by women.
BABY BOOMERS

After World War II, when service men and women returned home, the U.S. experienced a significant rise in the birth rate. The era that followed, the 1950s, represented a normative era for family life in which the ideal was a family of two to three children, a husband who worked and a wife and mother who stayed home and raised the children. These families were expected to live in single family homes. The children born during this time, like Wasserstein and Heidi Holland, have proven to be a barometer of each era, starting with the idealism of the late 1960s and early 70s with the anti-Vietnam war movement, Civil Rights, and women’s liberation. The late 1970s ushered in an era of disillusion with the Watergate hearings and the aftermath of several leaders’ assassinations followed in quick succession by the Reagan era of “greed is good”, consumerism, and self-promotion. Women who had rebelled against the apron, pearls and pumps image of their mothers, received college and graduate educations and “opened doors” in careers, arts, but found themselves unable to balance this new power with interests in relationships in families. They could not be “superwomen” who “had it all.” As well, women found themselves stuck and unable to achieve political power or to break the invisible but present “glass ceiling” to the highest positions.

Scooter’s arc, represented by his description of his magazines “left magazines in college—music magazines in the seventies and—what I call a ‘power’ magazine in the eighties,” and Susan’s transformation from legal collective lawyer to tv producer both epitomize the baby boomers’ changes as a generation, much to Heidi’s disappointment.

References

THE LECTURES

In the 1970s, Linda Nochlin brought new interest to female painters with her essay “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists.”

—http://davidrifkind.org/fiu/library_files/Linda%20Nochlin%20%20Why%20have%20there%20been%20no%20Great%20Women%20Artists.pdf

SOFONISBA ANGUISSOLA (1532-1635)

Sofonisba Anguissola — Italian portrait painter and painting tutor to Queen Isabel de Valois. She prided herself on her modesty. In his Libro de Sogni published in 1564, Lomazzo presents this following imagined conversation between Leonardo da Vinci, representative of modern painting, and Phidias, the artist from Antiquity:

I bring to your attention the miracles of a Cremonese woman called Sofonisba, who has astonished every prince and wise man in all of Europe by means of her paintings, which are all portraits, so like life they seem to conform to nature itself. Many valiant [professionals] have judged her to have a brush taken from the hand of the divine Titian himself; and now she is deeply appreciated by Philip King of Spain and his wife who lavish the greatest honors on the artist.
CLARA PEETERS (1594-1657)

Clara Peeters — Baroque artist. A pioneer in the field of still-life painting, Clara Peeters is the only Flemish woman known to have specialized in such pictures as early as the first decade of the 17th century. Peeters’s earliest dated oil paintings, from 1607 and 1608, are small-scale, detailed images representing food and beverages.
LILY MARTIN SPENCER (1822-1902)

Lily Martin Spencer — English born American painter. Lily Martin Spencer’s still-life and portrait paintings were popular, but she became particularly well known for humorous domestic genre scenes.
LILLA CABOT PERRY (1848-1933)

Lilla Cabot Perry — American Impressionist.

Lady with a Bowl of Violets

Lady in an Evening Dress
MARY CASSATT (1844-1926)
Mary Cassatt — American Impressionist painter.

BERTHE MORISOT (1841-1895)
Berthe Morisot — French impressionist painter.
ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI (1593-1656)

Artemisia Gentileschi is considered one of the greatest Baroque painters in the style of Caravaggio. She was the first woman admitted to the Academia di Arte di Disegno in Florence. She often painted strong and suffering women from the Bible and mythology.

—http://www.artemisia-gentileschi.com/

Judith Beheading Holofernes

Madonna and Child
**Cultural Touchpoints**

**1965**


**Death Be Not Proud** is a 1949 best-selling memoir by American author John Gunther, taking its name from Holy Sonnet X by John Donne chronicling his son’s struggle with a brain tumor that left him dead at seventeen.

**The Hully Gully** is a type of unstructured line dance often considered to have originated in the sixties, but is also mentioned some forty years earlier as a dance common in the black juke joints in the first part of the twentieth century. In its modern form it consisted of a series of “steps” that are called out by the MC. Each step was relatively simple and easy to execute; however, the challenge was to keep up with the speed of each step.

The phrase “Hully Gully” or “Hull da Gull” comes from a folk game in which a player shakes a handful of nuts or seeds and asks his opponent “Hully Gully, how many?”

—https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fMlfXmHsb4

**1968**

**Neat and clean for Eugene.** Eugene McCarthy’s young “hippie” supporters cut their long hair, mustaches and sideburns to go “Clean for Gene” when they campaigned for their candidate in the 1968 New Hampshire Presidential primary. In the 1968 presidential election, McCarthy was the first candidate to challenge incumbent Lyndon B. Johnson for the Democratic nomination for president of the United States, running on an anti-Vietnam War platform. The unexpected vote total he achieved in the New Hampshire primary and his strong polling in the upcoming Wisconsin primary contributed to Johnson’s decision to withdraw from the race, and lured Robert F. Kennedy into the contest. Ultimately the Republican Richard Nixon won against Democrat Hubert Humphrey after Kennedy’s assassination. McCarthy would unsuccessfully seek the presidency five times altogether.

**Adlai Ewing Stevenson II** (February 5, 1900 – July 14, 1965) was an American lawyer, politician, and diplomat, noted for his intellectual demeanor, eloquent public speaking, and promotion of progressive causes in the Democratic Party. He was the 31st Governor of Illinois from 1949 to 1953, and received the Democratic Party’s nomination for president in the 1952 and 1956 elections. In both 1952 and 1956, Stevenson was defeated in a landslide by Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower. He sought the Democratic presidential nomination for a third time at the 1960 Democratic National Convention, but was defeated by Senator John F. Kennedy.
“Homage to the Square: Apparition”, painted in 1959, is a disarmingly simple work, composed of four superimposed squares of oil color applied with a palette knife directly from the tube onto a white, primed Masonite panel. It is part of a series that Albers began in 1950 and that occupied him for 25 years. The series is defined by an unmitigating adherence to one pictorial formula: the square. The optical effects Albers created—shimmering color contrasts and the illusion of receding and advancing planes—were meant not so much to deceive the eye as to challenge the viewer’s faculties of visual reception. This shift in emphasis from perception willed by the artist to reception engineered by the viewer is the philosophical root of the “Homage to the Square series.”

—Guggenheim.org

Trotskyite in the age of Lenin’s new economic policy. Lenin’s new economic policy was capitalism subject to state control, a compromise between socialism and capitalism. Trotsky was the second most powerful socialist after Lenin and wanted total state control.

Proust French author of Remembrance of Things Past (1913-1927) whose protagonist can be transported imaginatively back in time through the taste of a madeleine cookie not unlike Stanislavsky’s sense memory.

1970

Donovan 1960s Scottish folk hippie singer of “Mellow Yellow”

Esalen The Esalen Institute is a holistic spiritual retreat established at Big Sur in 1962 that emphasizes human potential philosophy and has been visited by many famous musicians, artists and writers—and Don Draper in the final episode of Mad Men.

1974

Elisabeth Vigee Lebrun (1755-1842) Portrait Artist to Marie Antoinette. A Rococo artist who left behind 600 portraits and 200 landscapes.

Marie Benoist (1768-1826) French neoclassical historical painter.

Judy Chicago (born 1939) Radical feminist artist best known for The Dinner Party on permanent display at the Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum. The Dinner Party is an important icon of 1970s feminist art and a milestone in twentieth-century art. The Dinner Party comprises a massive ceremonial banquet, arranged on a triangular table with a total of thirty-nine place settings, each commemorating an important woman from history created by Judy Chicago and hundreds of volunteers between 1974 and 1979.
The settings consist of embroidered runners, gold chalices and utensils, and china-painted porcelain plates with raised central motifs that are based on vulvar and butterfly forms and rendered in styles appropriate to the individual women being honored. The names of another 999 women are inscribed in gold on the white tile floor below the triangular table.

From 1980 to 1985, Chicago worked on the Birth Project. Having observed an absence of iconography about the subject of birth in Western art, Chicago designed a series of birth and creation images for needlework which were executed under her supervision by 150 skilled needle workers around the country. The Birth Project, exhibited in more than 100 venues, employed the collaborative methods and a similar merging of concept and media that characterized The Dinner Party.

**Dick Nixon, Haldeman, Ehrlichman.** In the summer of 1974, President Richard Nixon (“Tricky Dick”) resigned the presidency during impeachment hearing over obstruction of justice for authorizing the erasure of tapes in relation to the burglary and planting devices at the Democratic National Committee offices at the Watergate Hotel. J.R. Haldeman, Nixon’s chief of staff and John Ehrlichman, Nixon’s assistant for domestic affairs, were known as the Prussians in the White House. Because of disclosures by other Watergate figures, they were forced to resign on April 30, 1973. Both subsequently were convicted of conspiracy and obstruction of justice.

**Laura Nyro** Influential and soulful 1960s folk singer.

**Florine Stettheimer** (1871 – 1944) was an American painter, designer, Jazz Age saloniste and poet. With her sisters, Carrie and Ettie, she hosted a salon for modernists in Manhattan, which included Marcel Duchamp, Henry McBride, Carl Van Vechten and Georgia O’Keeffe.

**Anna Mary Robertson Moses** (1860 – 1961), known by her nickname Grandma Moses, was a renowned American folk artist. She began painting in earnest at the age of 78 and is often cited as an example of an individual who successfully began a career in the arts at an advanced age.
1977

Jonas Salk (1914-1995) A virologist who discovered and developed the first successful polio vaccine in 1955. In 1977, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Jimmy Carter, with the following statement accompanying the medal: “Because of Doctor Jonas E. Salk, our country is free from the cruel epidemics of poliomyelitis that once struck almost yearly. Because of his tireless work, untold hundreds of thousands who might have been crippled are sound in body today. These are Doctor Salk’s true honors, and there is no way to add to them. This Medal of Freedom can only express our gratitude, and our deepest thanks.” Because of vaccines, polio has been largely eradicated.

Bert Lance Director of President Jimmy Carter’s Office of Budget and Management, considered one of Carter’s “Georgia Mafia. He was forced out after less than a year.


Felix Frankfurter founded the ACLU in 1920.

1980

John Lennon One of the Beatles and an inspired and influential solo writer, performer and activist, was murdered on December 8, 1980 in front of his apartment by John Hinckley Jr. ending an era of idealism for many. The Beatles — John, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr—broke up between 1968 and 1970. His apartment in the Dakota building overlooks Central Park and an area in the Park was dedicated to him as “Strawberry Fields” after his song “Strawberry Fields Forever.”

—https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOgFZfRVaww

1982

Death of the ERA The Equal Rights Amendment was first introduced into Congress in 1923 by Alice Paul stating that “equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex.” It gained momentum in the early 1970s with the support of leaders such as Gloria Steinem and even passed the House but failed to get necessary state support. It has been re-introduced as the 27th amendment every session since 1982 but has never been ratified.

Reaganomics Economic policies pursued by Ronal Reagan in the 1980s, critically referred to as trickle-down or voodoo economics. He believed that helping business would help all as “a rising tide lifts all ships.”


Betsy Bloomingdale Internationally known socialite, author of a book on entertaining, and friend of the Reagans.
Noam Chomsky American linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist, historian, social critic, and political activist.

Bishop Tutu South African bishop and humanist.

1986

Picturesque The word *picturesque*, meaning literally “in the manner of a picture; fit to be made into a picture”, was a word used as early as 1703 (*Oxford English Dictionary*), and derived from French *pittoresque* and an Italian term *pittoreseco*, “in the manner of a painter.” The poet Alexander Pope was instrumental in defining and creating Palladian garden design in his estate at Twickenham in an effort to evoke the sublime. According to Morris Brownell, “Pope’s awareness of the terrible in ruined architecture and the frightful in landscape, his normal response to landscape is neither terror nor fright. Natural scenery interpreted as in painting, playhouse, or garden does not arouse turbulent emotion; it yields ‘a delicious feeling about the heart.’
**1987**

**Carleton College** is a very small top-ranked liberal arts college in Northfield, Minnesota, the town where Jesse James was apprehended. The town celebrates the “Defeat of Jesse James Days” each year.

**My Antonia** published in 1918, is arguably the most famous work of American novelist and feminist icon Willa Cather. The novel takes the form of a fictional memoir written by Jim Burden about an immigrant girl named Antonia with whom he grew up in the American West.

**The HIV/AIDS epidemic.** The history of HIV/AIDS in the United States began in about 1969, when HIV likely entered the United States through a single infected immigrant. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, doctors in Los Angeles, New York City, and San Francisco began seeing young men with Kaposi’s Sarcoma, a cancer. As the knowledge that men who had sex with men were dying of an otherwise rare cancer began to spread throughout the medical communities, the syndrome began to be called by the colloquialism “gay cancer.” As medical scientists discovered that the syndrome included other manifestations, such as pneumocystis pneumonia, a rare form of fungal pneumonia, its name was changed to “GRID,” or Gay Related Immune Deficiency. This had an effect of boosting homophobia and adding stigma to homosexuality in the general public. For a while the American government completely ignored the emerging AIDS epidemic.

In a press briefing at the White House in 1982, a journalist asked a spokesperson for President Reagan “…does the President have any reaction to the announcement—the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, that AIDS is now an epidemic and have over 600 cases?” The spokesperson responded—“What’s AIDS?” Because AIDS attacks the immune system patients with AIDS are susceptible to a variety of unusual infections and conditions that those with healthy immune systems fight off without realizing they’ve been exposed. People don’t die from AIDS, but from AIDS-related illnesses. Because the illness was associated with homosexual men at the beginning, many of those infected were ostracized or perceived as suffering from or being punished for their lifestyle. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were approximately 35 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS in 2013. Of these, 3.2 million were children (<15 years old). HIV is the world’s leading infectious killer. According to WHO, an estimated 39 million people have died since the first cases were reported in 1981 and 1.5 million people died of AIDS-related causes in 2013.

**1989**

**Panama Hattie** A 1942 Cole Porter revue/musical set in a club run by Hattie (Ann Sothern) in Panama. Also features Red Skelton.
A key component of a chronicle is that it is presented without opinion or analysis. By definition, it is the documentation and presentation of the facts and important events in the order they took place. That’s all. I think it’s easy to watch this play (which is now essentially a period piece) with our analysis cap on. It’s easy to constantly think about how far the world has come (or hasn’t come) in the last 30 years as you’re watching a story unfold surrounding battles we are so obviously still fighting. However, I believe the modern lens we’re watching this through now functions at its best when we are able to step away from our big picture telescope and get in a little closer during the time we’re actually in the theater. It works best if we stop analyzing the struggles in the play on the whole and instead attempt to understand what these particular people are feeling, struggling with, and scared of. Then, when you do step back out to the big picture and our current world, I think you’ll be struck (as I was) by how badly the fights we’re fighting need us to have radical empathy. I often hear talk in the theater industry about how live theater is important in our current political climate because we need to see stories about people who are different from us; we need to see a huge range of experiences on stage so that we empathize with all people and understand their fight. This is a hugely important goal, but often the same (primarily liberal) people making this argument could stand to be more conscious of their own understanding and acceptance of others. If you leave this play, go to the bar to debrief with your friends and immediately shake your head and complain about how it’s ridiculous that we haven’t moved further in the past 30 years and how our current government seems to be moving us backwards, that’s great. I’m thrilled you want to keep fighting. However, I challenge you to take just a moment before jumping to the more obviously political connections and talk about what resonated with you, what you felt, what you understood emotionally in Heidi or Peter or Lisa’s experiences. Then, go ahead and let’s talk about how little we’ve moved forward. The analysis is important, and a huge part of doing this play now as you’ll read about in Joseph Ritsch’s notes. However, empathy only exists when we truly watch and listen. It exists when we drop opinion or judgement for a moment and try to watch another’s life unburdened by any lens. There’s a point in this play when Heidi says “It’s just that I feel stranded. And I thought the whole point was that we wouldn’t feel stranded. And I thought the whole point was that we were all in this together.” I hope when you put your lens back on you find it a clearer view; one where you feel less stranded and more able to continue the fight ready to receive the chronicles of others lives with a more open mind and heart.

— Jenna Duncan
Design

SET DESIGN, By James Fouchard
THE HEIDI CHRONICLES
The Production

COSTUME DESIGN RESEARCH, By Eric Abele

Peter
Heidi
Scoop
Chris/Mark/Waiter/Ray

Jill/Debbie/Lisa

Becky/Clara/Denise

Susan

Fran/Molly/Betsey/April

20. The Heidi Chronicles AUDIENCE GUIDE
THE HEIDI CHRONICLES Cast

Madeline Burrows
Alina Collins Maldonado
Hallie Cooper
Rex Daugherty
Melissa Flaim
Beth Hylton
Joseph W. Ritsch
Anderson Wells

AEA Member  EMC
Questions for Discussion

1. Are there different expectations in the twentieth-century for men and women in terms of their responsibilities and commitments to family, work, and personal expression? What are they? For whom is it more difficult, and why?

2. What are the challenges and benefits of being a single parent? Of being a parent who has chosen not to marry?

3. Do some research on one of the female artists and compare their careers to a male artist of their era in terms of style, content, form.

4. Historically, there have been far fewer female playwrights than male playwrights. What might be some reasons? Look at Virginia Woolf’s essay about “Shakespeare’s Sister.”

5. What does the play suggest about the relationship between art and politics? How does the play’s structure contribute to that outlook?

Theater Etiquette

Attending the theater will be a positive experience for everyone if you observe a few simple courtesies:

- Turn off and put away all electronic devices prior to entering the theater.
- Taking photographs and video recording in the theater is prohibited.
- Do not place your feet on the seat in front of you.
- The actors onstage can see and hear the audience just as well as the audience can see and hear them. Please refrain from talking or moving around during the performance as it can be distracting to the actors, as well as to other audience members.
- Feel free to respond to the action of the play through appropriate laughter and applause. The actors enjoy this type of communication from the audience!
- Have fun! Attending theater should be an enjoyable experience.