LOS ANGELES - Next month, the Villa Theater Lab series presents The Archer from Malis, a new performance work by Griot Theatre, an LA-based theater company that focuses on providing opportunities for underrepresented artists. Employing non-traditional casting in terms of gender, ethnicity, and disability, the play is a bold reimagining of Sophocles’s Philoctetes set in a Hunger Games-inspired dystopia.

Odysseus orders young Neoptolemus, daughter of Achilles, to trick Philoctetes into joining the Greeks to assure their victory of the Trojan War. Philoctetes was entrusted with Hercules' bow upon the demi-god's death. The Greeks, who abandoned the snake-bitten Philoctetes on the island of Lemnos ten years earlier, return, now in need of him and the divine bow to win the Trojan War. The play explores questions of loss, betrayal, loyalty and whether the ends always justify the means.

Since co-founding Griot Theatre in 2011, Artistic Director Malik B. El-Amin has pushed the company’s mission, finding not just roles but entire productions that could feature female artists, artists of color and artists with physical disabilities and using what some would call creative casting as an opportunity to redefine the classics and local theatre in general.

“In our production, not only is Neoptolemus a woman, rather than a man, but the actress also uses a wheelchair. Audiences will witness how casting skilled artists with disabilities broadens, rather than shrinks the creative possibilities of a given play,” said Malik B. El-Amin, Artistic Director of Griot Theatre.

Performances will take place Friday, April 15 at 8:00 p.m., Saturday, April 16 at 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and Sunday, April 17 at 3:00 p.m. The performance on April 16 at 3:00 p.m. will be an ASL interpreted show with a Q&A at the end. All shows will be open captioned. Tickets are $7 and are available by calling 310-440-7300 or online at
After being workshopped at the Getty Villa, The Archer from Malis will go on to a fully staged production at the Lounge Theaters from April 29 to May 22. Additional information is available at http://griottheatre.org/happeningnow.html.

About Griot Theatre

Everyone has a story to tell. That’s what we do in theatre. Yet women, artists of color, and artists with physical disabilities have been left out of the conversation – their voices unheard – in traditional theatre.

We believe that theatre performs two functions: it reminds us who we’ve been and it teaches us who we have the potential to become. When our stories lack diversity, our past remains deficient and our future less bright. Griot Theatre exists to give voice to these untold stories, by creating a forum for artists from underrepresented groups to interpret theatre in new ways.

Malik B. El-Amin is Artistic Director of Griot Theatre, which he co-founded to create a forum for artists from underrepresented groups to interpret theatre in new ways. Malik holds a BS in Industrial Engineering from the University of Oklahoma, an MFA in Theatre Arts from Brandeis University, and is currently pursuing an MBA in Nonprofit Management from American Jewish University. He is a member of Actors Equity Association (AEA) and the Screen Actors Guild (SAG-AFTRA). When not conspiring to commit theatre, Malik volunteers with the Los Angeles chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America, is a regular blood donor with the American Red Cross, and works as a Senior Manager at Farmers Insurance, where he holds the designation of Project Management Professional (PMP). Mr. El-Amin is a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

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The J. Paul Getty Museum collects Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts to 1900, as well as photographs from around the world to the present day. The Museum’s mission is to display and interpret its collections, and present important loan exhibitions and publications for the enjoyment and education of visitors locally and internationally. This is supported by an active program of research, conservation, and public programs that seek to deepen our knowledge of and connection to works of art.

Visiting the Getty Villa
The Getty Villa is open Wednesday through Monday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is closed Tuesday and most major holidays, open on July 4. Admission to the Getty Villa is always free, but a ticket is required for admission. Tickets can be ordered in advance, or on the day of your visit, at www.getty.edu/visit or at (310) 440-7300. Parking is $15 per car, but reduced to $10 after 4 p.m. Groups of 15 or more must make reservations by phone. For more information, call (310) 440-7300 (English or Spanish); (310) 440-7305 (TTY line for the deaf or hearing impaired). The Getty Villa is at 17985 Pacific Coast Highway, Pacific Palisades, California.