



## Smoke Goddess: Judy Chicago on Land Art and the Desert, In Conversation with Philipp Kaiser

Thursday, January 24 | 6 – 8 pm

Join artist and icon Judy Chicago as she discusses her work from the early 1970s that aimed to feminize the environment and reclaim the landscape for women.

\$20 | \$17 Members

Purchase tickets at NevadaArt.org

**N** NEVADA MUSEUM OF ART

Donald W. Reynolds Center for the Visual Arts | E. L. Wiegand Gallery  
160 West Liberty Street in downtown Reno, Nevada

Judy Chicago, *Smoke Goddess V* (detail), from the *Women and Smoke* series, 1972, Flares, performance outside of Los Angeles, CA. Courtesy of Through the Flower Archives. Photo courtesy of Judy Chicago/Art Resource, NY.



Reno Little Theater pays homage to Neil Simon in its first production of 2019, Simon's play *Barefoot in the Park*.

PHOTO/ERIC MARKS

## Park it

**The dramas of marriage aren't usually** big and monumental. Rather, they're small and subtle—the cup too often left sitting out, the repeatedly late arrival at scheduled activities, the failure to notice a new hair-style—accumulating tension drop by drop. By the same token, romance comes not from grand gestures, but tiny ones—washing the dishes or picking up milk without prompting.

Perhaps no one in modern American theater understood the delicate intricacies of modern relationships better or could capture them as well as Neil Simon. The playwright whose name is synonymous with romantic comedies—having virtually created the genre—passed away in August. Reno Little Theater now pays homage to the master in its first production of 2019, Simon's third play and first critical hit, *Barefoot in the Park*.

Set in early '60s New York, it's the story of newlyweds Paul and Corie Bratter as they begin married life in a crumbling, fifth-floor walkup apartment. Following their six-day honeymoon rolling in the sheets at the Plaza Hotel, Corie's now making the place home while newbie attorney Paul is back at work on his first case.

Romantic Corie (played by Emilie Meyer) sees the place through a bride's rose-colored glasses—its miniscule size ideal for cuddlers, its many quirks offering character and charm. But practical Paul (Aaron Foster) sees the five flights of stairs (six if you count the front stoop), the closet-sized bedroom, the hole in the skylight and the kooky neighbors.

One of these is Victor Velasco (Bob Ives), an eccentric older gentleman with unusual taste in cuisine who lives in the attic apartment—only reachable through the Bratters' bedroom window.

Just days into her marriage, in a bid to share her own delirious happiness

with those around her, Corie tries to fix up her staid single mother, Ethel (Michelle Calhoun), with the lively Mr. Velasco. After an evening involving bizarre *hors d'oeuvres*, too much ouzo and Albanian dancing, unexpected tensions between the Bratters bubble to the surface, calling attention to immense, previously ignored differences—a gap perhaps too wide to bridge.

A master of the one-liner, Simon's dialogue crackles, and no one in this RLT cast falters. Meyers' Corie sparkles; she's magnetic and adorable, impossible not to watch, and she delivers her lines with impeccable timing. As Paul, Foster manages to be the more grounded and reasonable of the two without coming off as stiff or cold. And as Ethel, Calhoun is brilliant—set in her ways yet not stubborn, a refreshingly loving, non-cliché of a proto-feminist mother.

Even the scene changes are entertaining, thanks to the directorial choice to provide entertainment courtesy of telephone repair man Scott Sarri and the “Barefoot Movers,” a.k.a. the Around the Stage Modern Dance Company.

Of course, Simon's work always elicits laughs, but it has such capacity to touch your heart as well. I was moved to tears, reminded to love the one I'm with and find joy in the smallest of things. □

## Barefoot in the Park



*Barefoot in the Park*, written by Neil Simon and directed by Alexandra Frankel and Scott Hernandez, will be at Reno Little Theater, 147 E. Pueblo St., through Feb. 3. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors/military, \$15 for students and \$12 for kids ages 12 and under. During the government shutdown, federal government employees or contractors can get two free tickets (pending availability) with a valid government ID or check stub. See dates and get tickets here: <https://bit.ly/2FF1Bdh>.