

## **Middletown Press / West Hartford News**

With hints and whispers from the Swedish playwright August Strindberg and his 1888 opus "Miss Julie," Theater Works Hartford is offering up, on a silver platter, a new view of Julie set in modern day Miami with a trio of intriguing Latinx actors. In Hilary Bettis' "Queen of Basel," until February 26, you are invited to visit the royal court of this modern day Miss Julie, a conflicted and complex woman who suffers as a poor little rich girl with a tyrant father who controls her every move. Without a mother to protect her, she finds herself without freedom of choice, forced to obey the dictates of her parental ruler.

Right now she is holding court in the storage kitchen of one of her father's many holdings. She has sought refuge there after a cocktail waitress has spilled a tray of alcoholic drinks on her lovely green dress. As a socialite and heiress, Julie cannot afford to embarrass her father so the kitchen has become a temporary sanctuary. Christine, the waitress who caused the collision, is attempting to clean her dress, unsuccessfully, and has called her fiance John, an Uber driver, to take Julie home.

An explosive confrontation arises, secrets and lies are revealed, love and lust are put to the test, and who really has the power is tested. Race and heritage are questioned, flirtations fly out of control, passions are explored, dreams are destroyed, and who will survive this encounter is in serious doubt. The evening finds Christine Spang's Julie giving up on her hard fought fight to abandon drinking after five years of sobriety, Silvia Dionicio's Christine finding a novel way to save her mother and daughter trapped in Venezuela and Kelvin Grullon's John experiencing the highs and lows of almost getting his life's goals fulfilled but suddenly dashed.

This is powerful and explosive theater that will have you exhausted with emotions by the end of its 90 minutes, no intermission, conclusion. As Julie goes more and more out of control, we learn almost too much about her past and how her mother's death from breast cancer still affects her years later. Cristina Angeles holds a stronghold on the action, insuring an evening of theater you will long remember.

For tickets (\$25-65), call Theater Works Hartford, 233 Pearl Street, Hartford at 860-527-7838 or online at [twhartford.org](http://twhartford.org). Performances are Tuesday to Thursday at 7:30 p.m., Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2:30 pm. and 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Select performances require masks.

Experience the behind the scenes world at Art Basel, a party time for the movers and shakers of the art world, where heartache and ambition collide and break, and like Humpty Dumpty, can't be put back together again.