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Low Level Panic by Clare McIntyre, currently mounted at The Playbill Cafe by Open Circle Theatre, seeks to examine the rolls sex, pornography and personal identity play in women's lives. Three young women (Jo, Mary and Celia) share not only a home, but also a bathroom, where they express their feelings about their lives, loves, dreams, and fantasies while preparing for an evening out.

Examining how fantasy affects reality, Low Level Panic probes how we as a society view women and more importantly how we view women with disabilities. Not just an exercise in lip service, Suzanne Richard the Artistic Director of Open Circle Theatre seeks to help us understand that women with disabilities have all the same desires, feelings and emotions that women without disabilities have. Open Circle has succeeded in bringing overdue issues to the stage and the stage to everyone.

Mary (Jessica Lynn Rodriguez) is a young woman afraid of her feelings and sexuality in general — a sexual assault has bruised her and left her with open wounds. Ms. Rodriguez's performance was extremely solid — she came across as fragile and angry, unsure of her feelings about herself and her body. Selene Faer as Jo, on the other hand is very sure of her feelings, she knows exactly what she wants and needs. Able to portray a sense of self assuredness that is perfect for her character, she stands out as the emotional opposite of Mary. K Clare Johnson's Celia is care free and unaware of much around her, absorbed in her own world she is just happy she has found the perfect eye shadow. Not on stage as much as Jo and Mary, Ms. Johnson's character is far less developed.

The small space at 1409 is limiting of course, Klyph Stanford (set design) creates a large bathroom covered with pinups and graphic examples of society's view of the female form. A single chair and a window frame by the tub complete the set. Ian Armstrong's sound design includes some wonderful songs, Gwen Stefani's I'm Just A Girl and other equally cool choices brought a decidedly American feel to the show first produced and written in the UK.

This show seeks to change how our society views people with disabilities by helping us to understand that the individual, not his or her disability, should be our focus. Open Circle Theatre's mission to increase our understanding of issues concerning people with disabilities is refreshing and a welcome voice in DC Theatre. See this play because it is an excellent production about how we view women in our society. While there you will become aware that people with disabilities can do, feel, and become anything people without those same disabilities can.

Walter Ruff

Directed by 2004 Helen Hayes Outstanding Director Nominee Suzanne Richard, Low Level Panic opens November 7 and runs through November 29. Performances are at 8pm, Fridays, Saturdays, Mondays, and Tuesdays; 2pm on Sundays. The three person cast is Selene Faer as Jo, Jessica Lynn Rodriguez as Mary, and K. Clare Johnson as Celia. Contains partial nudity and adult themes and language.

Showing in Washington, DC, at The 1409 Playbill Café — a theatre bar and restaurant - at 1409 14th St. NW, between O and P Sts., near the Dupont Circle Metro station (Red Line) and the U Street/Cardozo station (Green Line). Phone: 202-265-3055

Tickets: \$15. For credit card purchases, please go to [boxofficetickets.com](http://boxofficetickets.com) or call 800-494-8497. To make a reservation and pay at the door (cash or check only), email [director@opencircletheatre.org](mailto:director@opencircletheatre.org) or call 240-683-0305. Reservations will be taken until 5:30 PM the day of the performance you wish to attend. Reserving wheelchair accessible seating in advance is recommended and wheelchair users should be

aware that there are no accessible bathrooms on site. Selected performances will offer audio description and sign language interpretation. Check [www.opencircletheatre.org](http://www.opencircletheatre.org) for dates and times.