



DARRETT SANDERS

OPEN FIST goes for a speakeasy setting during its "What Matters Now?/!" festival of short plays.

BY F. KATHLEEN FOLEY

‘What Matters’ at Open First

The essentials: This third annual “political pop-up” at Open Fist Company features 10-minute plays culled from more than 100 submissions. The 12 selections will be performed — eight or nine per evening — on a rotating basis. As in years past, the theater will be transformed into a casual speakeasy, complete with a corner bar and chairs and sofas on which to lounge.

Why this? The comfy setting belies the program’s serious intent. Open Fist started the festival after President Trump’s election, as artistic director Martha Demson thought about the role of theater in the aftermath. Demson and her readers searched out plays with narrative thrust that were neither heavy-handed nor slight. The result, Demson said, was an immediate hit.

Details: Open Fist Theatre Company, Atwater Village Theatre, 3269 Casitas Ave., Los Angeles. 8 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays, 7 p.m. Sundays; ends April 6. \$25-\$30. (323) 882-6912, openfist.org