

RISING STAR *Director Tom Dugdale*

By Christina Orlovsky Page, *San Diego Magazine*, September 2013

UC San Diego MFA graduate **Tom Dugdale**, 32, is an associate producer with La Jolla Playhouse's upcoming Without Walls (WoW) Festival, director of the festival's production of *Our Town*, UCSD lecturer, and co-founder of a new local performance project called *The Trip*.

What's your proudest achievement to date?

I was honored to win the Princess Grace Award this year at La Jolla Playhouse, a national award that's enabled me to spend time working in San Diego. I also had the chance after I left UCSD to work at a theater in Romania, and working internationally was a huge honor.

Who has inspired you?

The famous director Robert Woodruff came to UCSD and I asked him, "Do you ever wonder why you're doing this [theater]?" And he said: "I'm doing this because it's a model for how the world should work." People of divergent interests from all walks of life should be able to come into a room together and after three or four weeks, stand side by side and present a work together. There's something about that that keeps me

going. And I always look to my family. When I make something, I ask myself, “Will my folks get it?” No matter what I’m trying to do, as long as they’ll get it, I’m okay.

Tell us about The Trip:

The Trip is a new performance impulse—an idea co-founded by me and Josh Brody. We’re trying to return the idea of community to theater and connect the audience with the performance. One thing we happened upon early is food. There will be food at *Our Town* and we’re planning a *Romeo and Juliet* performance downtown structured around a spaghetti dinner. The audience would share the meal with the actors, and the show would revolve around that. The Trip is inspired by the two things closest to me in San Diego: UCSD and the WoW Festival.

What about the SD arts community makes you want to stay here?

An availability of space and an openness to experimentation with space and an accessibility that has been challenging for me to find elsewhere. I’m an outdoors guy, and there’s a beautifully thin membrane between the indoors and outdoors that finds itself in art. I’m also excited about continuing to be a part of UCSD because they have a history of art that’s forward-thinking. There’s a great communion of people here working in the arts and the universities.