

SARAH RUHL'S WOMEN:
GENDER, REPRESENTATION AND SUBVERSION IN *THE CLEAN HOUSE*,
EURYDICE AND *IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY*

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ABSTRACT

Sarah Ruhl is one of the most promising young playwrights working in the theatre today. While she is still in the early phases of her career, her work has garnered significant critical attention and has been produced by theatres across the nation. Much of the attention focused on Ruhl's work centers on her innovative and poetic sense of visual style and her use of magic theatricality. I am more interested in how Ruhl treats questions of femininity within her plays. This interest leads me to an analysis of Ruhl's women as characters and how they depict women's experience. On a deeper level, I hope to excavate Ruhl's *staging* of gender through a study of the representational forms she employs within her work and how they interact with strands of feminist theory. In particular, Ruhl's plays (particularly *The Clean House*, *Eurydice*, and *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*) suggest an analysis based in embodiment, looking and the gaze, and domesticity.