

POSTERS FROM C1

Occupiers.

The bull represents Wall Street, even for protesters who are camped far from Manhattan. The animal also bespeaks arrogance, which makes it ideal for Occupy's purposes.

One witty Occuprint poster depicts greed as a statue of the Monopoly game's iconic plutocrat, which is being toppled by a crowd the way monuments to Stalin and Saddam Hussein came down in recent memory. Disney's attorneys aside, Scrooge McDuck would also work. But the bull is better, and not just because it's not a cartoon character. The 11-foot-high Wall Street beast is hard-edged, outsize and heedless, just like certain investment firms.

Youth uprisings, even ones without demands, tend to look to their predecessors for imagery. So the Occupy posters include many clenched fists, an emblem identified with the late '60s and early '70s New Left. (Its use dates at least as far back as the Industrial Workers of the World in the early 20th century.)

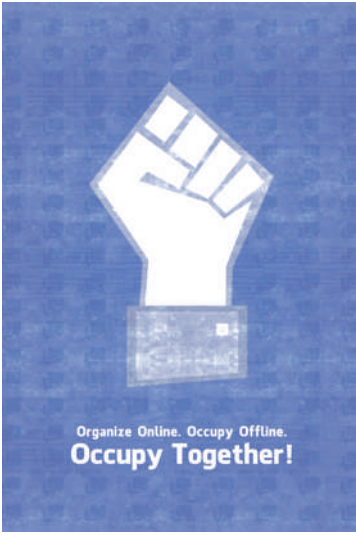
One of the most striking placards, which warns that "when you're in riot gear, everything looks like a riot," employs blotchy black type on a bright yellow backdrop, evoking the visual style of late '70s punk. A few signs, including one with the cosmic tagline "Occupy Our Lives," draw on another perennial influence: the oh-wow look of '60s psychedelia.

Aside from the bull and the word "occupy," the dominant motif is the 99 percent "us" vs. the 1 percent "them." "We are the 99 percent," insist several of the signs; "Time's up for the 1 percent," advises one. That math may be roughly correct, and these posters do show a global appeal; there's even one from Occupy Jakarta.

But the placards' confrontational graphics are a minority taste. They're meant for people who dream of being on the barricades, not for the ones who'd rather watch on TV when the tyrant's statue topples.

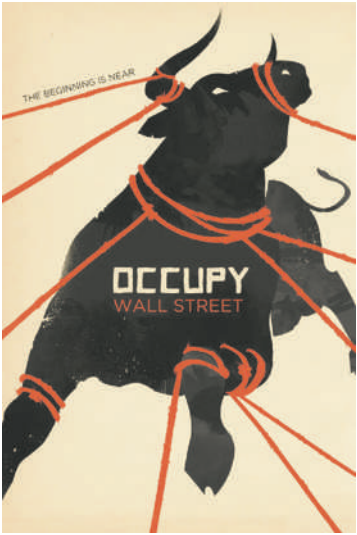
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STEVE ALFARO

TOGETHER: "Organize Online"



ALEXANDRA CLOTFELTER

CAUGHT: "The Beginning Is Near"



DAVE LOEWENSTEIN

OUR TURN: "Time's Up For the 1%"



ANTHONY NOMOROSA

SHUTDOWN: "Occupy DC"



RUS WOOTON

WAKE UP: "Occupy America"

# Stage presence and then some

THEATER FROM C1

ly, plain old selfishness.

It's an identifiably cosmopolitan and provincial L.A. that she conjures, from her embodiment of a callous casting director for a soft drink commercial, to a hyper-loquacious jail inmate with a crystal meth itch.

A Washington audience may not commune as knowingly as one from California with the spa, beach and exercise culture that Weedman evokes: There's a scene in a sauna with a witty pantomime involving breast implants, for instance, that takes you an extra second to process. And it does require some translation skills for an Atlantic brain to fully grasp how dominant a force body consciousness is on the opposite edge of the continent.

But the neuroses on display here are universal, and Weedman proves to be a witty ambassador of Pacific values, even as she trains a microscope on her own.

"Bust" is an account by the actress and playwright of her efforts to redirect outwardly her solipsistic life, by becoming a volunteer counselor in the Los Angeles County Jail system. "I just wanted to do something that wasn't about me," Weedman explains, playing herself in an orientation meeting for the volunteer program, Beyond Bars. "If I did one thing in my day that wasn't about my career — or weight loss — that would be okay."

Weedman occupies the bodies of her fellow recruits; the orientation leader; the guard who leads their tour of the jail; the prisoners to whom she's assigned; and other assorted chaplains, corrections officers and friends. The proceedings are muscled choreographed by director Allison Narver, with the excellent assist of Allen Hahn's well-defined lighting design. They help to underline the strengths of Weedman, one of those disciplined mimics who can summon a distinct intonation and posture for each character: She's an Anna Deavere Smith perched on the corner of Sunset and Vine.

Unlike Smith, though, the



CAROL PRATT

SKILL SETS: Lauren Weedman is a disciplined mimic who can summon a distinct intonation and posture for each character.

most satisfyingly fleshed-out character is the author herself. We learn, for example, just enough about the desperate conditions of each of her prisoners to understand her own limited usefulness as their liaison to the outside.

The Lauren Weedman she portrays in "Bust" has a compulsion for narrating her own wise-acre stream-of-consciousness in public, even on such inappropriate occasions as the introductory session for the jail volunteers. It's the self-deprecating, Woody Allen school of comedy: Her jokes typically don't seem to make the other people in her stories laugh. And there's always the tension in her storytelling of what happens when you're not being clearly understood.

This plays out particularly strongly in the other major strand of "Bust," which concerns a confessional article she writes for Glamour magazine, recounting a time in her adolescence when, she says, she made a spurious claim to have been raped. It was a cry for attention at a low point — she tells us no charges were brought against anyone as a result — and she adds that the offer to write came only after a third party confided the anecdote to the magazine editor from New York.

The journalistic result was a personal disaster for Weedman, who felt her admission had been

distorted in the editing of the article: Her impression of the editor, an uber-glib Manhattanite with the smarmy habit of addressing her as "girlfriend," is one of the juiciest the actress executes.

This story takes on added meaning during a confrontation with the inmate she counsels who is facing the most serious charges, and who asserts that her public defender has already assumed the worst about her. Without turning into an editorial itself, "Bust" allows us to see how Beyond Bars becomes an antidote to the poison of the entire Glamour episode.

Weedman is a natural observational artist — perhaps the single most important attribute for successful solo performance. To fill a stage entirely with one's own thoughts and gestures seems an act both foolhardy and brave. My hat is off to the brave fools like Weedman, who not only try, but can also pull it off.

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**Bust**  
written and performed by Lauren Weedman. Directed by Allison Narver. Set and lighting, Allen Hahn; sound, Mark Nichols; production stage manager, Eric Arnold. About 90 minutes. Through Dec. 18 at Studio Theatre, 1501 14th St. NW. Visit [www.studiotheatre.org](http://www.studiotheatre.org) or call 202-332-3300.

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