

the village

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THEATER

By Alisa Solomon

Though it's a little early to have a lot of faith in the Democratic thaw, it does look like theater is making room again for work that offers more sophisticated views of women's lives than, say, David Mamet—or Wendy Wasserstein. Or if the theater is not making room, women, at least, are taking it. And that alone is hopeful.

Interart has just remounted *The Breaks*, a poignant character study by Deb Margolin and Rae C. Wright, which had a short run there earlier in the year after developmental presentations at Dixon Place and P.S. 122. This lineage is important because it describes the route many alternative artists have carved out to bring work to life in the absence of institutional support.

The play is a 90-minute portrait of two working women, spun out in a series of short scenes—the cigarette breaks the women share each day in the broom closet of a nursing home. They relate silly anecdotes—Marian (Margolin) describes how she got stuck in a tight \$684 dress she once tried on

at Lord and Taylor. And they reveal their dreams—Betty (Wright) tells wistful tales of her trip with the union to Nicaragua right after the revolution. But it's through the little details that get parceled out in their keenly written stories that a full picture of their difficult lives emerges, lives of exhausting work, absent husbands, and disappointing children. And it's through their nonverbal exchanges—singing '50s pop tunes together, blowing intersecting smoke rings—that they build a solid intimacy, both reassuring and reliable.

Yet together, the two create a powerful and moving connection, delicately laying bare the development of a friendship measured out in cigarettes.



Rae C. Wright and Deb Margolin in *The Breaks*

AMY MEADOW/WOMEN'S INTERART CENTER

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