



NOW Festival 2023: Week Two

- Melissa Ferrari, Vanessa Hernández Cruz, Kevin Williamson

Dance, Music, Theater

AUGUST 24 - 26, 2023
8:30 PM

PRESENTED BY
REDCAT
Roy and Edna Disney
CalArts Theater
CaLARTS
California Institute of the Arts

We gratefully acknowledge that we operate on the traditional lands of the Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash peoples—including the Gabrieleño, Fernandefío, and Venturefío; members of the Takic and Chumashan language families; and other Indigenous peoples who made their homes in and around the area we now call Los Angeles. We honor their ancestors past, present, and future, and recognize their continued existence and contributions to our society.

NOW Festival 2023: Week Two

The 20th Annual New Original Works Festival continues with a program of works by Melissa Ferrari (CalArts MFA '19), Vanessa Hernández Cruz, and Kevin Williamson. With a sharp interest in rituals, fantasies and memories, these works use history and technology to formulate diverse, other-worldly futures that provide a counterpart to our reality while allowing us to examine the injustices around us.

New Original Works Festival 2023 is organized by Edgar Miramontes and Rolando Rodriguez with Sola Bamis (CalArts MFA '11), Dami Spain, and Rosanna Tavarez.

Runtime: Approx. 120 minutes, with intermission

MELISSA FERRARI: *RELICT: A PHANTASMAGORIA*

Artist and educator Melissa Ferrari's (CalArts MFA '19) *Relict: A Phantasmagoria* is an experimental documentary performed with antique magic lanterns and digitally projected hand-drawn animation. Invoking the history of magic lantern phantasmagoria as an exercise in belief and perception, this work stays true to its history, structured as a series of vignettes that navigate through various landscapes and contemporary mythologies. Nestled in a collage of audio interviews, recent creationist sermons and excerpts of pseudoscientific wildlife documentaries, Ferrari considers the zeitgeist of pseudoscience, fake news, religion, and documentary ethics collapsed within contemporary cryptozoology.

Created by MELISSA FERRARI

Magic Lanternists: MELISSA FERRARI, STEPHANIE DELAZERI

Slide Fabrication Assistance: BENNI QUINTERO

Animation: MELISSA FERRARI, JESSICA GOH, SAMMY LAMB

Sound Mix: CRAIG SMITH

To listen to the audio description of this performance, please request an assistive listening device by the bar. Please note: Relict: A Phantasmagoria contains gunshot sounds and strobe lights.

Melissa Ferrari is an experimental nonfiction animator, magic lanternist, and educator who seeks to acquaint folklores of the past with contemporary culture. In exposing peripheral histories, she aims to unveil the wonder that lies in the shadow of nonfiction, rather than fiction. Her practice engages with intersections of science and the supernatural, the mythification of pseudoscience, and the history of phantasmagoria and documentary.

Originally from Virginia, Melissa is now based in Los Angeles. Her films and lantern performances have been shown internationally in venues such as Hot Docs, Ottawa International Animation Festival, Hauser & Wirth, and Ann Arbor Film Festival. As an animated documentarian, her commissions have been featured on PBS, *The New York Times*, and the MOMA. She teaches nonfiction animation and expanded cinema, most recently at CalArts and LACHSA.
| melissaferrari.com / IG @melissa.a.ferrari

Stephanie Delazeri is an animator, illustrator and researcher. Her artistic practice is split between surreal horror and criticizing the methodology of history as a discipline, with an emphasis on American history. She has also worked at museums and theatrical venues, where she interweaves her artistic skills and historical research.

—BRIEF PAUSE—

VANESSA HERNÁNDEZ CRUZ: *EXHALE STATIC, INHALE FUMES*

Exhale Static, Inhale Fumes, by Disabled dance artist and activist Vanessa Hernández Cruz, is a solo dance work that examines the contradiction of over-consuming social media to the point of feeling isolated and disconnected. Inspired by Cruz's own experience with social media, screens and technology, as someone who counts on it as a way of survival like others in the Disabled community, this work ponders how technology can expand human connection, even if in today's reality, we mostly communicate through our screens.

Performance & Choreography by VANESSA HERNÁNDEZ CRUZ

Poetry & Visual Art by VANESSA HERNÁNDEZ CRUZ

Sound Design by KEILAN STAFFORD with incorporation excerpts of

“Before the Dawn” by EVANESCENCE

Voice by VANESSA HERNÁNDEZ CRUZ

Costume Design by ROBERT HUERTA

Lighting Design by CHU-HSUAN CHANG

Audio Description & Descriptor Program by VANESSA HERNÁNDEZ CRUZ

Audio Description Narration by NOHELY GOMEZ

“I scroll to feel something. Human. We praise in-person connection. Forgetting people like me.”

This project was supported in part, by a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant.

Special thank you to the Foundation for Contemporary Arts for funding a part of this work. Thank you to my amazing family, Maria Silvia Hernández & Nancy Cruz, who are my incredible support system! I appreciate the continual wisdom of the Disability Justice Framework by Sins Invalid that deeply informs my work.

Thank you to Rolando Rodriguez, Jacques Boudreau, Diana Wyenn, Tony Shayne, Chu-Hsuan Chang, Pete Pace, & to all the personnel for all the support. Thank you to REDCAT for this amazing opportunity & for the beautiful work that was put into the REDCAT NOW Festival!

Exhale Static, Inhale Fumes includes a film that will be presented with subtitles. To listen to the audio description of this performance, please request an assistive listening device by the bar. Please note: Exhale Static, Inhale Fumes contains loud and distorted sounds, glitching effects, and strobe lights.



Descriptor Program: The Audio Description Companion

Direct Link: qrco.de/beHPZO

Vanessa Hernández Cruz (she, her, ella) is an interdependent Chicana Disabled dance artist and Disability Justice activist. She is from the unceded lands of the Tongva & Kizh lands colonially known as Los Angeles, California. She holds her BA in Dance Science from California State University Long Beach.

Over the past few years, Vanessa's dance work has been presented nationally & internationally. Her work is intergalactic and limitless from the confines of this world. She creates to explore the hidden roots of the fabrics of her being and brings to life other worlds that have power to challenge our perceptions of time and our humanity.

Through her artistic practice, Vanessa presents the audience with thought-provoking pieces that ignite the imagination & explores Disability aesthetics in contemporary forms and experimentation. Through dance, community, and interdependence she believes that collective liberation can be achieved. | galaxiesdance.info / IG @galaxiesdance

—INTERMISSION—

KEVIN WILLIAMSON: SAFE AND SOUND

Choreographer Kevin Williamson's *Safe and Sound* is a meditation on self-preservation and solidarity where bodies morph through emotional states to combat anti-LGBTIQ+ aggression. Shifting from punctuated tones of grief, abandonment and anger, to fluid strength and communal pleasure, this ode to alternative nightlife spaces is accompanied by a sound score from Anna Luisa Petrisko, film interludes by Taso Papadakis, and fashion designed by Kelsey Vidic.

Direction and Choreography by KEVIN WILLIAMSON in collaboration with performers

Performers: KAYLA JOHNSON, JUSTIN MORRIS, ALEX RIX, KEVIN WILLIAMSON

Film Interludes Directed by TASO PAPADAKIS, KEVIN WILLIAMSON

Original Sound by ANNA LUISA PETRISKO

Recorded Music: "Trigger Protection Mantra" by JHENÉ AIKO, "Frances" by WAAJEED

Costume Design by KELSEY VIDIC

Lighting Design by KATELAN BRAYMER

Choreographer's Note: The process of making Safe and Sound started several years ago in response to horrific violence enacted on queer people in spaces that were intended to heal and protect. Unfortunately, the need to grieve and search for solace is ever present in queer communities. Sharing this today feels as necessary as when we first began.

Special thanks to Scripps College, Arletta Anderson, Ronnie Brosterman, Jasmine Jawato, Samantha Mohr, and the REDCAT production team.

Please note: Safe and Sound contains references to LGBTIQ+ hate speech, violence, and self-harm.

Kevin Williamson (he/him) is an L.A. born and based dance artist whose choreography focuses on themes of queer belonging. He is a Lester Horton Award recipient, Bates Educators Fellow, and Center Theatre Group Sherwood Award Finalist. Presentations at venues include DanspaceProject, REDCAT, Dixon Place, CounterPulse, LACMA, Austin's OUTsider Festival, Minnesota Fringe, Diversionary Theater, and the Beijing Dance Festival. Theater and opera work includes choreography for Washington National Opera, Atlantic Theater Company, the Juilliard School, Geffen Playhouse, Yale Theater, and Opera UCLA. As a performer, Kevin danced for David Rousseve/REALITY, Maria Gillespie's Oni Dance, LA Contemporary Dance Company, Robert Moses' Kin, David Gordon's Pick Up Performance and in projects for Keith Johnson, Victoria Marks, Cheng-chieh Yu, Ryan Heffington and more. He received his MFA in Choreography from UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance and is currently Associate Professor of Dance and Chair of the Scripps College Dance Department in Claremont, CA.
| williamsonkevin.com / IG @kdubdancing

Anna Luisa Petrisko (she/they) is a musician and interdisciplinary artist working in video, performance, installation, and interactive media. Her art is invested in the sacred as much as it is interested in technological speculation, exploring future and ancient ideas at a non-linear tempo. She investigates the body as a site of paradox - transcendent of time, space and form. Her work is grounded in community and archiving histories. She collaborates with many artists and friends. These shared works build relationships and cultural communion. She is currently developing an experimental opera titled *All Time Stop Now*, which will premiere at REDCAT in Fall 2023.

Taso Papadakis (he/him) is a commercial art photographer and award-winning filmmaker whose published work includes a film in the permanent collection of the Joseph Campbell Foundation.

He currently makes images for Los Angeles Opera, UCLA Opera, and is often published in the LA Times. He photographs and films recurring documentary assignments and outreach programs in El Salvador and Mexico, and portraiture assignments for hospice programs.

Kelsey Vidic (she/her), born in Florida, received an MFA in Costume Design at the University of Texas at Austin. Working with bodies, textiles and space, she has collaborated with companies the Intel Corporation, Opera på Skåret in Kopparberg, Sweden, American Players Theatre and LA Contemporary Dance Company all under varying design titles. Vidic currently works as the Costume Designer and Shop Manager for the Dance Department at California State University, Long Beach. She will continue to listen with her eyes and always prefers the present moment.

Justin Morris (they/them, fluctuating pronouns) is a transdisciplinary artist based in Southern California. They began cultivating their practice at a young age at family functions and have continued to tie and ground their work in black and queer aesthetics, playfulness, and ratchedy. Justin has performed/collaborated in performances and dance-based works with artists Jay Carlon, Sue Roginski and Kirsten Johansen, Bernard Brown, Kevin Williamson, Alex Shilling, Colleen Thomas, visual artist David Lamelas, Rebecca Bryant, Rosa Rodriguez-Fraiser, and Summation Dance Company. Justin holds a BFA from CSU Long Beach's Department of Dance, an MFA from UC Riverside, and was recently a faculty member at Renaissance High School for the Arts in Long Beach.

Alex Rix (she/her/they) is originally from Western Massachusetts and made the move to Los Angeles to continue her dance education at California State University, Long Beach, completing her BFA in Dance and BA option in Dance Science. Alex works as a Licensed Massage Therapist, specializing in providing accessible bodywork for the dance community. Through bodywork, authentic movement, and dance, Rix is interested in cultivating and sharing a holistic approach to the body and moving through life. Recently, Alex co-produced a show series titled *Show 'N Tell* in hopes of expanding the Long Beach dance community and cultivating sustainable performance opportunities for local artists. Within the year, they have worked with Summation Dance, Rebecca Lemme / Acts of Matter, Kevin Williamson, and Gianna Burright.

Kayla Johnson (she/her) born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, began her training at Art Of Dance and Dance Arts Centre and continued training at St. Paul Conservatory for performing artists. While there, she had the opportunity to perform with TU Dance company in *With Love* at the Ordway Theater. Kayla received her BFA in Dance from California Institute of the Arts and since has performed in works by Rosanna Gamson, Becca Lemme, Kira Blazek, Joan H Padeo, and Kevin Williamson. Kayla's choreography includes Prince's *Welcome 2 America* album release and Celebration 2022 at Paisley Park. She went on to dance for the Minnesota Timberwolves and found love recently teaching Zumba and Dance Jam at Lifetime Fitness.

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Associate Technical Director, Lighting: CHU-HSUAN CHANG

Audio Engineer: JOSHUA HILL

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UPCOMING AT REDCAT

New Original Works Festival 2023: Week Three

August 31 - September 2

Erica Bitton: *Vacuum Girl*

Vacuum Girl is a live presentation of a television pilot written and performed by Erica Bitton (CalArts BFA '10) that follows Jane, a 31-year old Jewish actor living through consistent, surreal dissociations in New York. What begins as a clear “tell me if you see what I see” tale, soon blurs the lines of theater and film, of writer and character, as Bitton speaks every line spoken by every character while behind a booth with LED lights and a mixing board. It is a fast and fluid, meticulously-timed story—and Bitton is in complete control of it.

Mark Golanco: *The Ghost of Ted Dragon*

The Ghost of Ted Dragon is a comedic, cabaret-style performance with original music by multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Mark Golanco, who embodies ballet dancer Ted Dragon and his lover, the painter Alfonso Ossorio—a New York City love story that spanned decades. Written from Golanco’s perspective as a queer Filipino artist, Golanco sings and plays viola, electric guitar and harp, while accompanied by an ensemble of dancers. The diaristic performance evokes traditional folk-music storytelling, classic ballad-love songs, and rock and roll to create a living gay history, demonstrating the importance and bittersweet longing of connecting with our long-departed queer ancestors.

Huntrezz Janos and Antigoni Tsagkaropoulou: *DENTAXUVIA*

DENTAXUVIA is a multi-layered performance that fuses the unique artistic visions of Huntrezz Janos (CalArts BFA '18) and Antigoni Tsagkaropoulou by using technology, sculpture, and poetry to conjure a fragmented futuristic scene of ecocyberfeminist insurgents. In this sci-fi explosion of visuals, the tangible meets the intangible as Huntrezz and Antigoni perform in wearable sculptures and as avatars in their virtual world. The result is an act of queer resistance that transports audiences on a supernatural journey and ignites belief that anyone can shed old skins and reclaim agency in the face of oppressive regimes.



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