



NOW Festival 2024: Week Two

• **Ajani Brannum, Sophia Cleary,**
Tijuana Dance Company

Dance, Music, Theater

November 14-16, 2024

8:30 PM

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 people including the Gabrieleño, Fernandeño, and Ventureño; 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 2024: WEEK TWO

The 21st Annual New Original Works continues with a program of works by Ajani Brannum, Sophia Cleary, and Tijuana Dance Company. Committed to an investigation of history and contemporary norms, these works use humor, improvisation, and multidisciplinary collaboration to disrupt power dynamics, craft collective rituals of care, and build new modes of community abundance.

NOW Festival was organized by Katy Dammers, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Performing Arts, with Rolando Rodriguez, Administrative Manager, through an open application process with NOW alumni Marissa Brown (NOW '21) and Emily Mast (NOW '12 & '16).

Approx. 90 minutes with intermission

AJANI BRANNUM: *CONGRESS*

As a national mythos slides into decay, *CONGRESS* builds a crypt for its ghosts. In this performance, five (alleged) men move, speak, and sing as representatives of both themselves and their historical inheritances. They conjure and confront patriarchy's ghosts—descending into the space where social violence takes physical, psychic, and energetic shape. This theatrical convening extends Ajani Brannum's investigation into what performers do on behalf of those who witness them. Part ceremony and part town hall, this interdisciplinary performance draws the audience in to confront bodily forms of oppression and remake the roles that hold together a suffering society.

This production contains mature content.

Creators: Ajani Brannum with Héctor Alvarez,
Cory Jones, Juniper Jones, Azwaw Medkour
Direction and Text: Ajani Brannum

ROY AND EDNA DISNEY CALARTS THEATER

Sound: Juniper Jones

Video: Héctor Alvarez

Lighting Design: Chu-Hsuan Chang

Thanks: Emily Mast, Max Martin,

Mandolin Burns, Stacy Dawson Stearns, and the generous contributions of individual supporters:

Kristel Baldoz, Jay Carlon, Cale Crawford,

Katherine Fisher, Miguel Gutierrez, Christine Lee,

Arushi Singh, Adam Stasiw, Ashley Stewart,

Tom Tsai, Lisa Wahlander

Ajani Brannum observes the forces that persist - for better, for worse, for otherwise - in and through our living. They have created spaces of encounter with REDCAT, ODC, Human Resources Los Angeles, Materials & Applications, Highways Performance Space, Los Angeles Performance Practice, in classrooms, on tabletops and screens, and when no one is looking. Born in Anchorage, Alaska, they hold an AB in English and a Certificate in Dance from Princeton University, and a PhD in Culture and

Performance from UCLA. They are also an alum of the Cecilia Weston Spiritual Academy, helmed by Jade T. Perry.

Héctor Alvarez (he/him) is an interdisciplinary artist and scholar working in performance, theater, film, and contemporary opera. His work interrogates experiences of incarceration, oppression, violence, history, and identity. Héctor holds an MFA in Directing from CalArts, an MA in Anglo-American modernist literature from University College London, and a BA in theater and international studies from Macalester College (USA).

Cory Jones is a designer, fabricator, installation artist, and performer. Jones works through narratives of racial, cultural, and sexual identity through textile sculptures that take the shape of puppetry, soft sculpture, and production design. Jones employs drag and cabaret aesthetics to communicate personal tragedies, successes, and a humorous approach to the self.

Juniper Jones (b. 1997, Detroit, MI) is an interdisciplinary artist whose work explores the pliancy of memory and embodiment. Focused on the confluence of Black familial archives and obfuscation, Jones's practice spans photography, sculpture, mixed media, and audio as intervention. Their work reveals present realities and materializes new futures and for queer and trans bodies.

Azwaw Medkour is a graphic designer from Grand Rapids, MI. He has been a professional timekeeper for his entire life.

—BRIEF PAUSE—

SOPHIA CLEARY: *READ THE ROOM*

Framed as a theatrical rehearsal between an Actor and her Director, *Read The Room* reconsiders these roles and their relationship to the audience in an unsettling, comedic, and outrageous experience. Interdisciplinary artist Sophia Cleary investigates

the tension between script and improvisation in theater and the illusion of control in a performance that embraces liveness: you cannot fast forward or rewind—you can only move without knowing what comes next. This two-hander play manifests as a metaphor for the contemporary climate where fact and fiction are no longer discernible and investigates what laughter seemingly condones—ultimately calling attention to what contracts can be upended rather than being consumed as spectacle.

Writer, Performer, Director: Sophia Cleary

Performer: Joshua Kilcoyne

Assistant Director: Amrita Dhaliwal

Costume Designer: Greta Langenberg

Movement Consulting: Emily Barasch

Lighting Design: Chu-Hsuan Chang

Funded, in part, by the 95 contributors of my crowd-funding campaign. Special thanks to Dinah Mendes for her generous contribution.

ROY AND EDNA DISNEY CALARTS THEATER

*This production contains mature content,
depictions of violence, and loud sounds*

Sophia Cleary is an interdisciplinary artist focused on performance and liveness. She has presented her work in Scotland at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, in NYC at the Center for Performance Research, Danspace Project, The Chocolate Factory, Dixon Place, and The Kitchen, and in LA at the Hammer Museum, MoCA, and Human Resources Gallery. Sophia is the founder and coordinator of works-in-progress performance series REHEARSAL, where she has advised over 75 performing artists in the development of their work. You can catch her performing monthly in LA as a part of The Idiot Workshop's ensemble, Cruel Babes. | sophiacleary.com

Joshua Kilcoyne is a Massachusetts native currently residing in Los Angeles. He is a founding member of LA-based Bouffon troupe iL FUNGO.

Amrita Dhaliwal: amrita (uhm-ri-tha), she/her, daughter of Tehsel Singh Dhaliwal and the late Balbir Kaur Dhaliwal, is an award-winning Punjabi Sikh American comedian, educator and director in Los Angeles. In supporting Sophia Cleary's work, she asks the viewer to consider the art of watching and being watched. | amritadhaliwal.com

—INTERMISSION—

TIJUANA DANCE COMPANY: *SALÓN MÉXICO*

The Tijuana Dance Company presents *Salón México*, an examination of the borderland staged in a dance hall. Directed and choreographed by Dulce Escobedo, this dance theater piece reveals the stories and complex interactions that pulse through Tijuana's nightlife. An intricate choreography of identity, power, and survival emerges as individuals carve out spaces for personal and collective expression on the dance floor.

ROY AND EDNA DISNEY CALARTS THEATER

Director, Choreographer, Co-Producer:

Dulce Escobedo Muñoz

Co-Producer, Scenic Designer:

Pablo de Larrañaga Aramoni

Dramaturg: Luna Izpisua Rodriguez

Sound Design and Composition: Braulio Lam

Lighting Designer: Chu-Hsuan Chang

Costume Design and Styling: Ana Lopez

Music Editing: David Frias

Cinematographer: Ángel Estrada

Film Sound Designer: Tonalli Magaña

Cast: Cristóbal Dearie, Marianna Escobedo,

Elie Korio, Sara Ramirez,

Pablo Francisco Ruvalcaba, Tristan Samson,

Linda Paola Varela, Amanda Zenaida

Presented in Spanish. This production contains mature content, depictions of violence, and loud sounds.

Founded by Dulce Escobedo in 2020, **Tijuana Dance Company (TJDC)** explores Tijuana's people and history through dance. Now directed by Dulce and Marianna Escobedo, TJDC creates an innovative movement language that embraces both dancers and non-dancers, expanding perspectives on dance and identity. TJDC is committed to inclusion and sharing Tijuana's stories beyond borders.

Dulce Escobedo Muñoz (Tijuana, MX, 1982) is a choreographer and artist from Tijuana. She holds a degree in dance from the Gloria Campobello School of Dance and an MFA in choreography from CalArts. She is the director and faculty at the Conservatorio de Danza México. Founder of the Veinte Once International Dance Festival, through which she received the FONCA 2019 award. Founder of Tijuana Dance Company, offering a perspective on the city of Tijuana and the northern border. In just four years, she has established

a clear statement within the border community, cultivating an active audience for dance in any space.

Pablo de Larrañaga Aramoni is a Mexican Experience Designer, passionate about the power of shared experiences to reveal universal truths and inspire collective action. With a BFA in Experience Design and Production from CalArts, he crafts work that invites audiences to engage, reflect, and imagine together, crafting time and space for new forms of interaction and understanding. Currently, Pablo works at STURDY., where he contributes to stage design, graphic design, and concept development for concerts and live experiences, including projects with artists like Peso Pluma and Rauw Alejandro. Pablo extends special thanks to his parents for their support from the start.

Luna Izpisua Rodriguez (b.1994) is a Romani Spanish-American artist working across performance, sculpture, video, and text. She holds

an MFA in Art and Theater Directing (CalArts), an ME in Industrial Engineering (UC Berkeley), and a BS in Chemistry (UC Berkeley). Luna is a recipient of the Princess Grace Award, the CalArts Interdisciplinary Grant, and the Fung Fellowship.

Braulio Lam is a Mexican-American electronic musician involved in Tijuana's experimental scene. He blends ambient, dub, techno, and glitch through synthesis, vocal recording, and live processing, grounding his work with his background as a guitarist and loop creation.

Stylist and photographer **Ana Lopez** is known for capturing compelling, culturally rich visuals that celebrate diversity and individuality. Her most recent project, Tianguis NYC, is focused on showcasing contemporary Mexican fashion designers.

Cristóbal Dearie is an actor with more than 20 years working in the performing arts in the Tijuana/

San Diego area. He has a BA in Theater from UABC. He can be seen in projects like *Welcome to the Norte*, *Fear the Walking Dead* (AMC), *Ingobernable* (Netflix), *The Frontera Project* (Tijuana Hace Teatro), among others.

Marianna Escobedo Muñoz is a performing artist with a degree in dance from Universidad de las Américas Puebla. Her work explores the relationship between dance and public space. Founder and artistic director of the Conservatorio de Danza México and the Veinte Once International Dance Festival, she was awarded FONCA support in 2019 for her contributions to Mexican art. She is part of Colectivo Mover la Ciudad, a project promoting collective imagination for sustainable mobility in Tijuana. Since 2022, she has been the co-director of Tijuana Dance Company.

Elie Korio May | every wall built to divide fall. From Tijuana to Occupied Palestine. Elie prays for an end to genocide, apartheid, and occupation ALL at

the hands of fascist zionists. Elie prays for the dream realized of returning to his ancestral home in the Levant without colonial violence: an actual birthright.

Sara Ramirez is a scenic creator, contemporary dancer, actress, performance artist, manager, and educator. With a degree in Performing Arts from UAQ, she co-directs the Purple Dancing Club, a project dedicated to women, and the Kintsugi Teatro Danza company in Tijuana. From 2019 to 2023, she collaborated with the Péndulo Cero Contemporary Dance company.

Pablo Francisco Ruvalcaba was raised in Tijuana, holds a BFA in Dance from Juilliard and an MFA from NYU Tisch. He joined the Limón Dance Company in 1996, performing as a soloist for 20 years, and is a founding member of Movement Migration. Ruvalcaba teaches Limón technique and repertoire worldwide.

Tristan Samson is an LA-based artist born in the Philippines who is passionate at delving in all forms

of performing arts. He is currently pursuing his MFA in Acting at CalArts and is a proud member of Burat Wangi, an Indonesian Gamelan group that promotes Balinese traditions through, music, dance and drama.

Linda Paola Varela is a performer, actor, and film/video artist based in Los Angeles, originally from Cananea, Sonora. Linda is interested in exploring the complexities of the human experience from the lens of being socialized as female in a patriarchal/machista society. She is currently completing her MFA in Film/Video at CalArts.

Amanda Zenaida is a Mexican-Filipina actor from the San Diego-Tijuana border. After signing with LA Models in 2018, she moved to LA where her passion for acting grew and she made her theatrical and film debut. Zenaida's worked alongside artists such as Tarsem, Harmony Korine, Ken Jong, and Zoe Kravitz.

Views expressed in language herein is that of the artists solely and not CalArts/REDCAT.

UPCOMING AT REDCAT

NOW Festival 2024: Week Three

November 21-23

NOW Festival concludes with works by Bret Easterling, Mallory Fabian, and Kensaku Shinohara.

rafa esparza, MUXX, among others

Live Night: Cruising Bodies, Spirits, and Machines

December 7

Performances by LA-based artist rafa esparza, Mexico City/Oaxaca-based collective MUXX, and others that engage with machines, AI, and avatars.

Holland Andrews

Where The Apple Fell

December 14

Vocalist, clarinetist, and composer Holland Andrews crafts a new sonic world.

REDCAT CREW

Stage Manager: Christa Troester

Lighting Programmer: Jerrel Milan

Deck: Dan Stevens, Magneto Morgan

Audio Engineer: Shivani Desai

Audio Assistant: Magneto Morgan

QLab: Scott Garner

Camera Operator: Natalie Nicholas

REDCAT STAFF

**Jacques Boudreau, Facilities and Production
Manager**

Jheanelle Brown, Film Programming

**Chu-Hsuan Chang, Associate Technical Director,
Lighting**

**Brent Charles, Box Office and Visitor Services
Manager**

**Katy Dammers, Deputy Director and Chief
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Talia Heiman, Assistant Curator

Allison Keating, Deputy Director, Finance and
Operations

Daniela Lieja Quintanar, Chief Curator and
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