



NOW Festival 2024: Week One

• **Eliza Bagg, Rohan Chander, George R. Miller;  
Bernard Brown; Meena Murugesan**

Dance, Music, Theater

**November 7-9, 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 ONE**

The 21st Annual New Original Works kicks off with a program of works by Eliza Bagg, Rohan Chander, George R. Miller, Bernard Brown, and Meena Murugesan. 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.

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*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**

**ELIZA BAGG, ROHAN CHANDER,  
GEORGE R. MILLER: 7 EARLY SONGS**

*7 Early Songs* is an opera song cycle created by composer-performers Eliza Bagg and Rohan Chander in collaboration with director George R. Miller. Framed by celebrated composer Alban Berg's rarely-staged song cycle of the same name, *Sieben frühe lieder* (1905-1908), this new work interweaves Berg's music with arrangements of the existing material for voice, electronics, and synthesizers, along with original compositions by Bagg and Chander that draw upon a wide set of musical and historical references. Miller stages the work as a series of poetic tableaux, tracing the lonely narrator's shadowy visions as she weaves in and out of reality, obscuring and resisting the urgency of societal and climate threats.

*Presented in German. This production contains strobe lights and simulation of drug consumption.*

**Vocalist and Co-composer:** Eliza Bagg

**Co-composer and Music Production:**

Rohan Chander

**Adapted from** Alban Berg's

*Sieben Frühe Lieder* (c. 1905-1908)

**Director:** George R. Miller

**Set Designer and Costume Designer:**

John Pete Hardy

**Lighting Designer:** Kaitlin Trimble

**Assistant Director:** Matilda Sakamoto

*Supported, in part, by a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant and an anonymous donation.*

**Eliza Bagg** is an experimental vocalist and composer. She is known for her “ethereal” aesthetic (*New York Times*) and unique performance and improvisational practice. Bagg has performed operatic roles in venues from the Komische Oper Berlin to the Prototype Festival, is a member of Roomful of Teeth, and has soloed with the NY and

LA Philharmonics. Bagg's compositional work combines classical forms, pop aesthetics, and historically informed performance with electronic processing to explore the "valley between authenticity and artifice" (*The Guardian*). She has been in residence as a composer at Yaddo and Avaloch Farm and releases albums under the artist name Lisel.

**Rohan Chander** (a.k.a BAKUDI SCREAM) is a media artist and electronic musician based in the United States. Described as "hypersensory" (*Washington Post*) and "remarkably alive" (*The Wire*), Chander's work considers questions of postcoloniality in the diaspora through hindoo historical research and speculative fiction. Chander has been commissioned by organizations such as the Barlow Endowment, Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Matt Marks Impact Fund, and the Donaueschingen Festival. His works have been performed by Yarn/Wire, the International Contemporary Ensemble,

Alarm Will Sound, Chromic Duo, So Percussion, and Vicky Chow. BAKUDI SCREAM won the 2022 Guadearmus Prize for Music Composition.

**George R. Miller** is a director and producer of operatic performance, deeply dedicated to celebrating and reimagining classical repertoire, as well as developing and championing newly created works. Miller has a strong interest in form, text, image, and gesture in his stagings, often interrogating themes of embodiment. His productions have recently been described as “stunning” (*LA Dance Chronicle*), “superbly directed”, “viscerally grounding”, and having “undeniable impact” (*SF Classical Voice*). Professional highlights include directorial work presented by Opera Philadelphia, Long Beach Opera, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Opera Saratoga, Pioneer Works, The Berggruen Institute, and Wild Up among others.

**John Pete Hardy** is a New York City based production designer with twenty years of experience, working across a broad expanse of mediums that include film, theatre, costume, and scenic. Currently he is an MFA candidate at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale.

**Kaitlin Trimble** is a lighting designer for experiential works of theater, opera, and dance. Her most recent work includes designing *Ipsa Dixit* with Long Beach Opera and Martha Graham Dance Academy, and assisting on *Yellow Face* (Broadway premiere). M.F.A. UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television.

**Matilda Sakamoto** is from Los Angeles. Matilda has performed in dance and theater productions including *Sleep No More* in New York City and Apple's "Snap" AirPods piece. She was chosen to be a dance resident at Art Omi and Jacob's Pillow. She received her BFA from the Juilliard School.



—BRIEF PAUSE—

**MEENA MURUGESAN: *DRAVIDIAN FUTURITIES:*  
CHAPTER II**

*Dravidian Futurities: Chapter II* dives into the deep indigo waters where the Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea meet. Murugesan investigates the space where a sunken landmass once connected South India and Sri Lanka to East Africa and West Asia to consider the connections across dark melanin, caste abolition, syncretic spiritual systems, and earth-reverent rituals. Together with an ensemble of diasporic artists based in Los Angeles—D’Lo, Seema Hari and Susu Attar—they craft a surreal visual art, movement, and music ritual to re-earth ethical possibilities of being together.

**Director, Video Artist, and Performer:**

Meena Murugesan

**Production Designer and Performer: Susu Attar**

**Composer and Performer: Seema Hari**

**Poet and Performer: D'Lo**

**Dramaturg and Cinematographer: d. Sabela grimes**

**Textile Sculpture: Meena Murugesan, Susu Attar**

**Lighting Designer: Chu-Hsuan Chang**

*Supported, in part, by The Mellon Foundation.*

**Meena Murugesan** is a video, movement and textile artist living on unceded Tongva-Kizh land, colonially known as Los Angeles. Meena creates experimental non-linear narratives at the intersection of live performance, video art installation, and social issues. Grappling with the practices of improvisation, somatic bodywork, brahminized bharatanatyam, collage, projection mapping, contemplative documentary, and textile art, Meena is committed to an anti-racist, anti-caste, feminist, queer, melanin-rich creative liberatory practice. | [vimeo.com/meenakshi](https://vimeo.com/meenakshi) / [@meenakshiproductions](https://www.instagram.com/meenakshiproductions)

**Susu Attar** is a multimedia artist born in Baghdad and raised in Los Angeles. Her individual and communal practices explore themes including mourning, hospitality, healing and renewal. Susu's commitment to building narratives that open up future possibilities has extended her practice to production design, curating, creative direction and world building. | [susuattar.com](http://susuattar.com) / [@susuhantusu](https://www.instagram.com/susuhantusu)

**Seema Hari** is a non-binary, DJ, producer, multi-hyphenate artist and activist focused on collective liberation. Through films, photography, music and poetry they imagine liberated futures born from annihilating colorism, casteism, queerphobia and unraveling the strings that connect different forms of oppression. | [@seemahari](https://www.instagram.com/seemahari)

**D'Lo** is an Ilankai Tamil-American community-based actor/writer/comic. His work ranges from poetry, plays, solo theater, essays, stories and stand-up comedy. | [dlocokid.com](http://dlocokid.com) / [@dlocokid](https://www.instagram.com/dlocokid)

**d. Sabela grimes** – be an interdisciplinary storyteller, sonic ARKivist, movement composer cultivating a devoted interest in Afribiquitous life practices; sonic-kinetic spectrums that be infinite, multi-dimensional and distinct manifestations of wombniversal consciousness. | @yameansupreme

—INTERMISSION—

**BERNARD BROWN: *SISSIES: SOMETHING PERFECT BETWEEN OURSELVES***

Choreographer Bernard Brown spotlights a community of seven Black and Brown men, accompanied by a live DJ, Defacto X, in an uplifting dance performance that celebrates the Black Gay bar as a Queer haven. Taking its title—*Sissies: Something Perfect Between Ourselves*—from the disco-era ballad by Black Queer music icon Sylvester and Marlon B. Ross’s text *Sissy Insurgencies: A Racial Anatomy of Unfit Manliness*, this work conjures a future where Queer Men of

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Color craft their own narratives as central to society. While they swirl, swish and kiki through disco and R&B songs highlighting the lost generation of Queer icons who changed the world, Brown prompts a reconsideration of understandings of masculinity, sexuality, and connection through embodied discourse, text, and sonic power.

**Choreography:** Bernard Brown

**Additional Choreography:** J'Sun Howard

**Music:** DeFacto X

**Additional Sound:** *Sound Barrier: Sylvester*

**Costumes:** Arrington Fleming

**Performers:** Alex Perez, Charles Pierson,  
Damon Green, John Santos, Joseph Stevens,  
Maxima Lyght, Malachi Middleton

**Lighting Designer:** Chu-Hsuan Chang

**Durag Construction:** Damon Green

*Made with support from Lula Washington, Deborah Brockus, UCSD Department of Theatre and Dance.*

**Bernard Brown** is a Los Angeles-based choreographer, arts activist, and educator who situates their work at the intersection of Blackness, Queerness, and belonging. Brown also serves as Director of Bernard Brown/bbmoves, presenting choreography for stage, specific sites, film, and opera globally. Brown facilitates educational experiences internationally, namely in Korea, Panama, Burkina Faso, and Brazil, and across the US. A first-generation college graduate, Brown is an Assistant Professor of Dance at University of California, San Diego, Certified Katherine Dunham Technique Instructor, and a California Arts Council Established Artist Fellow. The *Los Angeles Times* has called him “...the incomparable Bernard Brown...” | [bbmoves.org](http://bbmoves.org)

Los Angeles-based DJ/producer and founder of Black Bass Collective, **DeFacto X** has emerged as a key figure in the queer black underground music scene. His unique style allows him to infuse sounds

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**ROY AND EDNA DISNEY CALARTS THEATER**

from his various travels across the globe, and creates genre bending sets.

**J'Sun Howard** is a Chicago-based dancemaker who creates intimate performances that explore the themes of generosity, love, and compassion among Black and Brown men. Currently, he is a U.S.-Japan Friendship Commission Creative Arts Fellow, where he is developing a new work for the 2025 World Expo in Osaka.

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## **REDCAT CREW**

**Stage Manager:** Christa Troester

**Lighting Programmer:** Jerrel Milan

**Deck:** Pete Sauber, Dan Stevens, Shivani Desai

**Audio Engineer:** Magneto Morgan

**Audio Assistant:** Shivani Desai

**QLab:** Scott Garner

**Camera Operator:** Natalie Nicholas

## UPCOMING AT REDCAT

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

*NOW Festival 2024: Week Two*

November 14-16

**Bret Easterling, Mallory Fabian, Kensaku Shinohara**

*NOW Festival 2024: Week Three*

November 21-23

**rafa esparza, MUXX, among others**

*Live Night: Cruising Bodies, Spirits, and Machines*

December 7

**Holland Andrews**

*Where The Apple Fell*

December 14



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