

## LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES COMPLETE PROGRAMMING FOR 2023 WITHOUT WALLS (WOW) FESTIVAL

ACCLAIMED ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF IMMERSIVE AND SITE-INSPIRED WORK  
TO BE PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SAN DIEGO SYMPHONY AT  
THE RADY SHELL AT JACOBS PARK™ APRIL 27 – 30

EVENT WILL BE FREE OF CHARGE AND WILL FEATURE MORE THAN 20 THRILLING PROJECTS  
BY LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse is pleased to announce complete programming for its **2023 Without Walls (WOW) Festival** of immersive and site-inspired work. Presented in association with the **San Diego Symphony**, the 2023 WOW Festival will take place **April 27 – 30** at **The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park**. Please visit [wowfestival.org](http://wowfestival.org) for more information.

Like previous WOW Festivals, the 2023 event will feature four action-packed days of theatre, dance, music, puppetry, spectacle events, and more, with multiple performances by acclaimed local, national and international artists occurring throughout the weekend. All projects at the 2023 WOW Festival will be offered **free of charge**, with reservations recommended for select performances with limited capacity. Reservations will open on April 4.

Joining the 2023 WOW Festival lineup will be **360**, from The Netherlands' **Benjamin “Monki” Kuitenbrouwer & TENT**; ***Brassroots District: Live in the Lot Summer '73***, from the Los Angeles-based **Brassroots District**; ***The Cell Plays***, from San Diego's **Playwrights Project**; ***Fair Trade***, from Philadelphia-based artists **Jessica Creane and Yannick Trapman-O'Brien**; ***It's Not That Way, It's This Way***, from France's **Galmae**; ***Moving Spaces***, from **San Diego Dance Theatre** (WOW Festival productions of *Senior Prom* and *Dances with Walls*); ***Yellow Bird Chase***, from the Boston-based **Liars and Believers**; and two pieces from The INKubator Collective's Herakles Project: ***CLEANING THE STABLES***, from local artists **Robert Twomey and Ash Eliza Smith**, and ***GLACIAL INCANTATIONS***, from local artist **Hortense Gerardo**. The WOW Festival will also include presentations of the Playhouse's 2023 Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour ***Jin vs. the Beach*** and a devised piece, ***Community Canvas: Making Our Mark***, by students in the **San Diego Unified School District's 2023 Honors Theatre Program**.

These works join the previously-announced WOW Festival roster, including Ryan Carter's ***A Shared Space***, from the **San Diego Symphony**; ***Birdmen*** from The Netherlands' **Close-Act Theatre Company**; ***Circular Dimensions***, from Coachella Valley artist **Cristopher Cichocki**; ***Choreo & Fly***, from San Diego's **DISCO RIOT**; Broadway veteran Sharon Wheatley's ***Drive***, from **Diversiónary Theatre**; ***The End***, from Denver's **Control Group Productions**; ***Las Cuatro Milpas***, from San Diego's **TuYo Theatre** (WOW Festival's *On Her Shoulders We Stand*); ***The NEST***, from St. Paul-based artist **Megan Flød Johnson**; and ***salty water***, from San Diego's **Blindspot Collective** (WOW Festival productions of *Black Séance* and *Hall Pass*).

“The lineup for our 2023 WOW Festival once again offers a thrilling combination of intimate and large-scale spectacle events – created by acclaimed local, national and international artists, said **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse. “We are overjoyed to celebrate this community-wide event at the San Diego Symphony's Rady Shell at Jacobs Park for a four-day extravaganza of innovative, immersive theatre, music and dance. There promises to be something for everyone – and all free of charge.”

-- more --

On Thursday, April 27, the WOW Festival will kick off with several opening night activities including a **Sunset Yoga** class from Fit Athletic!, a performance by **King Britt and Friends** featuring a live remix event inspired by the innovative 90s club scene, and a **Silent Disco** with live mixing by UC San Diego's DeeJay & Vinylphiles Club.

The WOW Festival at The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park will create a vibrant communal space where patrons can gather to experience WOW performances, engage in lively discussions about the work, and enjoy the food and drink options on offer at the Symphony's exciting bayside location.

The 2023 WOW Festival is made possible with support from the City of San Diego and The James Irvine Foundation, as well as Venue Sponsors Lucid and UC San Diego; and WOW supporters: Denise and Lon Bevers, Dean Haas, Dwight Hare and Stephanie Bergsma, Gail and Doug Hutcheson, Kathy and Rob Jones, Peggy Ann Wallace, Cooley, PNC Bank, Qualcomm, Robin and Larry Rusinko, and Julie and Jay Sarno.

Launching in tandem with the WOW Festival will be **La Lucha**, a world-premiere immersive experience by award-winning designer **David Israel Reynoso** and his theatrical company **Optika Moderna** (WOW Festival productions of *Las Quinceañeras*, *Waking La Llorona*). Presented in partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD), the piece will have previews during the festival April 27 – 30 at MCASD Downtown in the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Building at 1100 Kettner Blvd, with an official run beginning May 11. Inspired by Lucha Libre – where professional Mexican wrestlers use masks and high-flying maneuvers to astonish and captivate audiences – *La Lucha* transports audiences to a realm of ringside thrills and backstage secrets. For tickets (starting at \$39) and information, please visit the official La Lucha ticketing partner [Fever](#) or [LaJollaPlayhouse.org](#).

The Playhouse's signature **Without Walls (WOW)** series has become one of the region's most popular and acclaimed performance programs. Since its inception in 2011, the Playhouse has been commissioning and presenting this series of immersive, site-inspired and virtual productions throughout the San Diego community, including eight stand-alone productions, five WOW Festivals and fourteen Digital WOW pieces.

Founded in 1910, the **San Diego Symphony** is the oldest orchestra in California and one of the largest and most significant cultural organizations in San Diego. The Orchestra performs for more than 250,000 people each season, offering a wide variety of programming at its two much-loved venues, Copley Symphony Hall in downtown San Diego (now under renovation) and The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park on San Diego Bay. Music Director Rafael Payare leads the orchestra's 82 full-time musicians, graduates of the finest and most celebrated music schools in the United States and abroad. For more than 30 years, the San Diego Symphony has provided comprehensive learning and community engagement programs reaching more than 65,000 students annually and bringing innovative programming to San Diego's diverse neighborhoods and schools. For more information, visit [www.sandiegosymphony.org](http://www.sandiegosymphony.org).

**La Jolla Playhouse** is a place where artists and audiences come together to create what's new and next in the American theatre, from Tony Award-winning productions, to imaginative programs for young audiences, to interactive experiences outside our theatre walls. Founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire and Mel Ferrer, the Playhouse is currently led by Tony Award winner Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, and Managing Director Debby Buchholz. The Playhouse is internationally renowned for the development of new plays and musicals, including mounting 108 world premieres, commissioning 60 new works, and sending 33 productions to Broadway, garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Visit [www.LaJollaPlayhouse.org](http://www.LaJollaPlayhouse.org).

-- more --

WOW Festival Projects**360****From Benjamin “Monki” Kuitenbrouwer & TENT, The Netherlands**

Take a seat on one of the rolling stools and be a player in this moving composition. Or stay on the sidelines, because how close do you want to get to a stranger? In this capricious game, nothing is fixed. With unexpected turns and new directional cues, the group dynamics and thus the script change. While the acrobats share their movement skills with bravura, you exert influence on proximity, and on the course of the play. The performance invites you to make contact, to touch, to be part of and to influence. Or none of this. *360* wants above all to direct an unforced gathering. Benjamin Kuitenbrouwer founded the company Monki and is currently a House Maker at the Dutch TENT house for contemporary circus in Amsterdam. *360* is directed by Benjamin Kuitenbrouwer & Hanneke Meijers, performed by Will Blenkin & Samuel Rhyner.

***A Shared Space*****Presented by the San Diego Symphony**

What happens when the performance includes everyone? In *A Shared Space*, Ryan Carter transforms cell phones into instruments as the audience joins San Diego Symphony musicians as players in a communal performance that enhances our sense of togetherness. Using technology, *A Shared Space* is an experience that could not have existed 20 years ago, and puts the audience in control of their own experience – not only controlling the sounds of their own devices, but also the ability to cue the orchestra. Taking over the lawn at the Rady Shell at Jacobs Park, these immersive performances will bring people together to make music like never before.

***Birdmen*****From Close-Act Theatre Company, The Netherlands**

Huge illuminated creatures roam the streets operated by mysterious men. Their movement and colors act synchronized as if they were programmed for a mission. Their illuminated bodies react on their environment. They are communication in colors. What is the benefit of futuristic men cooperating with a large ancient creature? They are looking for other species from our past but bring us closer the future. Close-Act Theatre brings strong visual street theatre in larger- than- life spectacles. Their works have been performed at renowned international theatre festivals and events all over the world. The shows are multidisciplinary, combine theatre, stilts, music, fire, dance, metal constructions and aerial objects and are always staged amongst the audience.

***Brassroots District: Live in the Lot Summer '73*****From Brassroots District, Los Angeles, CA**

It's 1973: The Summer of Love is a memory and Nixon is bugging out in the White House. But the war is over, the California sun is shinin', and LA is the funkier town this side of the stratosphere. That's the vibe when Brassroots District arrives on the scene. A funk outfit helmed by the fabulously far out ex-lovers Copper Jones and Ursa Major, Brassroots District is making unity and community through sweet soul music from Crenshaw Boulevard to the Sunset Strip. Now they've got record execs sniffing around, a growing fan club, and a sweet summer gig opening the parking lot for Sly and the Family Stone. The only thing missing is you, ya dig?

-- more --

***The Cell Plays*****From Playwrights Project, San Diego, CA**

*The Cell Plays* is an intimate, immersive, site-specific play written by theatre artists in Playwrights Project's Out of the Yard Program who have experienced incarceration. The play provides a glimpse into the hearts and minds of individuals relegated to living inside a cell. The audience gathers outside in The Headquarters at Seaport Village as a group of guests touring a correctional facility. "Prison staff" provide a brief history of California's criminal justice system and efforts toward rehabilitation, then guide guests into the Jail Museum, where they experience the play performed by actors in and around the cells. At the end of the performance, audiences are invited outside to a restorative circle for a brief facilitated talkback with formerly incarcerated artists involved in the project.

***Choreo & Fly*****From DISCO RIOT, San Diego, CA**

*Choreo & Fly* is a performance plus an activity that allows for people to engage in something physical between short dance performances by local movement artists. This intersection of performance and participation creates a unique experience for local dance artists and audiences. *Choreo & Fly*, a unique combination of dance + kite-flying, is about engaging with meaningful opportunities to move our bodies, enjoy physical expression, and build community through movement.

***Circular Dimensions*****From Cristopher Cichocki, Coachella Valley, CA**

*Circular Dimensions* is the audiovisual performance series of artist Cristopher Cichocki, who harnesses elements of the natural world and industrial mutation as primary mediums, alongside original compositions fused into his DJ sets that embrace sonic ambience and experimental dance genres. *Circular Dimensions* maps the surrounding environment with monumental video projections experienced in chroma-depth 3-D. At the 2022 Coachella Festival Cichocki showcased his 5-story tall *Circular Dimensions x Microscape*, constructed of 25,000 feet of PVC tubes. *Circular Dimensions* transforms in relationship from site-to-site, shifting through a diverse scope of ever-evolving installation environments. These experiences are amplified with spectacles of light, video mapping, haze, and sonic alchemy that embrace the surrounding nature and/or architecture with a multi-sensory symphony for the senses.

***CLEANING THE STABLES*****From The Herakles Project's Robert Twomey and Ash Eliza Smith, San Diego, CA**

Strange vibrations are coming from the refrigerated trucks. The cows have left their stables. The cranes are heading south for the winter, so it's a great time to ask...do you have what it takes to join team HeraKlean? Join us for this participatory sound-walk-meets-locative-cinema experience, where you contribute to the annual ritual of CLEANING THE STABLES. Herakles' fifth labor, redirecting two rivers to flush the stables, echoes on as a bizarre cult legend. In headphones, audiences explore a speculative future of geoengineering and management systems gone wrong. This is NOT a HERO's journey. The Herakles Project questions the motive behind Herakles' twelve tasks – were they a form of expiation for the murder of his wife and children, or were they the cause of a state of post-traumatic stress?

-- more --

***Drive*****From Diversionsary Theater, San Diego, CA**

This immersive theater experience is based on Broadway veteran Sharon Wheatley's (*Come From Away*) book *Drive*, which chronicles her real-life, pandemic-necessitated cross country RV trip with her wife and family. This humorous and heartwarming piece centers around a 30-foot RV as the two women struggle to set up a camp site, with tasks often interrupted by discussions of family, the loss working in live theater, and how to manage the great outdoors. Starring Wheatley and *Come From Away*'s Astrid Van Wieren, audiences will join them as they navigate their discovery of each other, ultimately learning to work together to find success and adventure in the bizarre summer of 2020.

***The-End*****From Control Group Productions, Denver, CO**

The immersive hijacking of a traditional civic bus tour takes audiences on a ride through a city transformed by escalating climate catastrophe, inexorably rolling toward the brink of collapse. *The-End* explores our city's present and futures, and seeks refuge from the rising storm, in an interactive expedition spanning multiple sites in a custom renovated apocalyptic school bus. Equal parts sublime artistry, civics lesson, summer camp, and sheer wild ride, *The-End* offers an entirely unique cultural adventure that will change how you see San Diego forever – or until the end, anyway...

***Fair Trade*****From Jessica Creane & Yannick Trapman-O'Brien, Philadelphia, PA**

Could you learn to bargain better? What is your neighbor's most prized possession? Is it wrong to re-gift socks if you've already worn them? Fair Trade might just be your chance to find out. In this new experiment from creators Jessica Creane (*Chaos Theory, Know Thyself*) and Yannick Trapman-O'Brien (*The Telelibrary, Undersigned*), you'll choose three things you own as possible offerings and negotiate a trade with a perfect stranger. Who they are and what they've brought is a mystery – but with just an hour between you, your decisions will lead the way to discover if a fair trade is in reach, and who you may become if you pursue it. Fair Trade is a hands-on, hands-full negotiation of your deeply held beliefs and the stuff lying around your house. What might you bring – and what might you get in return?

***GLACIAL INCANTATIONS*****From The Herakles Project's Hortense Gerardo, San Diego, CA**

The Herakles Project addresses the existential question of the motive behind Herakles' twelve tasks – were they a form of expiation for the murder of his wife and children, or were they the cause of a form of post-traumatic stress – violence begetting violence? *Glacial Incantations* is a modern rendering of the ninth labor of Herakles in which King Eurystheus ordered Herakles to bring him the belt of Hippolyte, Queen of the Amazons. In this project, Hippolyte is the Thwaites Glacier, which is "dying" because of a "belt" of warm, salinated water around the area where floating ice meets ground ice underneath the glacier. Audience participants to *Glacial Incantations* will require a smart phone and earbuds to access ASMR recordings and a QR reader to access the augmented reality visuals that will be superimposed along the southwest walkway near the harbor at the Rady Shell.

-- more --

***It's Not That Way, It's This Way***  
**From Galmae (France)**

A proposal for a group of people in motion, where the awareness of another becomes more and more indispensable. How does the crowd move? Does one move differently when alone, from when being amongst a crowd? What determines the "we"? What is an individual within a group? At the departure, there is a stone. With the stone, there is a string. Then, little by little, something which surpasses the sum of individuals appears. Inspired by his own sensations during a rally in Seoul in 2015, Juhyung Lee, young South Korean artist, proposes a sensitive experience of the collectivity.

***Las Cuatro Milpas***  
**From TuYo Theatre, San Diego, CA**

*Las Cuatro Milpas* is an immersive journey through a corn maze inspired by the local restaurant, Petra and Nati's Las Cuatro Milpas in Barrio Logan, that bridges ancient Aztec mythology with the American dream. Audiences enter a maze modeled on Aztec codices and covered in murals that tell the journey of the Estudillo family from Mexico to California. As they freely roam the maze, patrons can interact with story stations with interactive QR codes and audio tracks to experience segments of the family's story, as well as music and recorded dances inspired by the Aztec corn gods. The story reveals itself in short segments like the folded partitions of the codices in the unique order each audience member selects on their own exploitation of the maze.

***Moving Spaces***  
**From San Diego Dance Theater (SDDT)**

Dances around the Rady Shell will take the audience through site specific spaces, creating a walking tour of movement by four distinctly different choreographers. Dr. Grace Shinhae Jun, artistic director of bkSOUL explores the relationship between Hip Hop culture and modern dance, with spoken word, dance, and music. Former SDDT artistic director Jean Isaacs presents *Creation Myth*, a take on indigenous ideas of how Mother Earth was created. Miraslova Wilson of Pendulo Cero shares *La Esquina del Movimiento/The Movement Corner*, inspired by the architecture as underlying poetry, finding pulls and relations to corners, changes and life journeys. Current SDDT artistic director Terry Wilson will create a premiere focusing on the celebratory nature of the Rady Shell and San Diego's beautiful skyline. Led by a tour guide, audiences will move from one site to the next, enjoying the full experience of music and dance outdoors in our beautiful city!

***The NEST***  
**From Megan Flød Johnson, St. Paul, MN**

*The NEST* is an immersive playscape for young people and their communities to explore the identity and home of an elusive and migrating Creature. Children explore ideas through unstructured play and hands-on making guided by a cohort of NEST facilitators who invite people to fill-in an empty armature with handmade writings and reflections on their city's assets and strengths along with musings/makings to welcome and unknown being.

-- more --

***salty water*****From Blindspot Collective, San Diego, CA**

*salty water* weaves music, movement, as well as spoken testimony and poetry (including contributions from local community members) to explore our community's history and connection to the sea. *salty water* mixes the fantastical elements of the sea with stories of San Diego family members in the Navy, Kumeyaay creation stories, and exploration of our sweat and tears. Created by a cast of 15 professional performers and 40 local youth, audiences will be guided through a larger than life experience featuring large scale puppets and themes we all can relate to on the waterfront.

***Yellow Bird Chase*****From Liars & Believers, Boston, MA**

A clownish maintenance crew finds a magical yellow bird and a mad chase begins! Racing over land, across the sea, and through the air – battling pirates and monsters – how far will our heroes go...without ever leaving the maintenance room? This delightful romp was a smash hit at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and is fully accessible to the Deaf and hard of hearing community, as well as to non-English speakers. Join Liars & Believers on an adventure of masks, puppets, and gibberish.

[La Jolla Playhouse Learning & Engagement Projects](#)

***Jin vs. the Beach*****La Jolla Playhouse Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour**

In *Jin vs. the Beach*, a new musical play, fifth grader Jin is headed to the beach for the very first time on a class field trip. Jin is more comfortable spending his time indoors, playing his favorite game, CUBECRAFTIA. Even though Jin grew up in San Diego, going to the beach is something new to him. He's a bit anxious about it, but with the support of friends, teachers, and his imagination, Jin learns that everyone has different feelings when it comes to approaching the unknown and that it is important to express those feelings, and try new things even when they feel scary.

***Community Canvas: Making Our Mark*****San Diego Unified School District Honors Theatre Project**

In partnership with La Jolla Playhouse, theatre students from across the San Diego Unified School District, come together to devise a physical theatre piece in response to visual art. After studying murals in their communities, these students gained insight into their own creative experiences and what impact they hope to have on the world. These high school students have crafted a piece of theatre that is truly unique to San Diego. Made possible, in part, by funding from the VAPA Foundation.

-- more --

Without Walls Project at MCASD***La Lucha***

World Premiere by David Israel Reynoso/Optika Moderna  
Presented in Partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego  
Previews April 27 – 30, in tandem with WOW Festival; opening May 11  
MCASD Downtown in the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Building at 1100 Kettner Blvd.  
Tickets start at \$39

Inspired by Lucha Libre – where professional Mexican wrestlers use masks and high-flying maneuvers to astonish and captivate audiences – *La Lucha* transports audiences to a realm of ringside thrills and backstage secrets. As you move through mysterious portals, newfound heroes confront their greatest adversaries. You may find yourself in the middle of the action or at the side of the ring, cheering the death-defying match – either way, you won't want to miss the unforgettable world of *La Lucha*.

WOW Festival Artist Biographies

**Blindspot Collective** (*salty water*) develops transformative theatre that amplifies marginalized voices, illuminates untold stories, bridges disparate experiences, and energizes vulnerable communities. Previous collaborations with La Jolla Playhouse include *Black Séance*, *Hall Pass*, *Walks of Life*, and *when the bubble bursts*, as well as currently serving as the theater company in residence. Since its founding in 2017, Blindspot Collective has collaborated with The Old Globe; Diversionary Theatre; ARTS (A Reason to Survive); UC San Diego; and other community partners to develop projects that meaningfully engage audiences and artists in the blindspot of society. The company has received acclaim for its original work, including site-specific events, forum theatre, new musicals, and verbatim plays. Blindspot Collective was the first theatre company to be awarded a performing arts residency at the San Diego International Airport and was selected “Theater of the Year” in 2020 by the San Diego Union-Tribune.

**Brassroots District** (*Brassroots District: Live in the Lot Summer '73*) is the funky brainchild of music industry thought leader and singer/songwriter Ari Herstand (Ari's Take) and veteran artist manager Andrew Leib. Herstand co-stars as the lead singer of the band, Copper Jones, and Leib executive produces. The project is directed by Capital W's Monica Miklas, a longtime mainstay in the Los Angeles immersive scene, and written by award-winning playwright Daysha Veronica. The show also features rising star Celeste Butler (*American Idol*) as frontwoman and band leader Ursa Major. *Brassroots District: Live in the Lot Summer '73* premiered in Los Angeles, CA in July 2021 to critical acclaim, with LA Weekly exclaiming, “You'll have a blast playing along!” Welcome to Brassroots District.

-- more --



Internationally recognized artist **Cristopher Cichocki** (*Circular Dimensions*) encapsulates the cycle of decay and renewal through examining the complex relationship between humankind, the natural world, and industrial mutation. Situated on the fringe of painting, land art, sound art, and natural science, the artist's environmental interventions reflect upon timelines spanning from prehistoric oceans to present-day deserts. Within his site-responsive practice, Cichocki generates new ecosystems configured between organic and synthetic materials and sounds. His aesthetic invokes opposites; the desert is submerged underwater, while macrocosms enter the view of a microscopic lens. With deep roots as a biomorphic painter, the artist's interdisciplinary art forms are compelled by primordial archetypes and fractal geometries. Cichocki studied at CalArts and Yale Norfolk School of the Art. His work is in permanent collections that include the J. Paul Getty Museum, Palm Springs Art Museum, Lancaster Museum of Art. He has performed at museums and festivals that include Coachella, Rojo Nova, Desert Daze, The Museum of Photographic Arts, and Riviera Maya among many others. Hailing from the Coachella Valley, Cichocki has explored the depths of the California desert over the past three decades, while generating exhibitions throughout North America, South America, Asia, and Europe. IG @cristophercichocki; [circulardimensions.com](http://circulardimensions.com)

**Close-Act Theatre Company** (*Birdmen*) was founded in 1991. Originates from a collaboration between designers, actors, dancers, choreographers and musicians. Although new acts are being developed from different artistic disciplines, the style of the visual creations is still one of the unique trademarks of Close-Act. The artistic directors of Close-Act are Hesther Melief and Tonny Aerts. Close-Act is renowned for interactive street theatre. Their unique form of theatre is performed in, between and above the public. "Let us move, draw and carry you into the world we create". What does it mean; interactive theatre? It's most comparable to reality whereby the most important thing is the emotional rush you get. In these performances you can feel all kinds of emotions, like love, seduction, fear or compassion, it's the ultimate way to intensify your perception of the performance. The story, how unreal it may seem, becomes reality. You are part of it just like all others around you.

**Control Group Productions** (*The End*) creates expeditionary performance — entirely singular live immersive experiences that take audiences on wild rides into the unknown. Together they drop into hidden corners of our familiar world, exploring rich environments filled with delicately crafted performance that bridges imagination and sensory reality, simultaneously transporting us and taking us deeper into ourselves.

**Jessica Creane** (*Fair Trade*) is a game and immersive experience designer who believes that the things we take most seriously in the life are the things we ought to be most playful about. She is the founder of IKantKoan Play/s, Professor of Game Design at Drexel University, and a 2022 Arctic Circle Artist-in-Residence. Her work has been presented at Caveat NYC, ArsNova, HERE Arts, Fastaval, SXSW, and Tanween Creativity Festival. She has spoken at TEDx, The World Economic Forum, and NPR, BeyondOpera, and been featured by NYTimes and NoProscenium. Her work ranges from single-player games to epic events.

**DISCO RIOT** (*Choreo & Fly*) exists to elevate a collaborative art culture in San Diego and beyond — because the world needs more movement-based art. They connect dancers and artists who want to move themselves and audiences in ways that push boundaries to make high impact art that promotes community, justice, and movement as a form of radical expression. DISCO RIOT produces and supports innovative dance programming, connects artists across media and form to grow and intensify our community, and provide an educational space that reflects contemporary and progressive professional realities. Their intent is to incite the exploration and (r)evolution of what our arts community can truly be, and to change the culture of how dance exists within it. Dance is potent; dance should move people. DISCO RIOT is here to make people feel and see something significant, and to move them towards the unexpected.

-- more --

**Diversionsary Theatre** (*Drive*) is the nation's third-oldest LGBTQ+ theatre dedicated to amplifying queer voices through the performing arts in a dynamic, inclusive, and provocative environment that celebrates and preserves their unique culture, while contributing to an environment of diversity and inclusion throughout the broader community. Since Diversionsary's founding in 1986, it has continually provided an inspiring and thought-provoking theatrical platform to explore complex and diverse stories of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning communities in the form of live entertainment that can be enjoyed by all.

**Galmae** (*It's Not That Way, It's This Way*) is driven by Juhung Lee (South Korea), who discovered street arts performances in 2012 in Seoul with Générík Vapeur (France). In 2015, Juhung Lee joined the FAi-AR (Higher Training of Art in Public Space) in Marseille (France) which he finished in 2017 with his first creation: *It's Not That Way, It's This Way*. He is interested in the concepts underlying large-scale shows: the address to a multitude of people, the place of the individual within a group. This first show impulses a participatory action and reveals its symbolic significance. It has been performed about sixty times in France and internationally. In 2019, Juhung Lee started working on *To the extent possible*, which premiered at La Passerelle in Gap in May 2022.

**Hortense Gerardo** (*Glacial Incantations*) is a writer and anthropologist. Her full-length play *Middleton Heights* will have its world premiere at Umbrella Stage on March 31 – April 23, 2023. Other recently featured works include *Virtuous Reality* (Boston Theater Marathon XX, 2018 Anthology of Best Ten-Minute Plays by Smith and Kraus) and *The Song of Odd* (MBL Club). Her award-winning feature-length screenplays include *Fourhand* and *Dancing in Exile* and her feature-length documentary on climate change, *Small Steps: Dances of Resilience*, won juried and awards for Best Environmental Film at the Vancouver Film Festival and Best Dance Film in the Rome International Film Festival. She is a Company One Theatre Playlab Unit Playwright and a New World Theatre Masterclass Playwright Fellow. Current projects include a focus on issues of power, identity, as well as multimedia experimentation in narrative form. She is a member of and former Regional Representative of the Dramatists Guild of America, member of The International Centre for Women Playwrights and Director of the non-profit organization, *in vivo* Productions.

**Megan Flød Johnson** (*The Nest*) is an Interdisciplinary Artist who imagines new art experiences for young people that fuse inquiry-driven installation spaces with participatory performance. She creates open-ended play experiences where active participation is expected, is sensory-charged and reflects unique ways young people learn and understand the world- through play. Megan develops creative youth programming for museums, art centers and theatre companies around the country. She is a 2019-21 Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship in Performance by the Jerome Foundation in St. Paul and NYC. Megan is the Interim Director of Education for SteppingStone and Park Square Theatres in St. Paul, MN where she specializes in community-based and early childhood programming. She is the founder of [Now. Make. Art.](#), an intergenerational arts event entity that invites an infusion of creative changemakers into the world by creating equitable access to arts experiences that connect collaboration, change, joy, and imagination based in St. Paul. Megan holds an MFA in Theatre for Youth along and graduate certificate in Socially Engaged Practice from Arizona State University and BA's in Theatre and Classical Voice from Lawrence University in Appleton, WI.

**Benjamin "Monki" Kuitenbrouwer** (*360*) is the founder of Monki Business, a circus company whose goal is to produce and perform socially challenging circus shows as well as engaging in and facilitating debate about social topics. Kuitenbrouwer started as a maker and Chinese pole acrobat with solo performances in which he combines the double Chinese mast with live music, theater and video. He explores the line between performance and the raw here-and-now, whether it's a specific story, something poetic, or just a beautiful image – anything that lifts us up for a moment and takes us along.

-- more --

**Liars and Believers** (*Yellow Bird Chase*) is a Boston-based company creating and touring original, breathtaking theatre. They use music, movement, mask, puppet, video, clown, bands, aerialists... pretty much anything they can get their hands on to tell a good story. They collaboratively develop plays over 12-14 months of improvisation, experimentation and training. Their mission is to create original live performances that move the heart, challenge the mind and feast the senses.

**Yannick Trapman-O'Brien** (*Fair Trade*) is a performer, theater-maker, and creative hand for hire. His practice centers on exploring the exchanges and spaces we are willing to make with strangers, and seeking unorthodox applications for performance. Past credits include The Walnut Street Theater, Theater Mitu, Witness Relocation, Interactive Playlab, The American Czech Theater, New Light Theater, and performances at the Franklin Institute, Morris Jumel and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museums. He is an alumnus of NYU Abu Dhabi (Theater, BA) and an ongoing collaborator with Monument Lab. He is also the creator of The Telelibrary, a critically acclaimed telephone performance for audiences of one.

**Playwrights Project** (*The Cell Plays*) empowers people of all ages and backgrounds to voice stories through theatre, inspiring individual growth and creating meaningful community connections. The vision of Playwrights Project is to sustain an inclusive, compassionate community that broadens minds through the power of creativity and theatre. Playwrights Project programs reach 10,000 people annually, serving youth in San Diego schools and underserved populations of all ages, including those who have experienced housing insecurity, poverty, foster care, immigration, substance use disorder, the justice system, and the military.

**San Diego Dance Theater** (*Moving Spaces*) was founded in 1972 by George Willis, Professor Emeritus of Dance at San Diego State University, whose goal was to bring joy, comedy and theatricality to modern dance and to train young dancers. Jean Isaacs was appointed Artistic Director in 1997. Under her direction, SDDT has earned its reputation as a company of professional dancers committed to unconventional and deeply courageous programming. George and Jean have expanded access to the stage for dancers of many nationalities, races, ages, and physical abilities. SDDT is known for cross-border projects, summer workshops and the yearly site-specific performance *Trolley Dances*<sup>TM</sup>. In 2022, Terry Wilson came to the helm as Executive Artistic Director and strives to continue the dynamic and inclusive programming of SDDT. The company's mission is "to create and perform dances that breathe life into the people of our region and beyond, and to provide access to professional training and the performance of these dances by people representing diversity of all kinds."

**Ash Eliza Smith** (*CLEANING THE STABLES*) is an artist and designer who uses storytelling, worldbuilding, and speculative design to shape new realities. With performance as both a tool and lens, Smith works across art and science, between fact and fiction, and with human and non-human agents (animals, plants, machines) to re-imagine past and future technologies, systems, and rural-urban ecologies. Smith incorporates strategies of liveness, play and participatory co-design to create interactive stories, films, mixed reality theater, live action roleplays (LARPs) and prototypes of the future that may solve or re-frame problems. She is an Assistant Professor at the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts and received her MFA from the Visual Arts program at UCSD where she worked as an affiliate of the UCSD Design Lab and associate director of the Culture, Art, Technology department. Previously she attended the Performance Studies program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Smith has presented work at Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD), International Symposium on Electronic Art (ISEA), Qualcomm Institute (Gallery QI) and Elsewhere Projects.

-- more --

**Robert Twomey** (*CLEANING THE STABLES*) is an artist and engineer exploring poetic intersections of human and machine perception, particularly how emerging technologies transform sites of intimate life. He integrates traditional forms with new technologies to examine questions of empathy, agency, and desire in human-computer interactions. He has been an Artist-in-Residence at the Studio for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University and Nokia Bell Labs Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T). He has presented his work at SIGGRAPH (Best Paper Award), CVPR, ISEA, the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, and has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the California Arts Council, Microsoft, Amazon, HP, and NVIDIA. He received his B.S. from Yale with majors in Art and Biomedical Engineering, his M.F.A. in Visual Arts from U San Diego, and his Ph.D. in Digital Arts and Experimental Media from the University of Washington. He is an Assistant Professor with the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts and a visiting scholar with the Arthur C. Clarke Center for Human Imagination.

**TuYo Theatre** (*Las Cuatros Milpas*) was founded in 2017 by Maria Patrice Amon, Peter Cirino, Evelyn Diaz Cruz, Daniel Jáquez, Bernardo Mazón, and Crystal Mercado. Led by Co-Artistic Directors Peter Cirino and Maria Patrice Amon, TuYo Theatre's mission is to create and produce theatre in the San Diego area that tells stories from and by diverse Latinx perspectives. TuYo is committed to professional artistic rigor, forging authentic connections, developing community artists, and furthering the discourses that affect our community.

#### *La Lucha Biographies*

**Optika Moderna** is a ground-breaking, immersive company led by San Diego's **David Israel Reynoso**, the Obie Award-winning costume designer for the Off-Broadway runaway hit *Sleep No More* (Punchdrunk/Emursive). At La Jolla Playhouse, he designed *Las Quinceañeras* (2019 WOW Festival), *Waking La Llorona* (2017 WOW Festival), Liz Lerman's *Healing Wars* (2015 WOW Festival), Digital WOW's *Portaleza*, as well as *to the yellow house*, *Queens*, *Tiger Style!* and *The Darrell Hammond Project*. His other regional scenic and costume design credits include The Old Globe, American Repertory Theater, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Lyric Stage and Gloucester Stage, among many others. He is the recipient of the Elliot Norton Award in Costume Design and a multiple nominee for the IRNE and BroadwayWorld awards.

**The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD)** is the region's foremost forum devoted to the exploration and presentation of the art of today. Open since 1941, we welcome all audiences to reflect on their lives, communities, and the ever-changing world through the powerful prism of contemporary art. Between two MCASD locations — one in the heart of downtown San Diego and the other in the coastal community of La Jolla — we showcase an internationally-recognized collection. MCASD's dynamic exhibition schedule features a vast array of media in an unprecedented variety of spaces, along with a growing dedication to community experiences and public programs. As a cultural hub, MCASD seeks to catalyze conversation in our region.

# # #