

Q-STAGE
2021

**queer experimental
new works**



COMMARRAH J. YOCHANAN



YONI TAMANG



KAT PURCELL



NAKITA KIRCHNER

Nakita Kirchner
March 4-7
Kat Purcell
March 11-14
Yoni Tamang
March 18-21
Commarrah J Yochanan
March 25-28

tix & info
tctwentypercent.org

20%
THEATRE
COMPANY
TWIN CITIES

Q-STAGE: New Works Series
March 2021

Curated for the first time by Artistic Director Marcela Michelle, the Q-STAGE: New Works Series is an annual experimental incubator program dedicated to providing a stage and resources for local queer & transgender artists to create, develop, and premiere new work. Q-STAGE seeks to shift consciousness of and about queer identity through new performance work, facilitate conversation surrounding queer identities and queer art, and contribute to the growth of local, emerging queer artists.

20% Theatre Company's 7th annual Q-STAGE: New Works Series features original works by Nakita Kirchner, Kat Purcell, Commarra Yochanan, and Yoni Tamang.

A NOTE FROM 20% ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MARCELA MICHELLE

GRACE/CRACKLE – 20s. African American or Latino or person of color. A drag queen or transgender female. Fabulous, glamorous, grand. Warm and direct. A future "mother of the house." Must be able to walk in killer heels. Movement ability needed. Voguing a plus.

This was the casting notice for a central role in a new work by an up-and-coming Black queer playwright being presented in a series called Q-STAGE. It was the first casting notice I ever saw and said "That's ME!". It was 2015, I had just moved to Minneapolis, and Paris is Burning was a constant. I got the part, and a parade of firsts marched it's way into my life. The first time I saw another Black trans woman on stage. The first time I played a Black trans woman on stage. My first real relationship with another trans person. The first time I worked with 20% Theatre Company. Now, seven years later, I am again surrounded by firsts. My first full time job as an artist. The first time Q-STAGE is curated by a single person. The first time it is presented virtually. The first time many of us have tried our hands at film.

I've spoken at length before about the magnitude of the impact Q-STAGE has had on my career, my life; from acting in that first short play in 2015, to panelling submissions in 2016, presenting my own work in 2018, co-producing with Claire and directing in 2019, to now helming the series in my new role as AD in 2021, Q-STAGE has been for me a space of constant creative, professional, and personal development. The vision that Claire believed in, the space that she created and cultivated for all those years, and is now bravely handing off to me, is one whose impact is felt constantly throughout the Minnesota arts scene. Our annals hold Jerome Fellows, Elected Officials, Netflix Stars, and even Artistic Directors. Many have founded companies of their own. This to me speaks of Claire's sentience, the sentience of the program, nebulous in it's autonomy. It is a sentience I have tried to embody in my commitment to supporting new queer work as well. Though 20% is sunsetting, the legacy of Claire's work, and the work of all of the artists, technicians, audience members, donors, volunteers who have contributed to Q-STAGE over the years will live on as a part of Lightning Rod's annual programming. I have the great privilege of seeing the program through that transition, and I promise to do my absolute best to hold it with the care, passion, compassion, intelligence, and grace that Claire has modeled for all these years.

Among the non-monolithic community that is Trans/Non-binary there is a prevailing, memefied idea that "there is no before". For me, this is not true. What happened before does not define a situation, but it does matter to some extent. The artists who are presenting in this series were selected in a time before. Before social distancing and closed venues. Before a renewed commitment to battling racial injustice sparked in our city. Before further displacement. Before new understandings of community, accountability, family, time, and space. While my reasons for selecting these artists then are very different from my reasons for being proud to share their work today, that pride has only magnified. Their works respond, reframe, reinvigorate. They are a state of being. A political notion. A questioning of the concepts of borders, nations, lines, and who gets to draw them. These people are beautiful. These people are brilliant. These people have risen to challenges none of us could have known. These people are my people. I love them. Our liberation is intertwined. They are the ones I want to dream with. Thank you for witnessing us, for being present with us, for dreaming with us and supporting those dreams as they move from passion to idea to action.

Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow, Thank You.

Marcela Michelle

Artistic Director, 20% Theatre Company

PRODUCTION TEAM

Managing Producer Claire Avitabile
Artistic Director & Curator Marcela Michelle
Production Mentee Juleana Enright
Stage Manager Suzanne Cross
Assistant Stage Manager Johanna Keller Flores
Lighting Design snem DeSellier, Marcela Michelle & the Artists
Lighting & Sound Technical Assistant snem DeSellier
Video Editing & Graphic Design Kristen Stoeckeler

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Riley Jay Davis, Member-at-Large
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Marcela Michelle, Member-at-Large
Keila Anali Saucedo, Co-Chair
Dana Lee Thompson, Member-at-Large
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SUPPORT 20% THEATRE COMPANY

In August 2020, 20% Theatre Company announced our exciting 15th and final season of programming, and that we will sunset (permanently close) with integrity and celebration at the end of 2021. The outpouring of love, support, and memories during this transition has been overwhelming. Thank you for sharing what 20% means to you!

Please consider making a gift to 20% Theatre Company to support the artists of our 15th and final season by donating through our GiveMN.org at www.givemn.org/organization/tctwentypercentpp.

For more information about our sunset, visit tctwentypercent.org/sunset.

Perspectives on Intimacy

MARCH 4 - 7, 2021

Choreographed by Nakita Kirchner

Performed by Fei Bi Chan, Sophia Meza, and Nakita Kirchner

ABOUT *PERSPECTIVES ON INTIMACY*

Perspectives on Intimacy is both meditation on and a vigorous celebration of coexisting intersections of identities. This piece is structured as a pre-recorded online meeting, which fractures the intimacy of a live performance. In this time of reimagining closeness, *Perspectives on Intimacy* aims to be a grounding practice on the relevance of "vigorous celebration". *Perspectives on Intimacy* is an offering of, in sum, a meditative celebration on coexisting identities and shifting ideas of intimacy.

ABOUT NAKITA KIRCHNER

Nakita Kirchner is a queer Lebanese-American performer in diaspora. Her choreography has been presented at Dear Gaza (2018, 2019) and Controlled Burn (2020). Nakita will perform her work in the second annual Lebanon International Contemporary Dance Festival and the 2021 season of Q-STAGE.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Incredible work of Fei Bi and Sophia, enlivenment of the piece thanks to Snem, steadfast leadership of Marcela, and continual support from Nakita's partner, Nadiyah

If you'd like to further support Nakita's work, please Venmo her @NakitaKirchner.

CASTLES II

MARCH 11 - 14, 2021

Written and Directed by Kat Purcell

Performed by Chava Kokhleffel, Lu Chen, Ondine, and Kat Purcell

ABOUT CASTLES II

CASTLES II is an ambitious, experimental performance mixing live and pre-recorded vignettes which will be performed in a random order using chance operations. Picking up where "CASTLES" (2019, Pangea World Theater) left off, this is a new work exploring themes of barricades, escape, labor, fortresses, bodies, abolition, and nature versus the state (in this case, the so-called "United States of America"). The ensemble places themselves in a challenge, a decision dilemma: do we make the Castle our own, or do we scramble to find the exits?

ABOUT KAT PURCELL

Kat Purcell (they/them) is a nonbinary trans performer, lighting designer, experimental producer, installation artist and theatrical director-- best known in the Twin Cities as the Producing Director of Lightning Rod, an ever emergent and evolving political flash theatre intensive for artists. They have performed and worked in London, New York, Paris, Stockholm and Minneapolis. They have worked with (MPLS) Catalyst Arts, Intermedia Arts, Patrick's Cabaret, Guthrie Theater, Southern Theater, Queertopia, Center for Performing Arts, Pangea World Theater, New Native Theater, Red Eye Theater, Kudeta Dance, In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theatre, Umbrella Collective, Pillsbury House + Theatre, (NYC) Target Margin Theater, HERE Arts Center, Baryshnikov Arts Center, The Old Can Factory, Theatre Three Collaborative, Theatre for a New City, MoMA PS1, Irondale, Incubator Arts f.k.a. Ontological-Hysteric (Paris) Fondation des Etats-Unis, Cei de Facto, and (London) Oubliette Arthouse. Kat graduated from the London International School of Performing Arts in 2009 (now split into two schools: Arthaus-Berlin and Embodied Poetics, London). They are also a passionate activist and organizer, with a focus on prison abolition, immigrant detention and fighting for the bodily autonomy of queer and women folk.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you Gisell Calderón & Sarah Abdel-Jelil for filming and Marcela Michelle for acting as DP for shots. Thank you Nina Medvedeva for musical arrangements.

If you'd like to further support Kat's work, please Venmo them @Kat-Purcell-1 (all donations will go to ensemble).

Excerpts from The Fawn

MARCH 18 - 21, 2021

Written and Directed Yoni Tamang

Performed by Mark McGraw and Robyn Char

ABOUT Excerpts from *THE FAWN*

When two telepathic alien wage-laborers concoct a plan to strike at their oppressors, it goes awry, jettisoning their spacecraft into the deep reaches of their solar system. While one wants to return to their post to carry out their devious plot, the other yearns for a place to call home. "**Excerpts from The Fawn**" is a collection of images, scenes, and monologues archived while workshoping this full length drama. The Fawn explores popular tropes in science fiction, the revolutionary impulse, and the intimacy of unlikely partners.

ABOUT YONI TAMANG

Yoni Tamang is a multimedia artist, based in Minneapolis since 2008. Their work often combines elements of text, audio-visual installation, performance, and design. One of Yoni's core beliefs is that bacteria already did it all and that there isn't much left for "higher-order" biological entities to do or invent.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thanks to Marcela Michelle for her voiceover cameo and directorial mentorship and snem Desellier for their technical support.

If you'd like to further support Yoni's work, please Venmo them @yonimoney.

Mx 4 Minneapolis

MARCH 25 - 28, 2021

Written by Commarrah Yochanan

Directed by Marcela Michelle

Performed by Commarrah Yochanan

ABOUT MX 4 MINNEAPOLIS

We are the ancestors. In a future beyond abolition and the Land taking us back, Mx our Black trans non-binary descendent would like to petition our help to become Mayor of Minneapolis. Mayor is a Spirit to be summoned through community. They are the leader who will preside over regenerating a totally organic Minneapolis every year. However, this year is different. The light generating mycelium Marshaphase, developed for a special purpose, has almost run out of its food—MPD uniforms. Mx wants to guide their people through the oncoming darkness. Their opponent wishes to revive a small police force in order to maintain the light. Will our collective ancestral strength be enough for them to win? Or will fear of change and transtemporal transphobia prevent Mx from winning?

ABOUT COMMARRAH YOCHANAN

Commarah J. Yochanan (they/them) is a black, trans-nonbinary, actress, activist, writer, and ritual-performance-art maker. They are a TransPlant from NY: Graduate of New York University Tisch School of the Arts for Drama and have 23 years of theater experience, including performances in New York City, Paris, and their chosen and true home of Minneapolis. Their piece Ance\$tor Money--an experimental improv featuring all black trans artists--was featured in Stonewall @ 50 curated by Andrea Jenkins and the Minneapolis Institute of Art. They served as one of three Ward 8 appointees to the Minneapolis Arts Commission, are the former the Ward 4 appointee to the Transgender Equity Council and were announced one of this year's Marsha P. Johnson Institute membership class of 2020. Please visit Commarrah.com for full resume and booking.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Black Trans Torah Club, All my funders from GoFundMe, Ethan Jensen for the dope sacrificial altar.

If you'd like to further support Commarrah's work, please Venmo or PayPal them @cocoabash, or Cashapp them @TheCocoabash

ADDITIONAL BIOS

Robyn Char (*The Fawn*) is a middle school theatre teacher, queero, artist, partner, and hopeful adoptive mama. She spends way too much time on video calls (both teaching and socializing), but loves to get outdoors in her free time for some camping and canoeing with her partner, Fawkes, and their fur babies, Lupin and Shiloh. This is Robyn's second time working with Yoni and Mark to make some gay theatre, and she's thrilled to have the opportunity to participate in Q-Stage!

Lu Chen (*CASTLES II*) is a non-binary multidisciplinary artist based in the Twin-Cities, born in Guangzhou City, China. Lu loves dancing, music, and other forms of performance art.

Suzanne Victoria Cross (Stage Manager) was born and raised in North Minneapolis, graduated from St. Cloud State University with a BA in Theater and Community Psychology. Suzanne is an actor, stage manager and teaching artist in the St. Paul and Minneapolis area. She has worked with many local theater companies including touring with CLIMB Theatre as an Actor-Educator, Penumbra Theatre Company's Education and Outreach Program, Lyric Arts Academy, Teatro del Pueblo and has been the lead instructor for multiple teaching artist residencies in the Twin Cities. Suzanne has a strong passion for the role theater can play in the development of an individual and a community as a whole. She is currently the Events Coordinator and Resident Stage Manager for Pangea World Theater. Suzanne's first professional show was performing in Q-STAGE in 2015 and she's thrilled to be back and supporting these beautiful artists!

snem DeSellier (Sound & Lighting Assistance) is a multi-modal maker in love with new works. In all mediums, snem works to integrate time, motion, and parallax through a queer and access-focused collaborative lens. Born and raised in rural western MA, snem received their BA from Hampshire College before relocating to Minneapolis in 2018. They have designed/presented/performed work with the Five Colleges (Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, Smith, Amherst, UMass Amherst), 9x22 Dance/Lab, Lightning Rod, Fresh Oysters Performance Research, Theatre Mu, the Playwrights' Center, and of course, the one and only, 20% Theatre Company.

Juleana Enright (Production Mentee) is an Indigenous, queer, non-binary writer, curator, and DJ living in Minneapolis. They are a member of the Sicangu Lakota Tribe of Lower Brulé, South Dakota. Their past roles have included culture editor for *l'étoile* magazine and communications specialist for Gamut Gallery. They have contributed to local platforms *Pride Magazine*, *mplsart.com*, *Primer*, and *City Pages*. Juleana has curated two art exhibitions, including their own solo show in the spring of 2018, titled "Soft Boundaries," which explored how the vulnerable narrative can be used as an act of resistance, liberation, and healing. In 2019, Juleana co-directed Lightning Rod, a week-long works-in-process theatre initiative. In 2020, they were a participating artist in *Controlled Burn* at the Phoenix Theatre, where they exhibited an audio/visual installation in collaboration with photographer Dom Laba, titled, "To Wash the Native Out of Us," on the history of Indian boarding schools through the lens of family experiences. Juleana is a recipient of the Emerging Curators Institute 2020-21 Fellowship program. They are a co-curator and co-founder of the multi-sensory queer dance and performance night, Feelsworldwide. Through their practice, Juleana strives to examine the act of daily creation in the midst of great chaos and explore what it means to be a contemporary Native artist with focus on decolonization through art, ancestral knowledge and reclaiming Native joy through existence, resilience and expression.

ADDITIONAL BIOS

Johanna Keller Flores (Assistant Stage Manager) is a Peruvian American playwright and theatre artist who's out here trying to tell stories close to her heart for her queer brown familia. She's from St. Paul, Minnesota with a second home in Chimbote, Peru. She has had the sincerest pleasure of creating in her Twin Cities home for about three years; assistant stage managing, writing, and performing with Pangea World Theatre, writing and performing with Teatro del Pueblo, writing and performing with Revolutionary Jetpacks, performing with Lightning Rod at Pillsbury House Theatre, writing, directing, stage managing and performing with 20% Theatre, writing and directing with Gadfly Theatre, and directing and conspiring with Alliance for Latinx Minnesota Artists. Te mando muchísimo amor, ya?

Marcela Michelle (Artistic Director) Marcela Michelle was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas on Payaya land, and now lives and works in Minneapolis, Minnesota on Dakota land. She identifies most with Black/Indigenous/Mexican American communities, Trans/Queer/Lesbian-Identified communities, and various intersections therein. She is currently the Artistic Director of 20% Theatre Company, now in its 15th and final season. She is also the Artistic Co-Director and Director of Programming for Lightning Rod - a Trans-led arts organization. Lightning Rod is focused on legacy, development, and opportunity for QTGNC Artists and Activists. With an extensive resume as an artist, educator, and facilitator, Marcela has curated or co-curated a number of performance events including The Minneapolis Burlesque Festival, Mixed Blood's On Our Own Terms Transgender Play Festival, for Guthrie's Dowling Studio - body fail body , and for 20% Theatre - The Naked I, Controlled Burn, Q-STAGE New Works Series, and Exposition: Queer Performance and Conversation. As a guest educator/facilitator Marcela has worked with Walker Art Center, Uprising Theatre, University of Minnesota Twin Cities, Macalester College, Augsburg University, Hamline University, and the University of Houston. Her performance work focuses primarily on simultaneity, im/mutability, and the platonic ideal host.

Mark McGraw (*The Fawn*) is a part-time performer and full-time fag. Anything to plug? I don't see how that's any of your business. *Insta: @portiacontrol*

Ondine (*CASTLES II*) is a ghost that haunts Minneapolis from the stage. Theaters have been awkwardly quiet since March of last year, and they are excited to appear on film with the help of special phantom capture technology. Every capitalist or colonizer who has ever laid eyes upon them has burst into flame.

חווה קאבלעפל **chava kokhleffel** (*CASTLES II*) (they/she) is an artist, organizer, educator and ritualist. They have deep roots in Theater/Pedagogy of the Oppressed and physical approaches to performance. She is a white disabled radical queer Jew of Ashkenazi lineage, clowning around south Minneapolis.