



LIVE ARTISTS LIVE

S i n g s o f F r e e d o m

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

10:30 A.M. TO 6:30 P.M.

ROSKI GRADUATE BUILDING

1262 Palmetto St., Los Angeles

Inspired by poet, writer, and civil rights activist Maya Angelou's verse, "The caged bird sings of freedom," the fourth iteration of USC's biennial performance art festival celebrates the liberating potentials of art and song. "Live Artists Live: Sings of Freedom" spotlights fusions of performance art, poetry, and music that amplify oppressed voices and resist racism, sexism, xenophobia, and homophobia. The full-day event will bring together internationally acclaimed artists and scholars for vibrant performances, immersive environments, and engaging discussions illuminating marginalized people's struggles and joys, while striving for social justice through performative, lyrical storytelling, and musical art experiments.

Organized by Jenny Lin, Director of MA, Curatorial Practices and the Public Sphere and Associate Professor of Critical Studies and Jennifer West, Director of the MFA, Art and Associate Professor of the Practice of Fine Art, USC Roski

Photo (3rd from left): KT Stenberg
Image (2nd from right): Actors Alex Barlas and Efe in *Boney Manilli*, by Edgar Arceneaux, 2022
Photo (far right): Matika Wilbur

Schedule

10:30 A.M.–12 P.M. VIRTUAL KEYNOTE by Joy Harjo

ZOOM: <https://usc.zoom.us/j/92135253386>

Joy Harjo will read poems from her expansive oeuvre, including from her highly acclaimed collection, *An American Sunrise*, and discuss themes of “Sings of Freedom,” including Indigenous struggle, resistance, and joy. A conversation and Q&A led by USC professors **Jenny Lin** and **Chris Finley** with Master of Urban Planning/M.A. Art and Curatorial Practices in the Public Sphere Candidate **Tracy Fenix** will follow.

12–1 P.M. HYBRID PRESENTATION of *Uroborus vs. Trump’s Wall* by Guillermo Gómez-Peña

Attendees will collectively listen to excerpts from **Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s** anthology of recordings from 1978 to 2018, including sound poems, audio art, performance, border poetry, and weird songs performed against Trump’s imaginary border wall. In the absence of Gómez-Peña, attendees will also watch a video the artist selected for this event. A conversation and Q&A led by USC professor **Josh Kun** will follow.

1–2 P.M. LUNCH by JOY

Discussion with visiting guests, USC students, and faculty.

2–3 P.M. MULTIMEDIA PERFORMANCE of *Boney Manilli* by Edgar Arceneaux

Edgar Arceneaux will present a multimedia screening and live performance drawn from *Boney Manilli*, a project exploring 1990s pop duo Milli Vanilli, their public shaming for lip syncing, and how their ridicule, spectacularized through the performers’ long, braided hair and dark skin, resonates in contemporary sociocultural and political spheres. A conversation and Q&A with USC professor Sarah Kessler will follow.

3–4 P.M. LINER NOTES FOR BEYONCÉ by madison moore and Daphne A. Brooks

ZOOM: <https://usc.zoom.us/j/91975937981>

madison moore and **Daphne A. Brooks** will lead a critical listening session of *Renaissance*, Beyoncé’s 7th studio album, touching on topics ranging from Black feminist sound to Black queer aesthetics.

4:30–5:30 P.M. PERFORMANCE by Xina Xurner (Young Joon Kwak, Marvin Astorga, Sarah Gail, Page Person, and Creepypasta Puttanesca)

Young Joon Kwak and **Marvin Astorga** will combine power electronics, mutated vocals, and DIY drag to expand ideas about queer and trans bodies in an in-person performance by **Xina Xurner**, a collaboration aimed at fostering connections between femme and POC communities.

5:30–6:30 P.M. RECEPTION and DANCE PARTY

“Live Artists Live: Sings of Freedom” will culminate in a dance party featuring a playlist by madison moore and a reception for visiting guests, USC faculty, students, and all participants and guests with refreshments by Pine & Crane.

B i o s



Edgar Arceneaux



Daphne A. Brooks



Tracy Fenix



Chris Finley



Guillermo Gómez-Peña



Joy Harjo

Los Angeles-based artist **EDGAR ARCENEAUX** is a professor at the USC Roski School of Art and Design who constructs drawings, installations, video, and film works as complex arrangements of association that examine adjacencies and points of contact between implausible relations. Constantly working in new modes, Arceneaux received the prestigious Mike Kelley Foundation Award in 2019 and the COLA Individual Artist Fellowship in 2020. Solo exhibitions have been presented at the Vera List Center at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts; the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles; the Studio Museum in Harlem; and Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Basel, Switzerland. His work is in collections at the Whitney; MoMA in New York City; Carnegie Museum; Museum Ludwig in Köln, Germany; the Hammer Museum; and LACMA. Recognized as a national leader in the arts, Arceneaux also serves on the board of directors at Creative Capital.

DAPHNE A. BROOKS is William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of African American Studies, American Studies, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Music at Yale University. She is the author of *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850–1910* and *Liner Notes for the Revolution: The Intellectual Life of Black Feminist Sound*. Brooks has authored numerous articles on race, gender, performance, and popular music culture, and is also the author of the liner notes for *The Complete Tammi Terrell* and *Take a Look: Aretha Franklin Complete on Columbia*, each of which has won the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for outstanding music writing. Her liner notes essay for Prince's *Sign O' The Times* deluxe box set was published in fall 2020. Brooks is currently editing an anthology of essays culled from "Blackstar Rising & The Purple Reign: Celebrating the Legacies of David Bowie and Prince," an international three-day conference and concert which she curated.

TRACY FENIX is a native Tejana pursuing dual degrees as a Masters of Curatorial Practice and Urban Planning student at USC. Fenix is currently focused on researching indigenous cultural placemaking initiatives and site-specific ecological BIPOC art projects within Southern California and the broader Southwest region.

CHRIS FINLEY (Colville Confederated Tribes) is a Native Studies professor at USC Dornsife. Her research, writing, and teaching critique how dominant U.S. popular culture sexualizes Native bodies as culturally and, therefore, racially unable to conform to white heteroreproductive norms.

GUILLERMO GÓMEZ-PEÑA is a performance artist, writer, activist, radical pedagogue, and artistic director of the performance troupe La Pocha Nostra. Born in Mexico City, he moved to the U.S. in 1978 and his three homes have been San Francisco, Mexico City, and "the road" since 1995. His performance work and 21 books have contributed to the debates on cultural, generational, and gender diversity, border culture, and North-South relations, and his artwork has been presented at over 1,000 venues around the globe. A MacArthur Fellow, USA Artists Fellow, and a Bessie, Guggenheim, and American Book Award recipient, Gómez-Peña is currently a patron for the London-based Live Art Development Agency and a senior fellow in the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics.

In 2019, **JOY HARJO** was appointed the 23rd United States Poet Laureate, the first Native American to hold the position and only the second person to serve three terms in the role. Harjo's nine books of poetry include *An American Sunrise*, *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings*, *How We Became Human: New and Selected Poems*, and *She Had Some Horses*. She is also the author of two memoirs, *Crazy Brave* and *Poet Warrior*. Her many writing awards include the 2019 Jackson Prize from Poets & Writers, the Ruth Lilly Prize from the Poetry Foundation, the 2015 Wallace Stevens Award from the Academy of American Poets, and the William Carlos Williams Award from the Poetry Society of America. She is a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, Board of Directors Chair of the Native Arts & Cultures Foundation, and artist-in-residence for the Bob Dylan Center.



Sarah Kessler

USC assistant professor of English **SARAH KESSLER**'s interdisciplinary research spans the fields of comparative media studies, critical race theory, queer and gender studies, voice and sound studies, and television studies. Her articles and essays have appeared in *Camera Obscura*, *Film Quarterly*, *In These Times*, *Public Books*, *Theory & Event*, *Triple Canopy*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, and elsewhere. She is the TV section editor at *Public Books*.



Josh Kun

JOSH KUN is the interim dean at the USC Thornton School of Music and professor and chair in cross-cultural communication at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. An expert on the intersection of arts, culture and politics, with an emphasis on popular music, the 2016 MacArthur Fellow's books include *The Autograph Book of L.A.: Improvements on the Page of the City*, *To Live and Dine in L.A.: Menus and the Making of the Modern City*, *Songs in the Key of Los Angeles*, and *Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America*.



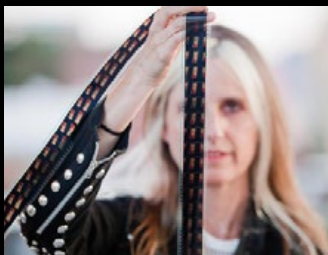
Jenny Lin

JENNY LIN directs the MA program in curatorial practices and the public sphere and is an associate professor of critical studies at the USC Roski School of Art and Design. As a scholar, writer, and curator, Lin explores relations between twentieth- and twenty-first-century art and design and social phenomena such as urbanization, globalization, and decolonization. She is currently writing a new book, *Another Beautiful Country: Moving Images by Chinese American Artists*, and curating a related exhibition scheduled to open at the USC Pacific Asia Museum in 2023.



madison moore

madison moore is an artist, scholar, DJ, and professor of critical studies at the USC Roski School of Art and Design. They are broadly invested in the aesthetic, sonic, and spatial strategies queer and trans people of color use to both survive and thrive in the face of rolling catastrophe. Their first book, *Fabulous: The Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric*, offers a cultural analysis of fabulousness as a practice of resistance. Expanding beyond their academic work, moore has also performed internationally at a broad range of art institutions, nightclubs, and parties, including the Perth Festival, Performance Space Sydney, the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, American Realness, Somerset House Studios London, Tate Britain, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and warehouses deep in Brooklyn. In Summer 2022, they were the inaugural scholar-in-residence at the Fire Island Artist Residency.



Jennifer West

JENNIFER WEST is a Los Angeles-based artist who has explored materialism in film for more than fifteen years. Her work is in museum and public collections such as and the Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China; Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Kadist Foundation (San Francisco/Paris), Thoma Foundation (Chicago/Sante Fe); Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Getty Museum (Los Angeles), among others. West received an MFA from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena and a BA from the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. She has lectured widely on her ideas of the "Analogital" and is an Associate Professor of the Practice of Fine Arts at the USC Roski School of Art and Design.



Xina Xurner

XINA XURNER is an experimental music and performance collaboration between Marvin Astorga and Young Joon Kwak, whose cathartic performances combine DIY and power electronics, mutated vocals, and bad drag to expand ideas about queer and trans bodies. Their music combines a variety of genres including happy hardcore, industrial, drone metal, and techno-opera to create "sadical" and "sexperimental" noise-diva-dance anthems that evoke a sense of death, decay, and transformation. Xina Xurner released their debut album, *DIE*, in 2012; their follow-up, *Queens of the Night*, was released in 2018. Past performance spaces and events include sCum, The Smell, the Hammer Museum, Cool World, Mustache Mondays, LACE, Smart Museum of Art (Chicago), Bath Salts (NYC), and Bitchpork (Chicago), as well as international performances in Paris, Tokyo, Seoul, Bogotá, and Mexico City.

Photo: Liz Ligon

Photo: Austin Young

***“The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.”***

***—Maya Angelou, excerpted from
the poem “Caged Bird”***



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ⦿ This is the fourth Live Artists Live, a performance art biennial at USC.
- ⦿ Live art/performance art can be defined in many different ways, but in general it refers to art that centrally involves live bodies and to performance that is situated in the realm of visual art.
- ⦿ “Live Artists Live: Sings of Freedom” spotlights fusions of performance art, poetry, and music that amplify oppressed voices and resist racism, sexism, xenophobia, and homophobia.

“I wanted to be so many things: historian, poet, activist, visual artist, even soccer player. Several important people in my life said, ‘you can be all of that if you label yourself a performance artist.’ It is the ultimate space for contradiction, for reinvention.”—Guillermo Gómez-Peña, in a 2019 interview with *PBS News Hour*

LIVE ARTISTS LIVE

Live Artists Live is L.A.’s premier performance art biennial. Founded in 2016 by USC professor Amelia Jones, Live Artists Live has had four iterations to date.

The inaugural Live Artists Live in 2016 featured performances and dialogues with artists and scholars exploring questions such as, How do live art performances get archived, documented, or otherwise written into history and remembered? How do audiences experience live art? How is live art created? The weekend-long event opened with a performance of new work by legendary underground artist Ron Athey and closed with a performance by the Brooklyn-based artist Narcissister.

In 2018, Live Artists Live considered the simultaneity that exists within binational and multicultural lives, with performances by artists including Rafa Esparza and Nao Bustamante, dialogues, and a Long Table event led by Beatriz Cortez.

The 2020 Live Artists Live, originally scheduled for late March 2020, was rescheduled for the fall and then presented online. The theme of despair/repair in that first pandemic year provoked meditations on mortality by artists including Linda Montano and Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook.

Live Artists Live was started by Amelia Jones, Robert A. Day Professor and Vice Dean of Academics and Research at the USC Roski School of Art and Design. Faculty organizers have included Nao Bustamante, Andy Campbell, Patty Chang, Jenny Lin, and Jennifer West.

ABOUT AMELIA JONES, FOUNDER OF LIVE ARTISTS LIVE

A feminist curator and a theorist and historian of art and performance, Amelia Jones is Robert A. Day Professor and Vice Dean of Academics and Research at the USC Roski School of Art and Design. Jones's recent publications include *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts* (2012); *Perform Repeat Record: Live Art in History* (2012), co-edited with Adrian Heathfield; the edited volume *Sexuality* (2014); and, co-edited with Erin Silver, *Otherwise: Imagining Queer Feminist Art Histories* (2016). Her exhibition *Material Traces: Time and the Gesture in Contemporary Art* took place in 2013 in Montreal and she programmed the events *Trans-Montréal* (2015) in that city, followed by a related publication "On Trans/Performance," a special issue of *Performance Research* (2016). Professor Jones's retrospective of the work and career of Ron Athey, accompanied by the catalogue *Queer Communion: Ron Athey* (2020), took place at Participant Inc. and ICA LA in 2021, and her book *In Between Subjects: A Critical Genealogy of Queer Performance* (2021) presents her new research examining 60 years of theory and practice around queer and the performative. She is currently the Diversity Equity and Inclusion representative for the Roski School, and her new project is a book of manifestos addressing the structural racism of the art world and art institutions.

LIVE ARTISTS LIVE PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

2016

Ron Athey
Nao Bustamante
Cassils
Harry Gamboa Jr.
Lynn Hershman Leeson
Narcissister
Ulay

2018

Nao Bustamante
Beatriz Cortez
Rafa Esparza
Xandra Ibarra
Marcus Kuiland-Nazario
Carlos Martiel
Mickey Negrón
Dorian Wood

2020

Danielle Abrams
Xavier Cha
Linda Montano
Kareem Khubchandani
Pavithra Prasad
Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook
Mary Ellen Strom
Yan Xing

2022

Edgar Arceneaux
Daphne A. Brooks
Guillermo Gómez-Peña
Joy Harjo
madison moore
Xina Xurner (Young Joon Kwak, Marvin Astorga, Sarah Gail, Page Person, Creepypasta Puttanesca)



Nao Bustamante

Photo: Jorge Acetuno



Dorian Wood



Kareem Khubchandani

Photo: Tim Corrêira



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LIVE ARTISTS LIVE 2022: SINGS OF FREEDOM

Like performance art, music—from songs of the Underground Railroad to pro-democracy anthems in Hong Kong—has long helped raise awareness of injustices while providing inventive modes for dismantling oppressive power structures.

The 2022 edition of Live Artists Live, organized under the theme “Sings of Freedom,” showcases music-oriented performance art illuminating intersectional BIPOC identities. Performances, presentations, discussions, and immersive environments explore the struggles, joys, and liberating audio artistic expressions of marginalized Americans who identify as Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Black, and LGBTQ. Performances and dialogues will explore how art, performance, and music can come together to challenge oppressive conditions wrought by racism, sexism, homophobia, and legacies of colonialism.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- Based on what you experienced at Live Artists Live, how would you describe the differences or overlaps between performance art, theatre, music, and dance?
- What are some of the different ways the artists engage with sound?
- How do the artists use sound and music to question or challenge power structures? To create possibilities for social justice?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- Upcoming events at Visions and Voices:
 - 10/20/22:** [\(Un\)Documents](#)
 - 10/25/22:** [Lido Pimienta in Concert](#)
 - 11/3/22:** [Dahlak Brathwaite: Try/Step/Trip](#)
 - 2/15/23:** [A.I.M by Kyle Abraham: An Untitled Love](#)
 - 3/8/23:** [Birds of No Nation: Afghan Women on Art, Gender, Freedom, and Exile Workshop and Conversation](#)
- Fall 2022 USC Roski Talks
- Performance art events at [REDCAT](#) (Roy and Edna Disney Cal Arts Theatre)
- [Los Angeles Performance Practice](#)
- [Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles](#)



(Un)Documents, October 20, 2022



Dahlak Brathwaite: Try/Step/Trip, November 3, 2022



Gibney Company, January 20, 2023

Photo: Janelle Jones

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

Christina Snider of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

BOOKS

- Daphne Brooks, [*Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910*](#) (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2006).
- Daphne Brooks, [*Liner Notes for the Revolution: The Intellectual Life of Black Feminist Sound*](#) (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2021).
- Joy Harjo, [*Crazy Brave: A Memoir*](#) (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012).
- Amelia Jones, [*Body Art/Performing the Subject*](#) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
- Josh Kun, [*The Tide Was Always High*](#) (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017).
- madison moore, [*Fabulous*](#) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).
- Shamim Momin, Alessandra Bellavita, Trinie Dalton, Samantha Frank, and Matthieu Lelièvre, [*Wasteland: New Art from Los Angeles*](#) (Paris: Galerie Thaddeus Ropac, 2016).
- Guillermo Gómez-Peña, [*Conversations Across Borders*](#) (Calcutta : Seagull Books, 2011)
- Emily Eliza Scott and Kirsten Swenson, [*Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, Politics*](#) (Oakland: Univ. of California Press, 2015).

DATABASES

[Latino Literature](#)

[Black Women Writers](#)

[Gender: Identity and Social Change](#)

JOURNALS

[Social Justice](#)

[Social Justice Research](#)

[PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art](#)

