JANUARY 25–31, 2024  ONE ARCHIVES AT THE USC LIBRARIES

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Blood Baby is an interdisciplinary event series celebrating queer kinship, radical gender performance, and belonging.
- The event series includes four artworks that span and merge mediums including dance, visual art, video, and performance.

For installation and performance descriptions, locations, and schedule, visit visionsandvoices.usc.edu/BloodBaby
PERFORMANCE ART

Performance art, sometimes also known as live art, is art that the artist and collaborators perform live. The artist’s/performers’ bodies in time are the materials, in the way that “oil on canvas” would be the materials of a painting. While performance art may involve other art forms, such as poetry, music, dance, or theatre, it is distinguished from theatre by being situated in the world of visual art, especially experimental and conceptual art. Performance art usually pushes at any barriers of genre or what art can or should be, and tends to be focused more on provocation than entertainment. Performance art is time-based and ephemeral, and the artwork may be the live performance itself, a documentation of the live performance, or both.

The term performance art gained traction in the 1970s, but the history of what we now call performance art begins earlier. Performance art is part of the broader story of avant-garde art, with roots in the early-twentieth-century art movements of Futurism and Dada. After World War II, the non-traditional tradition progressed with groups like the Viennese Actionists and the collaborations of composer John Cage and choreographer Merce Cunningham at the experimental, art-focused Black Mountain College. The 1960s and ’70s saw the art performances of Fluxus, an international community of artists including Yoko Ono and Joseph Beuys who engaged in art actions or “happenings.” This era saw the flourishing of several threads of performance art, such as art corporel (body art), performances by the Japanese avant-garde group Gutai, and feminist performance art that coincided with the feminist political and social movement. From its very beginnings, performance art has had overlaps with political protest and movements for social change. This notably includes queer performance art, such as the political funerals organized by the AIDS activist group ACT UP.

Sources: The Art Story, Britannica, Tate
**QUEER KINSHIP**

Queer theory and queer cultures challenge heteronormative ideas of bodies, identities, and relationships—including the notion that family is determined solely by biology or reproduction. Instead, queerness offers an expansive and flexible vision of kinship. Chosen families, community as family, platonic partnerships, and many other forms of non-normative families are recognized and affirmed by queer notions of kinship.

Queer communities have created chosen families through necessity, through activism, through social spaces like discos and clubs, and more. A notable example is the kinship structures of ballroom culture, a scene centered around performance and fashion that was created by Black and brown queer communities in New York in the twentieth century. The ballroom scene was structured in “houses,” with chosen “mothers” and “fathers” that supported the “children” of the house—creating an alternative (and art-centered) family system for people who had been shut out of or didn’t fit in normative families.

**ONE ARCHIVES**

ONE Archives at the USC Libraries is the largest repository of LGBTQ materials in the world. Founded in 1952, ONE Archives houses millions of archival items including periodicals, books, films, videos, audio recordings, photographs, artworks, organizational records, and personal papers. The mission of ONE Archives is to collect, preserve, and make accessible LGBTQ historical materials while promoting new scholarship on and public awareness of queer histories. ONE Archives has been a part of the USC Libraries since 2010.

The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives at USC contains more than 2 million items. (Photo: Wally Skalij / Los Angeles Times)
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Charli Brissey is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and teacher who works choreographically with bodies, cameras, objects, genders, instincts, language, and ecosystems. Their live performances and video work have been presented internationally. Brissey is currently Director of Graduate Studies and an assistant professor of dance at the University of Michigan.

Meg Foley is a queer dance artist, educator, and parent who creates performances and somatic-based events as self-affirming practices. She currently researches gay and trans families and how we are formed. Her improvisational practice builds detailed movement vocabularies out of scientifically engaged research and lived experience.

Rabbit AL Friedrich works collaboratively to create environments for performance, film, and civic engagement. Their practice engages with inquiries of site, material integrity, and environmental impact. Rabbit’s work has been seen at art spaces and cultural centers around the world, as well as in warehouses, storefronts, escape rooms, parking lots, an airport, a city hall, and the chapel of a decommissioned convalescent home.

Lila Hurwitz supports individuals and organizations in the arts with project/tour management, grant writing, communications, strategy, and more. She is a co-founder of Motion State Arts, a presenting organization supporting innovative dance in Providence, Rhode Island, and Dance Art Group, the nonprofit organization that created and produced the Seattle Festival of Dance Improvisation for eighteen years, and is also a dance artist with a focus on ensemble improvisation in practice and performance.

Carmichael Jones is an artist who works in installation, sculpture, film, photography, and performative objects to upend parameters of the encounter and orientation. They have shown at places such as Vox Populi, the Museum of Glass, and Heller Gallery. Jones is creative co-director of The Whole Shebang and a former fellow at the Creative Glass Center of America.

Zara Martina Lopez is a Seattle-based dancer, performer, filmmaker, and photographer originally from Medellín, Colombia. Combining mediums such as drag, physical theater, spoken word, video, and photography, her work pulses with the synergy of myriad techniques that give shape to her unique visual poetry.

Kristine Manuel is a queer, Filipinx American, Bay Area–born and Seattle-based healing artist; E-RYT200 and yogaphilosophy, meditation, and breathwork facilitator; interdisciplinary visual/performance artist; and medical lab scientist who is deeply inspired to help others tune into the muse within and re-myth their old stories. Her movement ranges from nondual classical tantric philosophy, ecstatic meditation, and Embodiology®, to street dance styles such as hip hop, house, and breaking.
Valerie Oliveiro is a Twin Cities–based dance and performance maker from Singapore. While they currently engage movement as their primary motor for expression, they also engage in expressions such as design, writing, drawing, and photography, as generative, complexly relational proposals. Currently, they are a co-artistic director at Red Eye Theater and ensemble member at Lightning Rod (QTBIPOC-led performance organism) and co-run a small performance incubator, MOVO SPACE.

Originally from Philadelphia, Sylvan Oswald is an interdisciplinary artist who creates plays, texts, publications, and video. His work uses metatheatricality and formal irreverence to explore queer and trans identity. Recent projects include the theatrical essay Trainers and the performance text High Winds, based on the book he co-authored with graphic designer Jessica Fleischmann. Honors include a 2019 Guggenheim Fellowship, a Rosati Fellowship from Duke University Libraries, the Thom Thomas Award from the Dramatists Guild, and a Jerome Fellowship.

Noél Puéllo is a Providence- and Mexico City–based artist whose work shifts perceptions of intimacy and revitalizes fantasy through the dissection of queer and Afro-Latinx identity. With clothing, mixed media installations, fiber practices, and video, her work centers the power of touch and moves us through a romanticized reality of the discarded. She poeticizes the relationships of her Dominican elders and her own personal stories of existing as a queer, fat, femme, racially ambiguous, trans person.

Majesty Royale-Jackson is a dancer, performance maker, sound explorer, and ghost occupying liminal spaces. Majesty’s work confronts claims of ownership on the body by engaging in radical defiance of how one should be. Through flamboyance, language reconstruction, community building, coded language, voice, glitter, and sweat, they intend to lose theirself and others of the constraints of a singular reality in search of new realnesses.

Michèle Steinwald is a feminist, DIY, artist-centered, and community-driven cultural organizer. Committed to social justice in the arts, she has researched and facilitated original sessions at conferences and professional gatherings; been an artist mentor for Creative Capital’s retreat and Arts Midwest’s ArtsLab; managed projects for DanceUSA and NEFA/National Dance Project; and worked as a performance curator. Although Canadian, Steinwald currently works in the U.S. as an independent curator, community organizer, and writer.

Fox Whitney is a dancer, musician, filmmaker, actor, writer, yoga and meditation facilitator, and teaching artist. He started the punk psychedelic art band Light Aloud in 2023 and founded the interdisciplinary performance project Gender Tender in 2012. Fox’s ongoing project and current focus is MELTED RIOT. A surreal protest song, a queer meditation, a psychedelic research project, and a punk prayer, MELTED RIOT uses sound, dance, durational performance, and visual art to investigate the effects peaceful and violent forms of support and sabotage have on the bodies, minds, and spirits of the transgender and queer community.
FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- What do you make of the title Blood Baby?
- How do different artistic disciplines come together in the works presented?
- How were the archives employed in these artworks?
- What kinds of family structures have you been a part of? Have you created any new or non-normative forms of kinship in your life?

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

- ONE Archives at the USC Libraries [one.usc.edu]
- Classes and events in the USC Roski School of Art and Design [roski.usc.edu]
- Classes and events at the USC Kaufman School of Dance [kauffman.usc.edu]
- Highways Performance Space [highwaysperformance.org]
- REDCAT [redcat.org]
- Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE) [welcometolace.org]
- Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA) [theicala.org]

Upcoming Visions and Voices Events

- 2/28/24 waheedworks: Bodies as Site of Faith and Protest
- 2/8/24 An Evening with Laura Ortman & Raven Chacon
- 2/20/24 An Evening with Common
- 3/1/24 Searching for Home: An Evening with Contemporary Artists Humaira Abid and Phung Huynh
- 3/2/24 Cypher Summit Block Party
- 3/23/24 CHRISTEENE: The Lion The Witch And the Cobra, with Peaches and Shannon Funchess
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


DATABASES

- GenderWatch
- ONE Archives Periodical Collection
- LGBT Magazine Archive
- LGBT Thought and Culture
- LGBTQ+ Source

JOURNALS

- The Advocate
- Journal of GLBT Family Studies
- Transgender Community News
- Transgender Studies Quarterly