

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES PROGRAMMING FOR 2025 WOW FESTIVAL

**Playhouse's Acclaimed Annual Festival of Immersive and Site-Inspired Work
To Be Presented In Partnership with UC San Diego**

**Festival to Feature More Than 20 Thrilling Projects
By Local, National And International Artists**

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse announces full programming for the [2025 WOW Festival](#) of immersive and site-inspired work, presented in partnership with **UC San Diego**. The WOW Festival will take place **April 24 – 27** on the UC San Diego campus.

Like previous WOW Festivals, the 2025 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.

Admission to the WOW Festival is free, and the majority of WOW productions are free of charge, with a handful of ticketed performances ranging from \$12 to \$37. Please visit [wowfestival.org](#) for the full WOW Festival schedule, information and tickets.

“We are delighted to once again celebrate this four-day, community-wide event in partnership with UC San Diego, featuring more than 20 exhilarating WOW experiences that invite us to connect with the space and each other,” said **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse. “The lineup for our 2025 WOW Festival features a wild and wonderful combination of intimate and large-scale spectacle productions for audiences of all ages, created by acclaimed artists from across the globe.”

The WOW Festival projects include: **American Dream Casino**, a WOW Workshop Presentation by San Diego artist **Robert Farid Karimi**; **Artists Everywhere**, by San Diego's **Playwrights Project**; **Bev and Blanche's Care-a-Van**, by San Diego artists Esty Bharier and Molly Maslak; **Black Benatar's Audience Lip Sync Spectacular** and **Black Magic Variety Hour**, both by San Francisco-based artist **Beatrice Thomas**; **Bring Back the Happening**, by The Netherlands-based company **Nineties**; **Burnout Paradise**, by the Australian company **Pony Cam**; **Escape the Box**, by the Texas-based **Wishing Horse Productions**; **FIREBIRD**, by The Netherlands-based **Touki Delphine**; **Garden**, by San Diego artist **Zlatko Mitev**; **Green Memories**, by UC San Diego professors **Shahrokh Yadegari** and **Memo Akten**; **How to Put On a Sock**, by New York-based artist **Rachel Gita Karp**; **I SEE YOU LIKE THIS**, by Australian artist **Jessica Wilson**; **THE JUMP UP!**, by the New

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York-based **Sandbox Percussion**, presented by ArtPower; ***Layers***, by **San Diego Circus Center**; ***Les Enfants Terribles – A Gameshow for Awful Children*** and ***Marcel Lucont’s Whine List***, both by UK artist **Marcel Lucont**; ***ODDISEA: A Puppet Procession***, by the San Diego-based **Animal Cracker Conspiracy**; ***The Society of Historic Sonic Happenings*** (SHSH), by the New York-based **UP CLOSE Projects**; ***Summer Break***, by the Canadian company **FLIP Fabrique**; ***Tale Travelers***, by the San Diego-based **Blindspot Collective**; and ***when my body talks***, by San Diego artist **Daniel Ureña** and **Diversionsary Theatre**.

Additionally, the Playhouse will present performances of the 2025 Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour, ***The Weather Busters of Beachcastle***, during the WOW Festival. Other special WOW Festival projects include ***Shifting Horizons***, created by the **San Diego Unified School District Honors Theatre Project** and ***Goldilocks Screentime***, created by **UC Theatre and Dance** students.

Without Walls (WOW) is La Jolla Playhouse’s signature performance program that takes art outside traditional theatre walls and into unique spaces, including the annual WOW Festival and WOW stand-alone productions. From a car to a bar, from a beach to a basement, WOW invites audiences of all ages to interact with artists and art in unexpected ways, bringing people together and reimagining what storytelling can be. WOW has become one of the region’s most popular and acclaimed performance programs. Since its inception in 2011, the Playhouse has commissioned and presented a series of immersive, site-inspired and virtual productions throughout the San Diego community, including eight stand-alone productions, seven WOW Festivals and fourteen Digital WOW pieces.

The 2025 WOW Festival is made possible through the partnership with UC San Diego and support from the City of San Diego Arts & Culture Commission, Creative West, Dutch Culture USA at the Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, National Endowment for the Arts, Performing Arts Fund NL, and Show Imaging, as well as WOW SuperFans: Christopher Ashley and Ranjit Bahadur, Denise and Lon Bevers, David and Claire Guggenheim, Dwight Hare and Stephanie Bergsma and Robin and Larry Rusinko. Media Sponsors include Clear Channel Outdoor, KPBS, San Diego Magazine and San Diego Reader.

Founded as an experiment in 1960, **UC San Diego** scholars aren’t afraid to challenge convention if it means they can accelerate answers to our society’s most pressing issues. As one of the top 20 research universities in the world, they are driving change far beyond its walls to advance society and propel economic growth. And the world has taken notice. UC San Diego’s main campus is located near the Pacific Ocean on approximately 1,200 acres of coastal woodland in La Jolla, California. The campus sits on the ancestral homelands of the Kumeyaay Nation. Kumeyaay people continue to have an important and thriving presence in the region. UC San Diego’s rich academic portfolio includes eleven academic, professional and graduate schools and eight undergraduate residential colleges. UC San Diego is also home to the prestigious Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the UC San Diego Health System.

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[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 120 world premieres, commissioning 70 new works, and sending 37 productions to Broadway, garnering a total of 42 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

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WOW Festival Projects***American Dream Casino*** (Free)

A WOW Workshop Presentation

By Robert Farid Karimi

San Diego, CA

WOW presents the next stage of development for *American Dream Casino*: a playful, interactive, casino-like experience that celebrates what we gamble, and what we gain (and lose) to achieve the American Dream. Gamblers play with a special casino currency to win prizes, with the ultimate reward being an all-expenses-paid American Dream for themselves and their loved ones.

Artists Everywhere (Free)

By Playwrights Project

San Diego, CA

Artists Everywhere brings stories from formerly incarcerated writers to life through professionally produced films. Written as plays and adapted into films by Playwrights Project teaching artist and filmmaker Chris Boyd, the films are presented on five screens with headsets. As if viewing paintings in a gallery, you choose the order and duration of your viewing experience with each film—you may even have the chance to interact with the writers and artists behind the works.

Bev & Blanche's Care-a-Van (Free)

By Esty Bharier and Molly Maslak

San Diego, CA

Meet Bev & Blanche, “The Rough Draft Sisters”—two quirky, codependent unfinished marionette twins navigating ongoing mental health journeys. During this roaming pop-up show, Bev and Blanche explore feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and grief while offering mindfulness, levity, and connection. Can you find their Care-a-Van? What nuggets of wisdom will they have in store for you?

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Black Benatar's Audience Lip Sync Spectacular (Free)
Black Benatar's Black Magic Variety Hour (Tickets: \$12)

By Beatrice Thomas
San Francisco, CA

In *Audience Lip Sync Spectacular*, get ready for an interactive, family-friendly, high-energy experience where the audience takes center stage! Hosted by the legendary Black Benatar, this event blends drag, lip sync, and playful performances. Enjoy lip sync battles, surprise guest artists, and playful puppetry. Whether performing or cheering, everyone is welcome to celebrate and let loose in this dynamic, variety-style showcase!

In *Black Magic Variety Hour*, step into Black Benatar's bold, immersive, and unapologetically queer world where drag, magic, comedy, and spectacle collide in a late-night adults-only variety experience. Hosted by Black Benatar, this high-energy journey is filled with dazzling performances, surprise acts, and boundary-pushing artistry. With a rotating lineup of top-tier artists, bringing live music, DJ sets and unpredictable acts, this immersive, rebellious show is full of sass, surprises, and no limits—an unforgettable night of theatrical mayhem awaits!

Bring Back the Happening (Tickets: \$17)

By Nineties
The Netherlands

“Happenings” in the tumultuous 1960s reflected the need for disruption. Dutch contemporary theatre collective Nineties convenes a “happening” – neither a play nor a show – as an interactive, high-spirited way to connect with others, find healing and leave behind all worldly dislocation – if only for a moment. Surrender to a lively ritual underscored by a lush soundtrack (and maybe a few dinosaurs).

Burnout Paradise (Tickets: \$37)

By Pony Cam
Australia

Four performers mount their treadmills, and the challenge begins. *Burnout Paradise* tests the limits of mind, body, and spirit in an increasingly frenetic juggling act of absurdity. A delusional love letter to the reckless labor and euphoric optimism before burnout, demonstrating that the system isn't designed for us: it's designed to break us. Time Out called it “one of the most frenetically uproarious shows of gloriously demented ecstasy.”

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Escape the Box (Tickets: \$27)
By Wishing Horse Productions
Austin, TX

A time-travel outdoor escape game for all ages, *Escape the Box* brings to life the history, public art, and spirit of a neighborhood. Your challenge: with the help of your team, get back to the present using the clues and solving the puzzles around you. If you fail, you'll be lost in time—forever.

FIREBIRD (Free)
By Touki Delphine
The Netherlands

The Amsterdam-based arts collective Touki Delphine brings you the most out-of-this-world concert experience you've never seen. Inspired by composer Igor Stravinsky's 1919 Firebird Suite, *FIREBIRD* is a rule-breaking, eye-popping electronic orchestral performance of sound and light. Illuminated by over 600 recycled car taillights, the Firebird's dance bursts into life. Don't miss this thoroughly hypnotic event.

Garden (Free)
By Zlatko Mitev
San Diego, CA

Admire stunning sculptures inspired by local flora and fauna, and take a seat where art and nature come together for a unique garden experience.

Goldilocks Screentime (Free)
By UC Theatre and Dance
San Diego, CA

Will snail mucin give you perfect skin? Can Pilates or weight training give you bulletproof abs? Social media promises answers to every wellness question, but how much advice is too much? Bring your gorgeous selves to join us in *Goldilocks Screentime* as we explore the internet, beauty, wellness, and the challenges of trying to be perfectly "just right" in real life.

Green Memories (Free)
By Shahrokh Yadegari and Memo Akten
San Diego, CA

Take your time to experience an installation by artists and UC San Diego professors Shahrokh Yadegari and Memo Akten, inspired by Forough Farrokhzad's poem "I Pity the Garden." Through the metaphor of a garden, Farrokhzad's poem delves into themes of life, death, and the passage of time.

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How to Put On a Sock (Free)

By Rachel Gita Karp
Brooklyn, NY

Abstinence pledges, birth videos, STI slideshows, condom demonstrations. Sex ed can have it all -- if sex ed is taught at all. *How to Put On a Sock* takes you on an interactive sex ed tour of the United States. Personal stories from a multigenerational ensemble illustrate the highs, lows, and confusing in-betweens of what teens are taught and not taught about sex in school.

I SEE YOU LIKE THIS (Free)

By Jessica Wilson
Australia

In a world of constant capture, *I SEE YOU LIKE THIS* invites parents to flip the viewfinder. See yourself through the eyes of your child in a unique artistic exploration: your face as their canvas. A one-of-a-kind artwork, and a memory you will both never forget.

THE JUMP UP! (Free)

Presented by ArtPower
New York, NY

Sandbox Percussion, in partnership with UC San Diego Professor Steven Schick and Red Fish Blue Fish, presents the West Coast premiere of Douglas J. Cuomo's *THE JUMP UP!*, directed by Mark DeChiazza. This site-specific performance involves musicians moving through the space, culminating in the audience joining as a communal orchestra. Praised as "exhilarating" by the *New York Times*, Cuomo's compositions span stage, TV, and film, including the Sex and the City theme.

Layers (Free)

By Circus Center
San Diego, CA

Layers is a chance to explore what inspires us all as humans. We're all storytellers in some way, and it's amazing how a single idea can grow into a whole world of animated characters. Join Circus Center on this journey of imagination to see how we create and sometimes tear things apart to find the story that's waiting to be told.

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Les Enfants Terribles – A Gameshow for Awful Children (Free)***Marcel Lucont's Whine List*** (Tickets: \$17)By Marcel Lucont
United Kingdom

In *Les Enfants Terribles – A Gameshow for Awful Children*, French comedian Marcel Lucont takes families on a wild ride of impersonation and improvisation, as kids play pests, politicians and more in a contest where worst comes first. See what happens when international insouciance meets infantile exuberance in this fringe festival favorite. “An absolute gem... If you don't have kids, borrow someone else's...a treat from beginning to end,” raved *Edinburgh Festivals* magazine.

Let your past gripes, moans, and woes take center stage! Served up by a deadpan Frenchman with characteristic wit, Gallic superiority, and a side dish of his premier erotic poetry, *Marcel Lucont's Whine List* promises no solutions—just plenty of laughs. This award-winning comedy show has packed houses around the globe. Now, add your minor sins to the list, and see that you're far from alone.

ODDISEA: A Puppet Procession (Free)By Animal Cracker Conspiracy
San Diego, CA

Embrace your mermaiden roots as you join the *ODDISEA*: an interactive giant puppet procession unlike any other! Inspired by the sea and an alien cosmology of light, *ODDISEA* calls us to gather, to celebrate life, and to reclaim connection – with the stars above, the ocean below, and the ancestors who offer a bridge between them. Audiences of all ages are invited to dance along to the rhythms of the Chunky Hustle Brass Band and become part of this larger-than-life spectacle.

Shifting Horizons (Free)By the San Diego Unified Honors Theatre Project
San Diego, CA

What happens when a shining star falls far from home? Join students from across the San Diego Unified School District on a journey from isolation to community. *Shifting Horizons* explores displacement, belonging, and finding one's place in the unfamiliar in an original movement piece.

The Society of Historic Sonic Happenings (SHSH) (Tickets: \$12)By UP CLOSE Projects
New York, NY

What if you could hear the sounds of the past? *The Society of Historic Sonic Happenings (SHSH)* is on a mission to find and preserve forgotten, hidden sounds from history—and they need your help! From the earth beneath your feet to the walls around you, SHSH believes every sound is still out there, waiting to be freed. Join the hunt to uncover the sonic history around you and help reveal the stories of those who came before us.

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Summer Break (Free)

By FLIP Fabrique
Canada

Join FLIP Fabrique for a nostalgic circus show that takes you back to your summer camp days! Relive the excitement of packing for camp, making new friends, and the thrill of early morning swims. Bring your popcorn, your marshmallows, and hop on the Vacation Bus for a heartwarming and fun-filled adventure back to those unforgettable camp memories!

Tale Travelers (Tickets: \$12)

By Blindspot Collective
San Diego, CA

Embark on an adventure at Geisel Library with *Tale Travelers*. Meet literary legends like Captain Hook, Frankenstein's monster, and Scheherazade. Explore hidden surprises, unlock storytelling secrets, and encounter unforgettable characters. Step into the pages of beloved books and discover a world of theatrical wonder along the way!

when my body talks (Free)

By Danniell Ureña and Diversionary Theatre
San Diego, CA

when my body talks is an experience exploring our first-time queer experiences – how they resonate in our bodies and shape our identities. Inspired by the question, “Why do we keep having ‘first-time’ experiences as queer people?”, the piece deconstructs moments of discovery, secrecy, celebration, and love through movement, monologue, and music. Developed at Diversionary Theatre, *when my body talks* fosters a shared exploration of storytelling to reimagine the past and create a better future.

The Weather Busters of Beachcastle (Free)

La Jolla Playhouse POP Tour
San Diego, CA

Bizarre weather is wreaking havoc in Beachcastle, California, and the only ones who can save the town are 12-year-olds Jayce and Kori. When they meet a mysterious explorer from beyond the stars, they embark on a journey that will change their lives--and their community--forever. *The Weather Busters of Beachcastle* is a world-premiere play for young audiences and families exploring how we all can make a difference.

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WOW Festival Artist Biographies

Memo Akten (*Green Memories*) is an artist, researcher and philomath from Istanbul, Turkey. He works with emerging technologies and computation as a medium to create moving images, compositions, large-scale responsive installations and performances. He brings together fields such as biological and artificial intelligence, computational creativity, perception, consciousness, information theory, neuroscience, fundamental physics, cosmology, spirituality, ritual and religion. Akten combines critical and conceptual approaches, with investigations into form, movement and sound. He uses code as his craft to design behavioral abstractions and data dramatizations of natural and anthropogenic processes. He holds a Ph.D. from Goldsmiths, University of London, specializing in expressive human-machine interaction and artistic explorations of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

San Diego-based artists Bridget Rountree and Iain Gunn are [Animal Cracker Conspiracy](#) (*ODDISEA: A Puppet Procession*), a contemporary hybrid puppet company invested in pushing the boundaries of kinetic performance. Joining forces in 2004, their ongoing practice is based on a shared interest and exploration of where fine art, puppetry, performance art, physical theatre, film and mixed media intersect. They actively cultivate the suspension of disbelief by embracing the unknown and using the manipulation of puppets to create original stories. Past work includes: 2022 WOW Festival's *Transmythical*; Digital WOW's *The Society of Wonder*, *Adrift*, *Myth Project 1*, *Paper Cities Project*, *The Collector*, *Desire to Fly* and many others.

Esty Bharier and **Molly Maslak** (*Bev and Blanche's Care-a-Van*) Esty is a writer, puppeteer, and creative consultant for themed entertainment and immersive theater. Her experience ranges from intimate immersive shows to large-scale theme parks. Molly is a puppeteer, actor, writer, and arts educator. She studied theatre at the University of San Diego and is an alumni of the Meisner/ Chekhov Integrated Actor Training Studio. Esty and Molly are recent alumni of the National Puppetry Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. Their work uses puppetry, vulnerability, and humor to connect with people and explore difficult topics while spreading positive messages of compassion and mental health awareness.

[Blindspot Collective](#) (*Tale Travelers*) develops transformative theatre that amplifies marginalized voices, illuminates untold stories, bridges disparate experiences, and energizes vulnerable communities. The company has received acclaim for its original work, including site-specific events, new musicals, forum theatre, and verbatim plays that have been nominated or awarded Outstanding Solo Performance, Outstanding Musical, and Outstanding New Company by the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle. Previous collaborations with La Jolla Playhouse include *iykyk*, *salty water*, *Black Séance*, *Hall Pass* and *Walks of Life*. Since its founding in 2017, Blindspot Collective has collaborated with The Old Globe; Diversionary Theatre; UC San Diego; and other community partners to develop projects that meaningfully engage audiences and artists in the blindspot of society.

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Bo Koek, Rik Elstgeest, John van Oostrum and Chris Doyle are **Touki Delphine** (*FIREBIRD*) an artist collective of musicians, performers and visual artists from Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The members draw from their eclectic backgrounds to create stimulating visual art and modern music performances. In their multidimensional works, they pull from classic and modern music from all corners of the globe, and combine reinterpretations with original compositions and new visual concepts crossing and blurring disciplinary boundaries. Their work is inspired by the climate crisis and the insights of natural science that nature is a living whole, not a dysfunctional mass. Using recycled materials, Touki Delphine creates installations that explore a restoration of balance between nature, technology and humans. Our collective discarded technology is salvaged and given a new life in their performances. Although abstract, they inevitably portray nature, capturing its inspiring beauty and power, offering a stimulating and contemplative experience for the human audience.

Diversionsary Theatre's (*when my body talks*) mission is to provide an inspiring, inclusive, and empowering space for community to celebrate and explore complex, provocative, and diverse LGBTQIA+ stories which contribute to the larger cultural discussion. Since its founding in 1986, we have 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.

FLIP Fabrique (*Summer Break*) is a circus company based in Québec, Canada. Born out of the dreams and the friendship of circus performers in 2011, this troupe is renowned around the world for its beloved productions combining astonishing feats and true visual poetry. Composed of world-class artists, the troupe crafts contemporary circus shows with an uncanny ability to have fun and move the audience. In addition to its large-scale shows presented every summer in Québec City since 2015, the troupe is performing around the globe in the most prestigious circus institutions and festivals.

Robert Farid Karimi (*American Dream Casino*), critically-acclaimed trans-channel artist, interactive experience educator, performer, author and cultural activist, designs interactive immersive game-performance experiences to spark players to imagine worlds of mutual community nourishment. Karimi is an artist of Iranian/Guatemalan/Mayan descent, whose work frequently addresses themes of cultural heritage, social justice, and community engagement, bridging various artistic mediums to foster dialogue and human connection. With over 25 years of expertise, Karimi develops playful participatory platforms that foster dialogue and human connection to spaces worldwide — from General Mills to Off Broadway to Nuyorican Poets Café to NPR to HBO's Def Poetry Jam, Hawaii International Film Festival, The Smithsonian, and South by Southwest. Karimi is co-director of the Public Practice + Generative Play StudioLab and serves as Assistant Professor in the Music, Dance and Theater department at Arizona State University.

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Rachel Gita Karp (*How to Put On a Sock*) makes performances to change US politics and policy. Based in NY, Rachel has written and directed performances through The Drama League, Clubbed Thumb, Ars Nova, Mabou Mines, Irondale, Brooklyn Arts Council, NY Foundation for the Arts, LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, The Wild Project, The Brick, The Flea, Dixon Place, Incubator Arts Project, Network of Ensemble Theaters. Regional credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics, Philly Fringe; residencies include SPACE on Ryder Farm, Barn Arts, Monson Arts, Orchard Project, Marble House Project, Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, Tofte Lake Center.

Marcel Lucont (*Les Enfants Terribles – A Gameshow for Awful Children* and *Marcel Lucont's Whine List*) has been staging critically-acclaimed shows around the world for over 15 years, picking up several accolades, including the Fringe World Award for Best Comedy Show. He has appeared on *Comedy Central at the Comedy Store*, *Set List* (Sky Atlantic) and *Live at the Electric* (BBC). Known for his deadpan wit, wry observations and bawdy poetry, he has been a hit at festivals such as Edinburgh Fringe, Melbourne Comedy Festival, Glastonbury Festival and New Zealand Comedy Festival.

Nineties (*Bring Back the Happening*) is a cutting-edge Dutch theater collective driven by their relentless experimentation and fearless curiosity and known for their radical fluidity. As creative shapeshifters, they playfully craft innovative narratives that embrace diverse worldviews, reflecting a generation shaped by multiple truths co-existing. Through thought-provoking storytelling, they challenge perceptions and make the present feel less elusive. With curiosity, commitment, and a touch of self-deprecation, they reimagine how stories are told—opening new perspectives that can help shape our future.

Playwrights Project (*Artists Everywhere*) is a San Diego based non-profit organization known statewide for its arts education programs. Our mission is to empower people of all ages and backgrounds to voice stories through theatre, inspiring individual growth and creating meaningful community connections. Playwrights Project's programs include in-school playwriting workshops for grades 3-12; an annual statewide playwriting competition for writers under age 19; professional productions of young writers' work; teacher training; and playwriting programs for adults, including those involved in the justice system, individuals recovering from substance abuse, current and former foster youth, veterans, and seniors.

Pony Cam (*Burnout Paradise*) is an award-winning experimental theatre collective of five theatre makers from across Australia. Driven by a desire to create experiences that defy expectations, they subvert familiar forms, activate unconventional spaces, and engage audiences in unexpected ways. With over five years of shared training, their practice is instinctive, physical and highly playful. Each work is unique, but all are united by a commitment to reimagine our impact on the world, celebrate community, and find joy—even in the face of tragedy. Pony Cam has recently performed in Edinburgh and New York, bringing their bold vision to international stages.

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San Diego Circus Center (*Layers*) is committed to advancing circus training and enriching lives through contemporary and traditional disciplines. With a focus on higher education and professional programs, their inclusive, noncompetitive environment fosters personal growth emphasizing individual strengths. They also champion the joy of recreational studies, creating a vibrant community where circus arts inspire and unite everyone alike.

San Diego Unified School District Honors Theatre Project (*Shifting Horizons*) prioritizes Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) as core academic pursuits, critical to a well-rounded education, by cultivating artistic literacy and developing in students the creative and intellectual capacity and skills necessary to thrive in cultural communities and career pursuits. SDUSD VAPA is committed to inclusion and diversity, so that all SDUSD students develop agency, creative capacity, and civic responsibility.

Described as “exhilarating” by *The New York Times*, the GRAMMY®-nominated ensemble **Sandbox Percussion** (*THE JUMP UP!*) champions living composers through its unwavering dedication to contemporary chamber music. In 2011, Jonathan Allen, Victor Caccese, Ian Rosenbaum, and Terry Sweeney were brought together by their love of chamber music and the simple joy of playing together; they have since captivated audiences with performances that are both visually and aurally stunning. In 2024, Sandbox Percussion became the first percussion ensemble to be awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant. Sandbox Percussion holds the positions of ensemble-in-residence and percussion faculty at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and The New School’s College of Performing Arts. Starting in 2024-25, Sandbox Percussion will also be on faculty at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University. Sandbox Percussion endorses Pearl/Adams musical instruments, Zildjian cymbals, Vic Firth sticks and mallets, Remo drumheads, and Black Swamp accessories.

Beatrice Thomas (*Black Benatar’s Audience Lip Sync Spectacular* and *Black Magic Variety Hour*) is a multidisciplinary artist, producer, consultant, and storyteller with over 30 years of experience. As the founder of Authentic Arts and Media, Beatrice’s work engages themes of cultural identity, racial justice, and queer visibility through performance, visual arts, and community-centered media. Through their alter ego, Black Benatar, Beatrice leads *Black Benatar’s Black Magic Cabaret*, blending drag, puppetry, magic, and theater to challenge narratives of belonging and explore inclusion.

UP CLOSE Projects (*The Society of Historic Sonic Happenings (SHSH)*) is a collective of artists and educators whose work occurs in partnership with our communities, driven by engaging audiences of all ages and abilities in thought-provoking immersive civic experiences that are deeply connected to the multilayered histories of public space. United by our formative collaborations at some of NYC’s most iconic cultural hubs – Lincoln Center, the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Governor’s Island, and the Park Avenue Armory – with innovative artist collectives like Blue Man Group and Trusty Sidekick Theater Company – we share the mission of bringing neighbors together to experience their neighborhood in new ways.

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Daniel Ureña (*when my body talks*; he/him) is a San Diego-based director, choreographer, and producer whose work explores the intersection of queerness, first-generation identity, and Latinidad in America. Raised at the crossroads of honoring tradition and creating individuality, he engages with the work that celebrates his history while defining the future. He has worked in theaters across San Diego including San Diego REP (Latinx New Play Festival Intern), La Jolla Playhouse (Artistic Intern, Latinx New Play Festival Associate Producer, Learning and Engagement Coordinator), and Diversionary (Artistic Fellow). He received his BA from UC San Diego double majoring in Theater and Dance with a Chicana and Latinx minor. Most recent project: *The Hispanic/Latino/ Latina/Latinx/Latine Vote* at TuYo Theater (Assistant Director). danielurena.godaddysites.com. Socials: @Danielurena

Jessica Wilson (*I SEE YOU LIKE THIS*) is a creative entrepreneur and an internationally recognized leader in the field of participative art for children. She has a history of inventing and realizing ambitious projects which are situated in new locations to change the way we see the ordinary world around us. Jessica is frequently invited to tour her projects around the world and collaborate with local artists on immersive walks, bus-based performances, and shared child/parent experiences with public outcomes. Her practice is underpinned by a passion for ‘mainstreaming’ child agency and returning roaming and imaginative play to children’s lives.

Wishing Horse Productions (WHP; *Escape the Box*) is an immersive experience design agency based in Austin, Texas. As thought leaders in the immersive space, WHP’s experiences are enjoyed by groups of up to 600 people. With over 20 years of experience in team building and 6 years of experience creating bespoke adventures for large groups, WHP creates custom immersive games anywhere you want.

Shahrokh Yadegari (*Green Memories*) is an Iranian-American composer, sound artist, and researcher known for his work in interactive music, live electronic performance, and interdisciplinary collaborations. With a background in electrical engineering and music, he explores the intersection of technology and artistic expression. Yadegari has collaborated with artists such as Peter Sellars, Robert Woodruff, Ann Hamilton, Christine Brewer, and Gabor Tompa. He is currently a faculty member in the Department of Music at UC San Diego and the Associate Director of the Qualcomm Institute, where he directs the Sonic Arts Research and Development group.

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