



Images left to right:
2024 Reading Series at Under St. Marks
2025 performance by tidbit collective at Downtown Art
2025 short play Evening Out by Karen Campion

FALL 2026 PROGRAM

Welcome!

CollectiveGenius (formerly EstroGenius) is an NYC-based multidisciplinary performance festival and creative community dedicated to amplifying and supporting the voices of women and gender-expansive artists through script-based and body-based work. The festival enters its 26th year with a new identity that reflects the evolution of its mission and the artists it serves.

The 2026 Festival is curated by Sabrina Canas, Melissa Riker, John C. Robinson, Buffy Sierra, short play lead producers Heather Bildman and Rikki Ziegelman along with a stellar Short Play adjudication panel. Spontaneous Combustion (our 48 hr playwriting challenge) is produced by Stuart Green and James Edward Becton III with co-producers Vincent Marano, Homer Frizzell and Helene Galek.

IF YOU LIKE WHAT YOU SEE TONIGHT - COME BACK FOR MORE
ART OVER THE FESTIVAL - AND PLEASE CONSIDER GIVING TO OUR

26 for 26 in 26 Fundraiser

so we can STAY a dependable platform for another 26 years!



2026 CollectiveGenius Festival: CANDID

September 25th - October 11th, 2026

The Episcopal Actors Guild

Triskelion Arts

TheaterLab

2026 Team

Sabrina Canas, Curator/Co-Producer

Melissa Riker, ED, Co-Producer, Curator

John C. Robinson, Curator/Advisor

Heather Bildman, Short Plays Co-Producer

Rikki Ziegelman, Short Plays Co-Producer, Marketing & Branding

Buffy Sierra, Curator/Artist Advisor

Vinnie Marano, Assistant Producer

Stuart Green, Spontaneous Combustion Co-Producer

James E. Becton III, Spontaneous Combustion Co-Producer/Associate Producer

Homer Frizzell, Spontaneous Combustion Co-Producer

Michelle Tabnick PR - Press

CollectiveGenius fka EstroGenius 2026 is made possible by grants from New York State Council for the Arts|Gov. Kathy Hochul, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council | Creative Communities with NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and Howard Gilman Foundation, John C. Robinson, Vincent Marano and generous individual donations.

FROM THE FEST DIRECTOR

I am proud to share with you our new name, that does not erase the beauty and power that came before it in EstroGenius, but solidifies our mission and dedication to the artists we serve as a platform for the artists often left on the edges.

We remain one of New York City's longest-running multidisciplinary performance festivals fully dedicated to women and gender-expansive artists.

Thank you to our lead producing team, Sabrina Canas, Heather Bildman, Rikki Ziegelman whose easy and passionate presence in weekly meetings for many months mean things get done well and gracefully, and our dear co-curators, Buffy Sierra and John C. Robinson who both love bringing performance power mixed with style to a stage through stunning and smart artists.

To our Spontaneous Combustion producing team, writers and actors of 177 McDougal days and beyond, welcome back!
We are so glad you are here with us again!

To New York State Council on the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and The Department of Cultural Affairs, thank you for seeing the value we offer our artists. To our dedicated supporters, John C. Robinson and Vincent Marano, and our friend Danielle Stein thank you for being the wind in our sails, and my source of sanity.

To you, our audiences: Thank you for being here and celebrating 2025's incredible artists. These artists need you more than ever - we are living in terrifying times - strong voices and good art will unite us and give us strength as we push forward into each day.

—Melissa Riker



WEEK #1

Episcopal Actors Guild: Sept 27-29

SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION

New Plays Written, Memorized, Staged & Performed in 48 Hours!

EPISCOPAL ACTORS GUILD
1 E 29th St

Sunday, September 27 – 7PM CANDID RE:SOURCE COMBUST #1
Monday, September 28 – 7PM CANDID RE:SOURCE COMBUST #2
Tuesday, September 29 – 7PM CANDID RE:SOURCE COMBUST #3

Chasing Proud
by Maura Kelley
with Paul Obedzinski &
James Edward Becton

Chloe Banjaxed
by Chris Chan Roberson
with Clare Tascio &
Alaina Hammond

Bot Mitzvah
by Philip Rosenbaum
with Austin Sanders
& Elle Crawford

In Liu Of...
by David Loewy-Harris
with Anais Main &
Isabella Orlowski

Where Are You Going?
by Angela Theresa Egic
with Kesia Patil &
Helene Galeki

Chulatok Dualcore
by Homer Frizzell
with Pamela Coss
& Alison Blakeslee

A Nearly Oedipal Encounter
by Jason Green
with Alexander Chilton
& Jenny Green

Two-Sided Die?
by Ed Malin
with Bill Kozy &
Mychelle Dangerfield

Running
by Andrew Frank
with Rhonda Hansome
& James Edward Becton

Stadium of Bones
by Laura Nori Rohrman
with Alaina Hammond
& Helene Galek

SPECIAL BONUS PLAY – MONDAY & TUESDAY NIGHTS ONLY

Hold It Right There
by Andrew Goldberg
(From Spontaneous Combustion #22: Family Guy Edition)
with Stuart Green & Dante Jayce (Monday) Kathleen O'Neill (Tuesday)

CLICK FOR FULL BIOS OF THE SPONTANEOUS TEAM



MANHATTAN THEATRE SOURCE PRESENTS

COLLECTIVE Genius 2026 FESTIVAL



SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION

Sunday September 27, 7:00 PM

Monday September 28, 7:00 PM

Tuesday September 29, 7:00 PM

Episcopal Actors Guild 1 East 29th Street - New York, NY 10016

COLLECTIVEGENIUS IS MADE POSSIBLE BY SUPPORT FROM



JOHN C. ROBINSON



VINCENT MARANO

WEEK #2

TRISKELION ARTS: Sept 28-Oct 3

CollectiveGenius Dance

Open workshops and performances by fierce, experimental and wildly varied artists at the edges of dance and performance creation in New York City.

Events at Trisk are curated by Sabrina Canas, Buffy Sierra, Melissa Riker, John C. Robinson

WORKSHOP

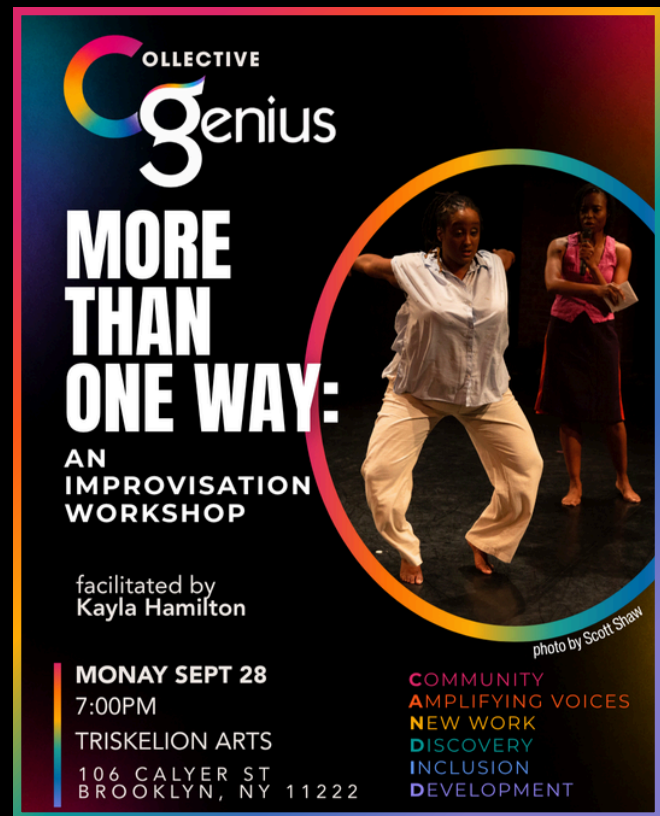
MONDAY, SEPT 28TH
7:00PM

Triskelion Arts

MORE THAN ONE WAY: An Improvisation Workshop

Facilitated by Kayla Hamilton

This workshop explores improvisation through choice, curiosity, and the many ways we move, communicate, and participate. Through guided prompts, we will respond to what our bodies need, learn from who is in the room, and discover how difference can shape the dance.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kayla Hamilton is a Bronx-based experience maker, educator, and cultural worker.

A Leo sun and Aquarius rising, she is an United States Artist Disability Futures Fellow and Bessie Award-winning dancer who feels most alive when she is dancing. Her work centers Blackness, disability, and care. Most present for her right now is the grief of losing her father and the question: What does it mean to live?



WORKSHOP

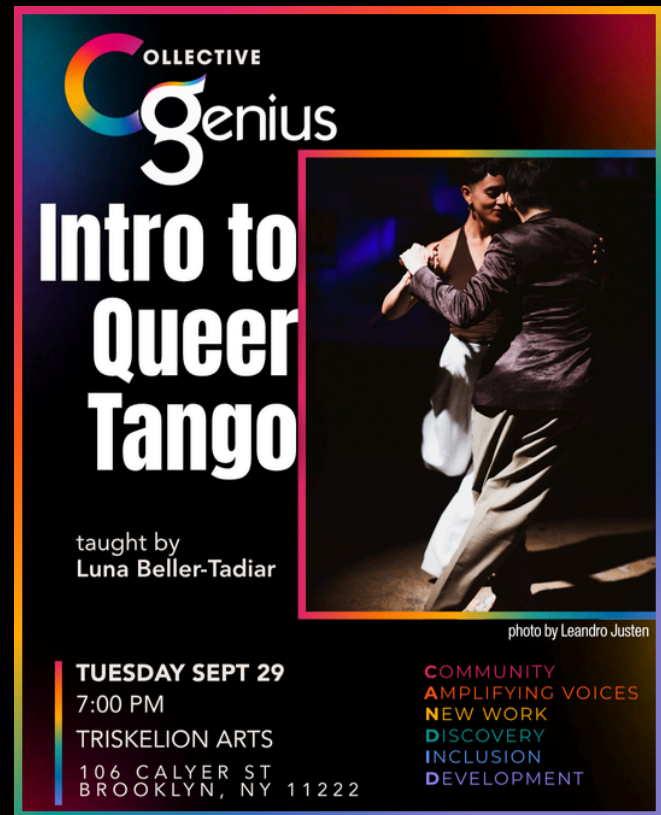
TUESDAY, SEPT 29TH
7:00PM

Triskelion Arts

INTRO TO QUEER TANGO

Taught by Luna Beller-Tadiar

This workshop takes us to queer tango and the possibilities of (de)gendered relation that queer dancers make there. Through tango fundamentals and guided group play, we will open bodily channels of communication to the pleasure of moving together, improvising with precision and freedom.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Luna Beller-Tadiar (she/they) is a queer mixed-US-Filipinx multi-media artist and performer who works in movement, words, and images. Her work excavates a body language made up of fragments: remnants of lands, peoples, relations, and machines. Drawing on movement training in aikido, capoeira, tango, and contemporary dance, she takes inspiration from queer collaborative fabulation; from postcolonial Filipino practices of mimicry and re-use; and from contemporary interfacing of the body and technology.

Anchored in the international queer tango community since 2018, Luna has taught queer tango weekly at The Center for LGBT Life since 2023, helping to shape a new generation of queer tango in her hometown of NYC.



WORKSHOP

WEDNESDAY, SEPT 30TH

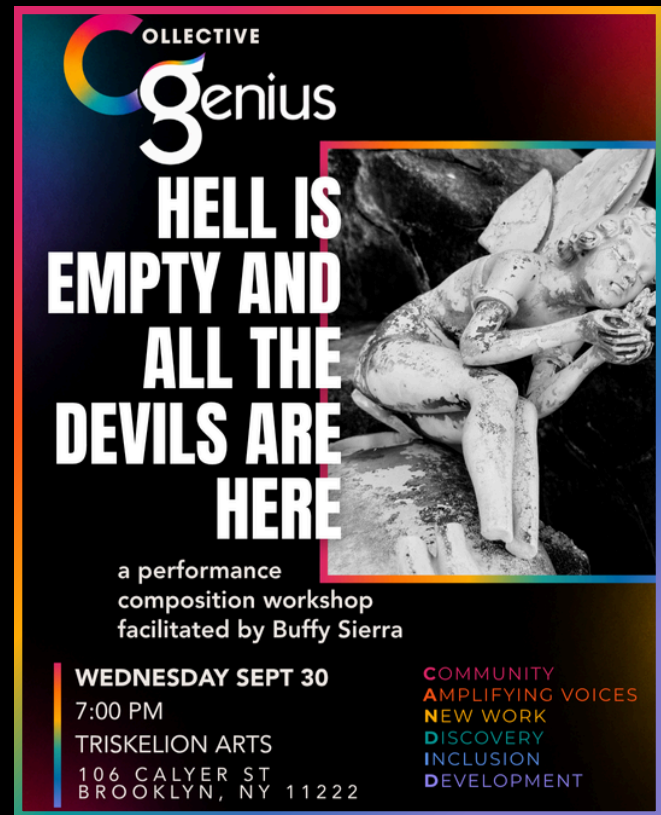
7:00PM

Triskelion Arts

HELL IS EMPTY AND ALL THE DEVILS ARE HERE

Facilitated by Buffy Sierra

This is a workshop for composing live performance against the backdrop of ongoing and increasing horrors. "Have you ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?" Dancing is the one of the oldest forms of condemnable action, alongside sex. In this workshop participants will be guided through improvisation and notation to create their own methods for movement-based performance composition.



This workshop is centered around the notion that dancing will always exceed containment. We will use text, image, sound, memory, dreaming, and dancing to forget our limits and remember our possibilities. Open to all 18 years and over at any movement levels.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

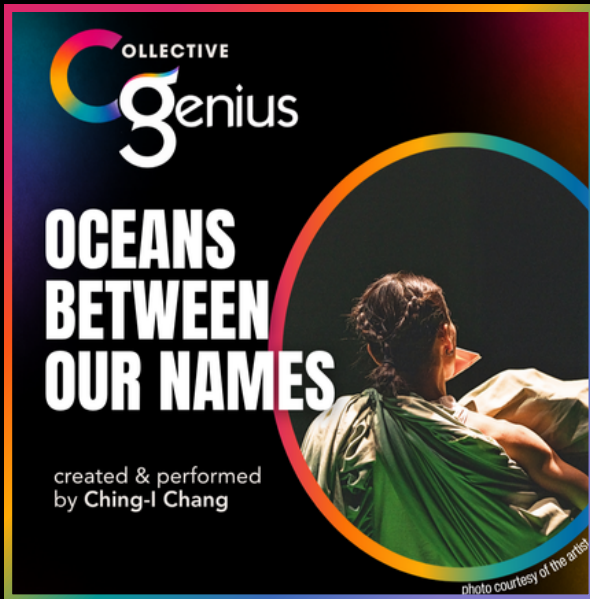
Buffy Sierra (she/her) is an artist and writer producing work about living horrors and dying beauties. Buffy's fixation on living horrors and dying beauties is an inverted obsession with life. She produces art to unravel how we live through this world's horrors, always with a retaliatory affirmation of beauty and its heartbreaking ephemerality. Her work slips promiscuously between sensuousness and severity: erotic live performance and its documents, stark technical design for stage and screen, unrelenting electronic music, and volatile choreographies that turn bodies inside-out. Her performances live in the gothic, gore-geous, and grotesque spaces between sex work, burlesque, drag, synthesized sound, tragic theater, and histories of transsexual futurity. She composes discordant music from open-source software, performance scores from metabolic memories implanted by medicalized technologies, operatic theater from the social engine of queer nightlife, dance from the felt dimensions of her synthetic biology's chronic pains, and rapturous events where audiences converge for exhilarating, unsettling, and transformative intimacies.



PERFORMANCE - SPLIT BILL

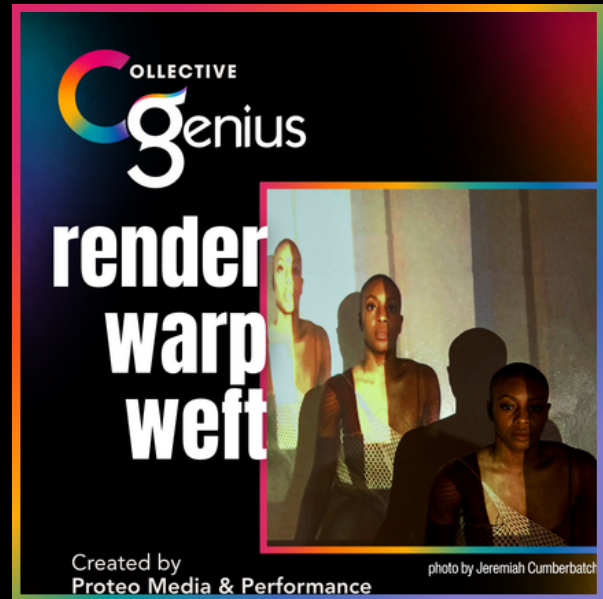
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1ST
8:00PM

Triskelion Arts



OCEANS BETWEEN OUR NAMES
by Ching-I Chang (work-in-process)

Explores migration, diasporic memory, and how displacement lives within the body over time.



RENDER WARP WEFT
by Proteo Media + Performance

The work conjures viral tales, video confessions, and deepfakes, "render warp weft" explores whose body and image we can really trust.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Anichi Moon (Ching-I Chang): A name discovered in a dream, carried gently by the wind between worlds. Born as Ching-I Chang, a name lovingly gifted by a beloved grandfather, Anichi walks through life with wonder in heart and songs in soul.

Anichi dreams of a world where humans and nature remember they are one; where creation flows freely without borders, separation, or fear. Anichi speaks with trees and listens closely to the wisdom hidden in their dances beneath the sky. When time softens, you can find Anichi singing to the moon, dancing barefoot through ordinary moments, and turning everyday life into a small celebration of being alive.

Anichi loves bananas.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS (CONT.)

Kathleen Kelley (she/her) is a director, filmmaker, and media artist whose work has been presented at venues like Gibney Center, Judson Church, La MaMa and Movement Research, and shared through national and international festivals and platforms including NPR, TriQuarterly, and Lisbon INSHADOW Screendance Festival. She is a 2025 New York State Council on the Arts Individual Awardee, and Professor of Dance and Technology and Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance at Montclair State University.

bree breeden (they/them) is a Bessie-nominated performance and media artist and a 2026 New York State Council on the Arts Individual Awardee. Currently, bree collaborates with various artists, including Kate Ladenheim, Janessa Clark, Jordan Demetrius Lloyd, Kinesis Project NYC, Pioneers Go East Collective, BANDportier, and Beth Graczyk Productions. bree holds a BFA in Dance Performance and Choreography from Montclair State University and an MFA in Dance from University of Maryland, College Park.

Together they are Proteo Media + Performance, a collective that produces creative experiences that engage live performers, film, projections, installations and other forms of visual/digital data to explore evocative intersections between technology and the body.

Curated by Melissa Riker, John C. Robinson and Sabrina Canas



PERFORMANCE
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2ND
6:30PM
Triskelion Arts

MY PLEASURE, GIRL

*Created & Performed
by Saga Snow*

This piece is a new work of live performance dissecting the URL and IRL pitfalls and pleasures of self-making through sex, service, surveillance, and sisterhood.

Curated by Buffy Sierra



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Saga Snow is a multi-hyphenate artist from the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan. She moved to NYC to work off-Broadway, having left musical theater school for more expansive opportunities. After working in theater and TV, she took time to blossom into who she is, exploring new mediums that felt more personal and fulfilling. Walking face in ballroom, performing drag and burlesque in bars and clubs, and being surrounded by creative community helped her find who she is again, gaining the love and confidence necessary to make art and live life. She has begun to remember the reason she started performing in the first place: to be what she wishes she could have seen growing up. She hopes to inspire somebody to follow their heart and express their soul's desire.



PERFORMANCE
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2ND
8:30PM
Triskelion Arts

TIGHTER

*Created & Performed
by Reina NoBuena*

This piece is a new work of live performance concerning the gasping, cinching, cutting, loss, and love constitutive to drag and its discontents.

Curated by Buffy Sierra



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Reina NoBuena (noun) is the boopity b!tch of Brooklyn, baby. A first generation Salvadoreña who was born and raised in New York City, she headlined Sasha Velour's NightGowns at BRIC, she was in The Subway music video with Chappell Roan, and on the Pride cover of TIME(OUT NY) Magazine with her drag mother Nancy NoGood. She's a Sag sun, Gemini moon and rising and she's really pretty. Sorry </3. @reinanobuena



PERFORMANCE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3RD
4:00PM

Triskelion Arts

LOOK, LOOK AGAIN

Directed by
Portia Wells

Look Look again is a ruin, a document of desire. Emerging from queer cruising's intimate and anonymous language of gestures, cues, glances, and grazes, this immersive ensemble work rehearses the erotic commons as a charged site of care, risk, and collective power.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Portia Wells (they/he) is a trans choreographer and multimedia artist based in Lenapehoking (NYC). Their work spans choreography, performance, technical dramaturgy, production management, visual art, writing, and sound design. His interdisciplinary practice investigates and fragments the queer dancing body in the studio, at the club, on the stage, in public, and in the dark. Their work has been shown at BAAD!, Opine Dance Film Festival, Green Space, Cooper Square, The Kraine Theater, the cell, and Downtown Art. He is the Technical Coordinator and an Adjunct Lecturer for the Dance Department at Hunter College.

Curated by Melissa Riker, John C. Robinson & Sabrina Canas



PERFORMANCE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3RD
6:00PM

Triskelion Arts

SANCTUARY

Created by Middle Child Dance Theatre
Sanctuary is an experimental and experiential performance that derives from the rhythms and rituals of christian spaces through the lens of queer identities. Through the premiere of this immersive evening length work, audiences will experience a playfully reimaged version of church.

Curated by Sabrina Canas



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Heather Dutton is a queer and gender fluid Brooklyn based dancer, choreographer, and teaching artist driven entirely by a deep fascination with people and the way they work. Her creative practice is informed by backgrounds in dance as well as comedy, theatre, and music. Dutton's work has been presented at venues including ODC Theater, Here Arts Center, Flushing Town Hall, Dixon Place, Arts on Site, LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, and the Tank. Her work has been seen in the Made by Women festival, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, the Koresh Come Together Dance Festival, Spark Theater Festival, FACT SF Summer Dance Festival and more. In addition to her creative life, she works as a postpartum doula. Her practice as both a dance artist and a doula is deeply informed by her inclinations toward collaboration, intimacy, and an ever-expanding sense of community.

Middle Child Dance Theatre is a Queer, project-based dance theatre collective that centers around negotiation, sensitivity, and finding something to laugh about. At the heart of our work as an ensemble is a sense of play and partnership, making it possible for us to build worlds that can simultaneously hold deep vulnerability and profound silliness. We prioritize collaboration with womxn and queer artists, and create work that cultivates a sense of community. Our work has recently been presented by Mare Nostrum Elements, the American Dance Festival, Made by Women, the Fact SF Summer Dance Festival, and the Crossroads Series at Socrates Sculpture Park.



PERFORMANCE - SPLIT BILL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3RD
8:30PM

Triskelion Arts



CANDID Split Bill: Cristina Moya-Palacios & Valentina Baché VACA

This is a shared bill by two imaginative and boundary pushing artists. Cristina Moya-Palacios (Fresh Tracks 2026) and Valentina Baché (2026 CPR Artist in Residence) often share the stage in one another's work, audiences will get the opportunity to experience their overlaps and their exquisite individualism.

Curated by Melissa Riker, John C. Robinson and Sabrina Canas

TE A solo made by Valentina Baché

"Everything Is A Big Deal" is a new dance theater solo-in-progress that examines the scarcity and embarrassment one experiences in the pursuit of making art. We embark on a moody, pseudo-rumba journey of meme & absurdity starring Sad Ant with Bindle.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Valentina Baché was born into a cacophony of color and macaws, in the isolation of the Caribbean jungle in Playa del Carmen, México. They learned the language of movement before they learned to speak, taught by sea, dogs, and blood. At fifteen, they skipped high school to attend Bard College at Simon's Rock, later transferring to Hunter College, where they graduated in 2020. Since then, they have done everything in their power to love and share. In a lifelong battle against the imperialist soul, they have found that love is the reason and that greed must be expelled from within each day. Through a spiritual devotion to dance as prayer, they explore the magic of nature and reveal the surreal ways in which we all contribute to cycles of harm. From this devotion, they have birthed a new technique, practice, and way of resisting. They spin because the divine is always spiraling, and they bark because the dog is a mirror reflecting our own malleability. They believe it is in the suppression of rage that energy becomes dangerous instead of transformative. Valentina is, a performer, textile artist, sculptor, and designer of beauty, violence, and truth, all at once.

Cristina Moya-Palacios is a Venezuelan-born, Miami-raised artist with a BFA from New World School of the Arts. She creates work focusing on the immigrant experience, Latine identity, and surrealism through extreme physicality and theater. Since moving to Brooklyn, she's had the pleasure of collaborating with Kashia Kancey, Miguel Alejandro Castillo, Valentina Baché, and Luis A. Lara Malvacías. Most recently, she presented solo work in the CATCH Performance Series, at Triskelion Arts, in Performance Mix Festival 39, at L'SPACE Gallery for New York Textile Month, and in Xenoduo's installation performances at Sunset Park and Union Square. She was a New Dance Alliance LiftOff Resident Artist in 2024, a GALLIM Moving Artist in 2025, and was part of the New York Live Arts Fresh Tracks Residency & Performance Program this year. Beyond performing and choreographing, Cristina enjoys crafting sonic scores for herself and longtime collaborator, Kashia Kancey.



WEEK #3

THEATERLAB: OCT 8TH - OCT 11TH

CollectiveGenius SHORT PLAYS: CANDID

Produced by Heather Bildman and Rikki Ziegelman

The Short Play Series is the cornerstone of the CollectiveGenius fka EstroGenius Festival. Beginning in 2000, and continuing - to ask playwrights and directors to challenge assumptions, bend stereotypes and offer multifaceted characters with complex experiences on our stage.

SHORT PLAY SERIES

Thursday
October 8th
7:30PM

Friday
October 9th
7:30PM

Saturday
October 10th
2:00PM

Saturday
October 10th
7:30PM

TheaterLab

357 W 36th St, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10018



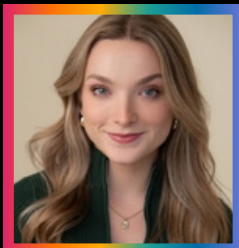
"Defying Lorelie"
by David Adam Gill



"Mini Marshmallows"
by Ren Rotante



"Oil On Your Eyelids."
by Al Groppi



"See the Wolf"
by Hanna Marie Olson



"Girtar Center"
by Cori Diaz



"Manifest Destiny"
by Emmy Potter

These six playwrights rose to the top in our adjudicated series.



CollectiveGenius **READING SERIES: CANDID**
Produced by Heather Bildman and Rikki Ziegelman

SHORT PLAY SERIES

Saturday
October 11th
3:00PM

TheaterLab
357 W 36th St, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10018



"The Bag-O-Crab"
by Yvonne DiGirolamo



"Telling A Story About Martha"
by Amelia Kennedy



"Lobster Claw"
by Dana Leslie Goldstein



"Brave"
by Brian Petti



"Leaving Paradise"
by Rebecca Kane





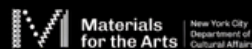
*Thank you for
your support!*

CollectiveGenius, fka EstroGenius Festival is an annual celebration of the artistry of femme, non-binary, non-conforming and trans womxn artists produced by Melissa Riker, Sabrina Canas with the guest curation of John C. Robinson and Short Play producers Heather Bildman, Rikki Ziegelman. Founded as a short play festival in 2000 at Manhattan Theatre Source by Fiona Jones, EstroGenius, as co-directed by Riker and maura nguyên donohue since 2017 existed to present the voices of dance-makers, playwrights, experimental performers, teens, musicians, burlesque performers, noise artists, filmmakers, dj's and anyone else looking to break molds and crack gender codes to the stage, street and forefront of public attention. CollectiveGenius 2026 is possible in part to generous funding via 2026 NYSCA Support for Organizations through New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, The Department Of Cultural Affairs and the Howard Gilman Foundation through regranting by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council along with the generosity of John C. Robinson, Vincent Marano and our individual donors. www.collectivegeniusfestival.org

COLLECTIVEGENIUS IS MADE POSSIBLE BY SUPPORT FROM



JOHN C. ROBINSON



VINCENT MARANO