

UC San Diego News Center

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“FAETOPIA: A Faerie Flash Mob,” designed and directed by 2017 La Jolla Playhouse Artist-in-Residence Basil Twist, features work by Department of Music ensemble red fish blue fish. Photo by Landon Nordeman.

Without Walls Festival Showcases UC San Diego Talent

Collaboration, professional development key to this year’s four-day, site-specific theater fest

The La Jolla Playhouse’s third Without Walls (WOW) Festival takes over San Diego Oct. 19-22, and UC San Diego students, alumni and faculty once again take center stage in a series of site-specific, innovative productions.

Held every other year, WOW provides an incredible opportunity for engagement, giving Division of Arts and Humanities students the opportunity to hone their professional development at the same time as showcasing their talents.

“As a student, this is a huge experience,” said Lily Padilla, a third-year MFA playwriting student in the Department of Theatre & Dance whose work was commissioned for the festival. Padilla, along with MFA directing student Dylan Key, will present “And Then You Wait,” a tender, immersive audio installation in the city’s Logan Heights neighborhood.

Now in its third year, the four-day, site-based WOW Festival comes to the city’s East Village and Barrio Logan for the first time.

“WOW is so crucial for bringing theater out to the people, and it takes me to places where I don’t normally have access,” Key said. “It’s a wonderful complement to the work we do here at UC San Diego.”

Padilla calls their work with the festival a true “incubator experience,” recognizing how particularly supportive UC San Diego and faculty mentor Deborah Stein have been for her own career development.

The WOW Festival provides another collaboration opportunity for Padilla and Key, following their production “(w)holeness” for the 2017 Wagner New Play Festival. Padilla said she began writing “And Then You Wait” after the La

Charles Mee’s “Under Construction: An American Masque”
Presented by UC San Diego Department of Theatre & Dance and Sledgehammer Theatre Company

When: Thursday, Oct. 19 at 8:15 p.m.; Friday, Oct. 20 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Oct. 21 and Sunday, Oct. 22 at 7 p.m.

Where: Bread & Salt, Logan Heights

“And Then You Wait”

By UC San Diego MFA students Lily Padilla and Dylan Key

When: Friday, Oct. 20, 5-10 p.m.; Saturday, Oct. 21 and Sunday, Oct. 22, 2-10 p.m.

Where: Bread & Salt, Logan Heights

“FAETOPIA: A Faerie Flash Mob”

Featuring Department of Music ensemble red fish blue fish

When: Saturday, Oct. 21 and Sunday, Oct. 22, top of each hour from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Where: New Children’s Museum

Trisha Brown Dance Company’s “In Plain Site”

Presented by ArtPower

When: Saturday, Oct. 21 and Sunday, Oct. 22 at 2 and 5 p.m.

Where: Revelle College, near the UC San Diego Theatre District

Jolla Playhouse invited her to the site in Barrio Logan for inspiration. Naturally, she said, Padilla went to Key to explore the piece's potential.

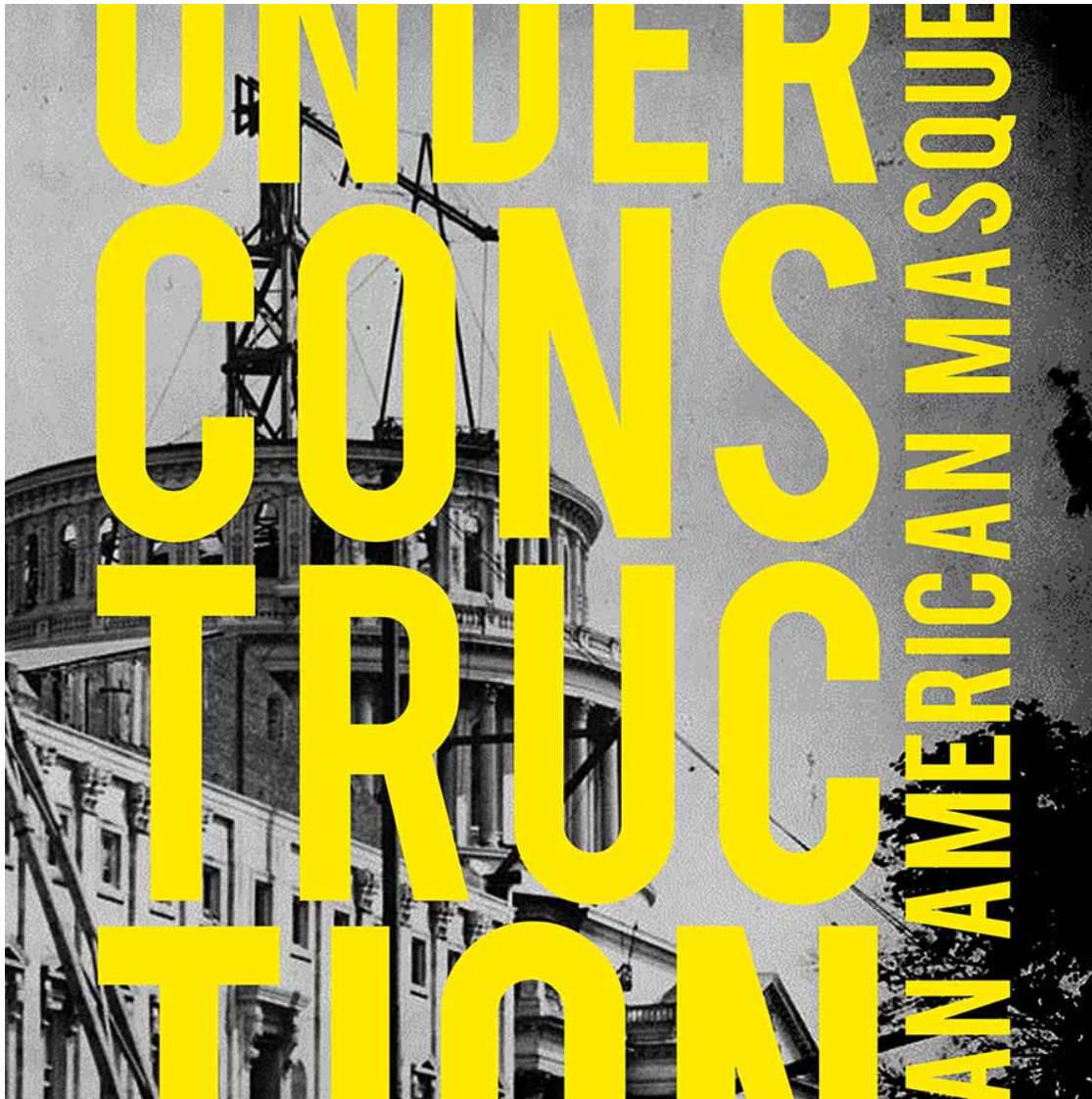
“My deepest collaborations, I've found, are those that can embody the text on the page, but also the work as a whole,” Padilla said of the “micro-communities” developed during this process. “I've been really lucky at UC San Diego because of these collaborations.”

Department of Music Ph.D. student John Burnett worked closely with Padilla and Key on sound design, creating an innovative algorithm into the piece so viewers can return multiple times for a new experience. Padilla said working with Burnett showed her how to think of a particular experience in time in a new way, enhancing the piece overall.

Additional Theatre and Dance MFA students Samantha Rojas, Kasson Marroquin, Kimberly Monks and Max Singer, as well as undergraduate Jenna

Dern, also helped develop “And While You Wait.”

“Theater is such a collaborative industry, [and] to have the opportunity to work with others like this is pretty incredible,” Key said. “I’m learning almost as much from my fellow students as from my mentors, my teachers.”



Charles Mee's "Under Construction: An American Masque" by Sledgehammer Theatre Company with the Department of Theatre & Dance is performed Oct. 19 – 22. Courtesy Sledgehammer Theatre.

In association with the Department of Theatre & Dance, the longstanding Sledgehammer Theatre Company presents Charles Mee's "Under Construction: An American Masque." Also staged at Bread & Salt in Barrio Logan, the production is set within a pop-up banquet hall where the audience will be immersed in a collage of scenes of the United States: images, song and dance inspired by Normal Rockwell of the 1950s to those inspired by a contemporary installation artist whose work most resonates in today's culture.

Current UC San Diego undergraduates Mona Gutierrez, Sofia Zaragoza and Levani Korganashvili are part of the production, as is MFA sound design student Justin Beets. Faculty professor Robert Brill is also heavily involved, overseeing much of the visual design. Alumnus Scott Feldsher, chair of the Viewpoint School Theater and Dance Department in Calabasas, Calif., is directing.

This isn't the first time Brill and Feldsher have worked together—the pair founded Sledgehammer Theatre Company with Ethan Feerst in 1985, when all three were undergraduates at UC San Diego. Then, the purpose was to have a venue where students could perform their work in town. After a brief hiatus, Feldsher and Feerst relaunched the company in 2014, continuing the tradition of partnership and providing professional experience.

A former Artist in Residence at the La Jolla Playhouse, Brill is the recipient of both the Michael Merritt and Lucille Lortel awards and is a two-time Tony Award nominee. He has produced set designs for theater, opera and dance productions that have been seen in every major city in the United States for three decades.



"In Plain Site," by Trisha Brown Dance Company and presented by ArtPower, will be performed on the UC San Diego campus. Photo by Jim Prisching.

Previous productions between the Department of Theatre & Dance and Sledgehammer Theatre Company have proven a huge success, with their 2015 Without Walls Festival showing, “Heaven on Earth,” dubbed a “must-see” for that year’s event.

The WOW festival will showcase multiple performances by local, national and international artists at five different venues: The New Children’s Museum, San Diego Public Library, Horton Plaza Park, Bread & Salt and Border X Brewing.

“Building on the success of our previous Without Wall Festivals, our 2017 outing will showcase works that redefine our conception of theatre, as well as the customary relationship between audience and art,” said La Jolla Playhouse Artistic Director Christopher Ashley.

For families, the WOW Festival is partnering with the New Children’s Museum for a series of flash-mobs staged at the top of each hour on Saturday and Sunday with the San Diego Guild of Puppetry. The critically acclaimed UC San Diego Department of Music percussion ensemble, red fish blue fish, will provide the music for this “whimsical, immersive” piece, called “FAETOPIA.”

And for a special engagement staged at UC San Diego, [ArtPower](#) presents four productions of Trisha Brown Dance Company’s “In Plain Site,” a unique, site-specific work adapted specifically for campus. Post-performance discussions with the artists will also be offered.

For more information and tickets to the UC San Diego productions, as well as the complete festival, visit the [2017 WOW Festival](#) website.