

# transformer

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## *Siren Arts: DRIFT* July 10 - Aug 18, 2023

Transformer brings *Siren Arts* back to the beach in Asbury Park, NJ for its 7th Annual Summer Artist Residency & Performance Art Series

Performance Art Events: 7pm Thursdays on the 2nd Avenue Beach, Asbury Park, NJ  
Artist Talks: 6pm Wednesdays at Transparent Clinch Gallery

All Audiences Welcome; All Programming Presented Free of Charge

*Asbury Park, NJ:* Transformer celebrates the 7th year of our *Siren Arts* program back on the beach in Asbury Park, NJ this summer, supporting 13 east coast-based artists presenting innovative performance art works that address human & environmental interconnectedness. Each artist's beach residency includes public artist talks 6pm Wednesdays at Transparent Clinch Gallery, and performances 7pm Thursdays on the 2nd Avenue Beach:

July 10 - 14 | Pussy Noir (Washington, DC)

July 17 - 21 | nia love (New York, New York)

July 24 - 28 | MuEr: Wood Ear/Eye Bait (Che Chen, Anne Ishii, Eugene Lew, Patrick Shiroishi, Matthew Smith Lee, Alex Zhang Hungtai) (Philadelphia, PA)

July 31 - Aug 4 | Yali Romagoza (Queens, NY)

Aug 7 - 11 | Maira Duarte/Dance to the People (New York, NY)

Aug 14 - 18 | Dusty Childers (Brooklyn, NY)

Launched in 2017, *Siren Arts* is a summertime micro-residency program taking place in Asbury Park, NJ that supports emerging visual artists working within evolving performance art disciplines. Created and curated by Victoria Reis, Transformer's Executive & Artistic Director, *Siren Arts* is an expansion of Transformer's mission to connect and promote emerging visual artists, to advance them in their artistic careers, and to build & engage audiences with new & best contemporary arts practices.

With new support from the National Endowment for the Arts' Presenting & Multidisciplinary Arts grant program, *Siren Arts: DRIFT* will explore themes of movement and transition within the continued lens of celebrating the ocean, while building awareness on the intersectional implications of climate change. Artists have been invited to participate in this year's program via nomination by peer arts colleagues including: Kara Gilmour, Brooklyn Arts Exchange; John Chaich, Queer Threads; and Kim Chan, National Sawdust; in addition to *Siren Arts* curator Victoria Reis.

All performances will take place at 7pm on the 2nd Avenue Beach in Asbury Park, NJ. Performances will last approximately 30-45 minutes and are open to all audiences free of charge. Audiences are encouraged to gather on the 2nd Ave beach at 6:45pm, bringing beach towels or chairs for seating. In case of rain, please visit [@sirenartsap](https://www.instagram.com/sirenartsap) on Instagram for rain location details.



# t r a n s f o r m e r



PERFORMANCE | THURS. JULY 13  
*Pussy Nior, 4 SEASONS*

Inspired by the histories of black people finding independence after self emancipation through the development of settlements along the East coast in the early American Colonies. The piece tells the story of a woman who escapes to an island after being ostracized by the growing town for her attempts to exercise her freedom in public. In *4 Seasons*, we witness her solitary life for a year as she waits for her lover to arrive. In her solitude she's finds new ways of communication, the empowering ability to make music and new methods of worship.

Pussy Noir was born and raised in the Washington, DC area and grew up in theaters and rehearsal halls. At the tender age of 5 they claimed the starring role in their first play. Their exposure to the big stage came via performing in President Clinton's second inaugural festival, in the premiere of the opera *King*, and later with the Victorian Lyric Opera Company. Pussy Noir began mastering their craft as a teenager at Washington, DC's prestigious Duke Ellington School of the Arts as a vocal music major, The Washington Opera summer program for young singers, as well The National Gallery of Art Student Fellowship program.

The Pussy Noir character developed into an androgynous performer, host, and producer within nightclubs and art galleries in 2011. She has made an appearance on *The Real Housewives of Potomac* and hosted events at the Hirshhorn Museum, The Art Museum of the Americas, the legendary 9:30 Club and the historic Howard Theater. Currently, she is an artist fellow in the Culture Caucus at the Kennedy Center, and is the co-producer, headliner, and MC of the Wig Party Drag Festival.

PERFORMANCE | THURS. JULY 20  
*nia love, ...a dwelling space*

"Tracing the repeated ruptures and displacements of Black people, from the sea's depths to the water's edge, into rivers and tributaries and across the land. Within the violent weather of anti-blackness, and the impossibility of return, I tend to the textures of Black practices of dwelling and moving in uninhabitable spaces. Here I continue to come and go."

nia love is a choreographer and somatic practitioner driven by the social force and weight of blackness. Aiming to breach the propriety of 'dance', she redresses it as gesture - the memory of movement, geographies, and scales and ruptures of time held in our flesh. She has received Bessie's awards for performance and music composition, and is a recipient of the MAP Fund, the Herb Alpert Award, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts Award, LMCC Workspace Residency, and NEFA's National Dance Project Production Grant, and The Petronio Residency grant. love is will be showing her most recent project -UNDERcurrents at The Harlem Stage|Water Works in May as the WaterWorks established Artist 2022-2023.



# t r a n s f o r m e r

PERFORMANCE | THURS. JULY 27

*MuEr: Wood Ear/Eye Bait* (Che Chen, Anne Ishii, Eugene Lew, Patrick Shiroishi, Matthew Smith Lee, Alex Zhang Hungtai), *Aeolis*

"MuEr is six improv musicians working from the center and the edges of their instruments--saxophone, percussion, radio waves, human body. We convene as a network and play with air and fragments, as creatures/bits that have been washed ashore, wave after wave after wave – just like so many before us. This grouping is the result of a cultural convergence. Patrick Shiroishi, Che Chen and Alex Zhang Hungtai performed in Philadelphia recently as a double drum+sax trio. There they met TOTALLY AUTOMATIC (Anne Ishii, Eugene Lew, Matthew Smith Lee), another Asian American double drum+sax trio. As performers vested in the liberation of a shared cultural specificity, we fantasized a dyad of pyramids, a hermeneutic whole, a sequence of waves leaning toward the same source code, like mycelium, like rhizomes, as the wind."



**Che Chen** is a multi-instrumentalist based in Queens, NY. Born in 1978 to Taiwanese immigrant parents, he grew up in the suburbs of Washington D.C. and played bass in bands before studying painting, printmaking and sculpture. Drawn back to the social and collaborative aspects of music making, he has been an energetic presence in New York City's experimental underground as a band leader, improviser and show organizer since the early 2000s. In 2012 he and percussionist Rick Brown formed 75 Dollar Bill, a community-based, multi-generational, multicultural ensemble that combines free improvisation, rock, minimalism, and African and Asian music traditions. Though primarily a self-taught musician, Chen took a two week crash course in the Moorish modal system with Jeich Ould Chigaly in Nouakchott, Mauritania in 2013, an experience to which his approach to guitar is deeply indebted. Something of a non-specialist, he also performs and records on percussion, violin, contrabass, woodwinds and crude electronic devices. He organizes concerts at DIY venues throughout the city, including the monthly concert series Fire Over Heaven at Outpost Artist Resources in Ridgewood. [chechen.bandcamp.com](http://chechen.bandcamp.com)

**Patrick Shiroishi** is a Japanese-American multi-instrumentalist and composer based in Los Angeles who is perhaps best known for his extensive and incredibly intense work with the saxophone. Over the last decade he has established himself as one of the premier improvising musicians in Los Angeles, playing solo and in numerous collaborative projects.

After retiring his project Dirty Beaches, **Alex Zhang Hungtai** has been focusing on explorations of improvised music, Free Jazz, film scores and compositions. Zhang predominantly works with saxophone, synthesizers, percussion and piano, furthering his research on ritualistic music of liminality and its correlation with the unconscious mind.

Totally Automatic was formed by **Anne Ishii, Eugene Lew and Matthew Smith Lee** in the summer of 2021. They play unarranged music with each other, on drums, saxophone and electronics, and can be found around Philadelphia.

# t r a n s f o r m e r



PERFORMANCE | THURS. AUGUST 3

Yali Romagoza, *Meditating ways to escape body trauma.*  
*(The healing Dance)*

*Meditating ways to escape body trauma. (The healing Dance)* is a performance that focuses on the female body. For women, our bodies are the most intimate contact with our souls and simultaneously are the sites where systemic abuse manifests (i.e., domestic violence, sexual assault, abortion, miscarriage). These

acts point to an ongoing patriarchal contestation against the female body that is physically draining and a direct attack on the emotional infrastructure that holds women together. In this performance, Romagoza uses her alter-ego Cuquita, The Cuban Doll to maintain body positions motionless, to feel uncomfortably, experiencing pain and relief, and seeking healing while meditating. With the sea as a landscape and background, Romagoza invites audiences to reflect on the struggles of diasporic female bodies and their traumas. Toward the end of the performance, the artist invites the audience to dance as a way of collective healing.

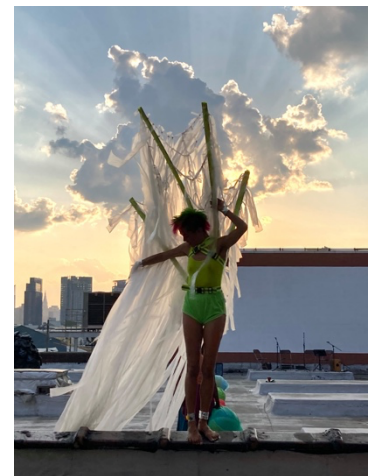
Yali Romagoza is a Cuban-born multidisciplinary artist currently based in Queens, NY. She graduated with an MFA in Fashion from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BA in Art History from the University of Havana. Romagoza's work explores migration issues while focusing on the female body as a place where political and institutional abuse manifests. She created her alter-ego Cuquita, The Cuban Doll, to rebuild a cultural home in the U.S. art scene where she often feels excluded or underrepresented. Cuquita allows Romagoza the safety to express what it is like to inhabit a space between cultures and the effects of political trauma on the individual.

PERFORMANCE | THURS. AUGUST 10

Maira Duarte/Dance to the People, *Mira lo que trajo la marea*  
*/ Look what the tide brought in*

Dance to the People will create a site specific, physical experience with objects collected at Asbury Park beach and nearby areas, as well as with costumes and props manufactured previously (also from discarded materials). The performance space will integrate such objects with elements in the natural landscape. The audience will have opportunities to interact with the performance and to reflect upon the environmental and human impact of our current economic models.

The Dance to the People collective was founded in 2015 by Mexican New York-based artist, educator, and organizer, Maira Duarte, as a way to foster non-hierarchical artistic exchange. Dance to the People (DTTP) has engaged over 150 multidisciplinary creatives, advocates, organizers and practitioners as collaborators in the presentation of choreographed pieces, community forums, workshops, public practices, environmental movement research and curated performance events - all donation-based and open to the public.



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Dance to the People's mission is to generate opportunities for artistic exchange and foster long term projects that value process over product. And has been presented in NYC at Grace Exhibition Space, Judson Church, The Woods, Mayday Space, NoOsphere Arts, Maria Hernandez Park, Tompkins Square Park, Rockaway Beach, Governor's Island, and in Mexico at Performatica in Cholula, Puebla, Huerto Verde Roma in Mexico City and the neighborhood of La Invasión in Tulum, Quintana Roo. DTTP members participating at *Siren Arts: DRIFT*: Maira Duarte, Joanna Stone and Violeta Tellez.



PERFORMANCE | THURS. AUGUST 17

Dusty Childers, *Campfire Queer Storytime*

Campfires have provided warmth and brought folks closer since time immemorial. *Campfire Queer Storytime* seeks to do the same by amplifying untold stories, furthering the grand oral history tradition so vital to our Queer ancestors and crucial to the true history of what was. Curator and Mistress Of Ceremonials Dusty Childers utilizes tangential anecdotes, topical observations and witty banter to weave seemingly disparate individual testimonies of triumph & turmoil together into an intriguing, one of a kind evening.

Dusty Childers (Dust Tea Shoulders / @duddylynn) is a multi-disciplinary artist and educator who has been director, producer, dramaturgist, costumer, and stylist. Dusty's body and body of work has graced the likes of The Guggenheim, St. Ann's Warehouse, The Whitney, BAM, Parsons, The Public Theater, Pratt, Sundance, SXSW, Metrograph, International Center of Photography, Signature Theater, Institute of Contemporary Art Philadelphia, Town Hall, Joe's Pub, Abrons Art Center, NY Live Arts, The Wild Project, Dixon Place, Irving Plaza, Sony Music Hall, Bushwig, Judson Memorial Church, The MIX NYC Queer Experimental Film Festival, La MaMa, Gov Ball, Club Cumming, The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, House of Yes, Pangea and the Soho Playhouse (NY Fringe Festival). Dusty and his work have appeared in *Art In America*, *Artforum*, *OUT Magazine*, *Electric Dirt* (by Queer Appalachia), *TimeOut NY*, *Velour Magazine*, *Next Magazine*, *Aljazeera*, *NY Times*, and *Gayletter*.

Image Credits (Top – Bottom): Siren Arts Logo by Transformer, Pussy Nior, nia love, Anne Ishii, Ryan Collerd, Erica Snyder-Drummond, Maira Duarte/Dance to the People, Izzy Berdan.

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**transformer** is a Washington, DC based 501 (c) 3 artist-centered, non-profit visual arts organization. Founded in June 2002 by artists & arts organizers, Transformer provides a consistent, supportive, and professional platform for emerging artists to explore and present experimental artistic concepts, build audiences for their work, and advance their careers. A catalyst and advocate for contemporary artists and emergent expression in the visual arts, Transformer connects and promotes emerging visual artists within regional, national and international contexts through innovative exhibition and programs partnerships with a broad & diverse range of individual and organizational partners.

**transformer's** 2023/24 Exhibition Series and programs are supported by: The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The CrossCurrents Foundation, The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities/NEA, The Sachiko Kuno Foundation, The Robert Lehman Foundation, Logan Circle Main Street Association, The National Endowment for the Visual Arts, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Transformer's Board and Advisory Council, and The Visionary Leaders Circle – a growing group of individual donors & corporate sponsors. *Siren Arts: DRIFT* is generously supported via a grant from National Endowments for the Visual Arts.