



Artists Repertory Theatre

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ARTISTS REP ANNOUNCES THE MERCURY FESTIVAL 2022

The culmination of the Mercury Company sessions during the pandemic, the festival celebrates the creative work accomplished with staged readings and five short films premieres

- WHO:** Artists Repertory Theatre
WHAT: Mercury Festival 2022
WHERE: The Welcome Dome at Pioneer Courthouse Square
701 SW Sixth Avenue in Portland, Oregon
WHEN: June 1, 2022 – June 5, 2022
- Opening Night/Press Night: Wednesday, June 1 @ 7:00 pm**
June 1 @ 7:00 pm GREAT GOD OF THE DARK STORM CLOUD play reading
@ 9:00 pm FILM SCREENINGS*
June 2 @ 7:00 pm SABOR play reading
@ 9:00 pm FILM SCREENINGS*
June 3 @ 7:00 pm WHY THIS NIGHT play reading
@ 9:00 pm FILM SCREENINGS*
June 4 @ 2:00 pm REFUGEE RHAPSODY play reading
@ 5:00 pm BEHEADING COLUMBUS play reading
June 5 @ 2:00 pm FIGHT CALL play reading
@ 5:00 pm SODARA play reading

PORTLAND, OREGON – May 18, 2022 In June of 2020, Artists Repertory Theatre (ART) established a repertory company called the ART: Mercury Company, spanning 18 months, 240 writers, directors, educators, actors, technicians, designers, and producers, were hired to collaboratively create theatre-inspired work that moved beyond the traditional form as a response to the pandemic. **The Mercury Festival** is the culmination of that work, showcasing the work in staged readings and film premieres over the course of a week.

The Mercury Festival is a free, five day festival of in-person concert stagings of new works developed by and in partnership with ART. Starting June 1, ART will occupy [The Welcome Dome](#) at Pioneer Courthouse Square, a community space to be filled with free, diverse programming for everyone to enjoy. **Executive Director, J.S. May** shared that producing these plays at The Welcome Dome is vital because “The Mercury Company was a time to re-imagine the way we work. At the forefront of it all is dismantling biased systems that have held theatres back from achieving diverse, welcoming, accessible, and equitable spaces. We’re excited for the opportunity to take our work into Pioneer Courthouse Square to share with new audiences.”

Seven new plays and five new short films, including two created with our partner PHAME Academy, will be shown. “COVID has been a transformative experience creating unprecedented uncertainty,” said **Interim Artistic Director, Luan Schooler**. “Mercury Company solicited pitches from our community of artists, which resulted in an exceptional mix of projects that ranged from early drafts to be heard for the first time, to well-developed projects ready to be recorded. Instead of pausing during the pandemic, ART immersed itself into an intense period of creating bold new work.” Schooler continues, “The Mercury Festival is our way to share with everyone an eclectic group of new works and partnerships that are thrillingly diverse.”

[MERCURY FESTIVAL STAGE READINGS](#)

[GREAT GOD OF THE DARK STORM CLOUD](#)

Written by Resident Artist, Josie Seid, *Great God of the Dark Storm Cloud*, is a contemporary retelling of the Greek tragedy Hecuba told from an African American perspective, integrating modern themes and concepts. A principal, haunted by a school shooting, uncovers a series of unthinkable crimes and conspiracies...and is pushed toward taking a shocking act of revenge.

[SABOR](#)

Written by AnaSofía Villanueva, *Sabor* is a story of a mixed-race Latina, Clara, in search of her place within the elite culinary world and among her relationships. After the passing of her abuelo, Clara makes drastic life changes that leads to complicating her relationship with her father. The spirit of abuelo gives them a chance to start creating their own language—a language of food.

[WHY THIS NIGHT](#)

Written by award-winning screenwriter ([We the Animals](#)) and playwright, Dan Kitrosser. It’s 1881 and Motke, the ne’er-do-well alcoholic Jewish homosexual novelist who can’t quite finish his novel, returns to his parents’ shtetl on the eve of a Passover seder unlike any other. For on this very night, right in the middle of the fekakte seder, there’s a murder! **WHY THIS NIGHT** is your typical queer Jewish shtetl mad-cap murder mystery, that scratches at the gray area between this world and the world to come.

[REFUGEE RHAPSODY](#)

Written by Yussef El Guindi, *Refugee Rhapsody* focuses on Sakinah, an Arab American woman, who undergoes a mental health evaluation to determine what led to the violent crime she committed against Emily, a rich heiress. The play explores race, class, privilege, and how those factors collide and play out in today’s culture.

BEHEADING COLUMBUS

Written by Diana Burbano, *Beheading Columbus* follows two sisters down a trail of DNA deception and makes them face race and colorism in the Latinx community and in their own family.

FIGHT CALL

Written by Sarah B. Mantell. Curtains up on an ensemble of actors who have dedicated their lives to performing Shakespeare's work. But what happens to us and our relationships when we tell the same stories over and over and over again? *Fight Call* is a time-bending love story told through the fight calls for all of Shakespeare's female death scenes.

SODARA

Written by Derek Kolluri & Deven Kolluri, *Sodara* follows two cousins, STU and SOL, who are seeing each other for the first time in years. STU, a PhD candidate in cultural anthropology, is finally beginning to gain acceptance by commodifying elements of his lost culture in his academic pursuits. SOL, a former marine struggling to find meaningful connection in civilian life, and mired in the violent trappings of PTSD, pins his hope for acceptance on his estranged best friend and cousin, STU. Both men are fighting to be accepted as Indians in America. In our fight to be accepted in a world that doesn't seem to want us, are we destined to become the monster we seek to destroy?

Films are screened on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday only: *Running Minds* (Crystal Kralian), *Dream Team* (Brian Peccia), *See Me* (Dawn Jones Redstone, Aki Ruiz, Josie Seid, Vin Shambry, Kisha Jarrett), and *Forget Me Not, America* (Josie Seid), and others. Together, all films run about an hour and fifteen minutes.

FULL SCHEDULE HERE

ABOUT ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE

ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE'S (Artists Rep or ART) mission is to produce intimate, provocative theatre and provide a home for a diverse community of artists and audiences to take creative risks. Artists Rep (est. 1982) is Portland's oldest professional theatre company and has become a significant presence in the U.S. regional theatre with a legacy of world, national, and regional premieres of provocative new work with the highest standards of stagecraft. In 2016, ART became the 72nd member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and is an Associate Member of the National New Play Network (NNPN). Plays developed by ART have subsequently been produced in New York, Chicago, London, and throughout the country. Recognition for ART developed plays includes the Dramatists Guild Foundation Award, the Edgerton New Play Award, NEA Funding, the Mellon Foundation National Playwright Residency Program, American Theatre Magazine's Most-Produced Plays, and coverage in the New Yorker and the New York Times. In 2021, the Oregon Media Production Association (OMPA) honored Artists Rep with the Creative Innovation Award for the company's pivot to digital mediums in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. ART recognizes that we are a predominately white organization and operate within systemic racism and oppression, and that silence and neutrality are actions of complicity. We commit ourselves to the work of becoming an anti-racism and anti-oppression organization, and will [work with urgency](#) to end racial inequities in our industry and our culture. To learn more about our organization and programs, please visit <https://artistsrep.org/about/>

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