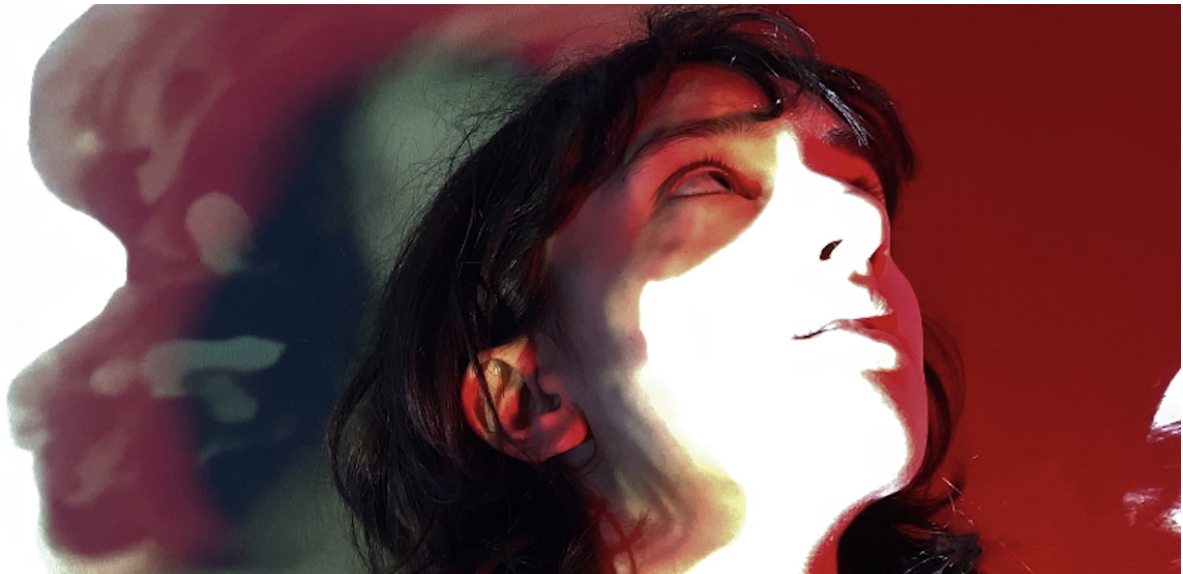


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: KST Presents Pria Dahiya's *You and Me and The End of the World*, A Freshworks: New Performance in Process

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EAST LIBERTY, PA September 14, 2023 — Kelly Strayhorn Theater presents *You and Me and the End of the World*, a devised theater piece by **Freshworks: New Performance In Process** artist in residence **Pria Dahiya**. The work is presented **as a 30-minute showing followed by a Q&A with the audience** at KST's Alloy Studios on Friday and Saturday, October 6 and 7, 2023 at 7:30pm. This digitally sick, nauseatingly young, and fearfully queer performance project explores first love, first loss, and coming of age online.

“At a certain point I realized that so many people had experienced things associated with coming of age — falling in love, processing loss, and finding the work of art that changes your life forever — online. In the past, it may have meant going to a concert and seeing someone across the room, but **now it is just between you and your phone or computer**. For several years I’ve wanted to do a project that would physicalize, through theater, these isolating and alienating experiences I’d experienced firsthand” — Pria Dahiya

Embodying the disconnect between the bewildering **psychological excess of living online** and the **frightening reality of living offline**, the performance in progress explores the relationship between alienation, desire, mortality, and the internet. In an isolated corner of the world, on an isolated corner of the internet, two teenagers seek understanding through imperfect screens, confessional posting, and constant communication.

Pria Dahiya is in the last phase of her undergraduate career in Carnegie Mellon University's John Well's Directing Program. Her relationship with KST started when she assistant-directed **Adil Mansoor's *Am(i)gonne*** at KST's Alloy Studios in 2022.

"I was blown away by the amount of freedom the rehearsal process had and by the amount of time we were able to build in the space. The production was relatively simple, yet so much time and so much support was given to it. I had also seen **Lyam B. Gabel's** performance, ***the dance floor, the hospital room, and the kitchen table*** at KST and again was blown away by the amount of resources and support for these fascinating, hybrid, boundary-pushing pieces" — Pria Dahiya

As a part of the Q&A, the artist welcomes a myriad of reactions to the themes presented by the performance in progress but hopes that audiences who have grown up online will see their experiences reflected onstage, and audiences who have not will gain a deeper understanding of how growing up online influences our perception of the world and ourselves.

For full details on Kelly Strayhorn Theater's upcoming Fall 2023 programming, click [HERE](#).

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Pria Dahiya is a director, visual artist, and writer exploring internet culture through literary adaptation, movement, and media design. Pria has spent twenty-one years being biracial, bisexual, and chronically online. Her work touches on the absurd code-switching and constant alienation of this duality, and how the internet can hide, broadcast, and manipulate these conflicting identities. Her recent work, *Anything Good Makes Me Want to Die*, was an evening of two surreal plays adapted from Otessa Moshfegh's short stories. These self-produced plays inaugurated her theater company, the New Modern Product Theatre, an avant-garde company centering the realities of being raised online.



Yin Raquino (they/them) writes sonnets with their right hand and cracks the knuckles of their left. They return to Pittsburgh bruised, sober, and eager to devise art that is aligned with their integrity, intuition, and newfound definition of inquisitiveness. They believe it is imperative that we refuse to assemble a museum exhibit of loose threads in our denim pockets. We cannot afford to tear each other down anymore when ecstasy does the unraveling for us. They've made an oath to their Filipino ancestors to sustain virginity in their drinks, but never their mouth.



Rory Janney (she/her) is a writer, actor, playwright, costume designer, theatre & community maker based in Pittsburgh. Her work explores alienation, community, trauma, loneliness, and grief through all things human, fantastic, absurd, and grime. She likes tchotchkes, bric-a-brac, knick knacks, women, horror stories, sunscreen, monsters, soft-yolky insides of hard and ugly things, hard-snarly insides of pretty polite things, chasing grace, embracing ugly, pirates, bats, and therapy. Having been a part of New Modern Product Theatre's baptismal piece, *Anything Good Makes Me Want to Die*, she is excited to continue the work to make this happen.



Rowan Acadia Dunlop is a proud Cajun from the back pastures of Vermont. As a writer, dramaturg, visual artist, and founding member of New Modern Product Theatre, Rowan's work revolves around the rural experience, the study of the past for the sake of the future, and holding hands. Rowan works on war dramas and good old fashioned love stories, and has worked with the DOD as a scriptwriter for President's Cup Cybersecurity Competition, with the U.S. Army War College, researching/devising WWII case study exercises, and with StoryWarrior Media Capital, producing children's animation. Rowan also enjoys working with goats.



davine byon (she/her) is a performance artist, theatre designer, and digital hoarder. her work visualizes the media landscapes that hold our silly and shameful collisions, offering that they might also be precious, even sublime. she is traumatized by brutal anonymous internet behavior and charmed by the hope that none of it matters. davine's recent work has been featured at Kelly Strayhorn Theatre, Rivers of Steel, Quantum Theatre, the Miller Institute for Contemporary Art, Pao Arts Center, Lenfest Center for the Arts, the New Hazlett Theater, City Theatre Company, and The Andy Warhol Museum.



ABOUT KELLY STRAYHORN THEATER

Named after 20th century entertainment legends **Gene Kelly** and **Billy Strayhorn**, both natives of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, **Kelly Strayhorn Theater** (KST) is reflective of the passion that its namesakes had for the arts. Today, KST carries their legacy by fostering bold and innovative artistry with a global perspective. **KST celebrates diversity in voice, thought, and expression**, and upholds a firm commitment to inclusion.

KST has a dynamic footprint in Pittsburgh, with two venues running along Penn Avenue. **KST's Alloy Studios** is a cultural hub in the heart of Friendship, and the historic **Kelly Strayhorn**

Theater is located in the thriving business district of East Liberty. More than 20 years after the founding of the theater, KST continues to use its broad reach to impact the contemporary arts and the community.

ABOUT FRESHWORKS: NEW PERFORMANCE IN PROCESS

Freshworks is KST's **creative residency for artists and collaborators** based in the greater Pittsburgh region. Freshworks made its debut in 2013 and supports playful exploration in performance through interdisciplinary work in contemporary dance, theater, music, and multimedia. The program provides artists with planning support and guidance, studio space, production staff, lighting and sound design and encouragement for creative risk taking. Artists are invited to apply either as an individual or as a collaborative group.

Freshworks artists are provided a \$1,000 honorarium and \$1,500 resource budget during the residency. This is to help offset the costs of creating new work. Each residency will take place over a two-month period. During these two months, **artists will develop a 30-minute live showing that is a first draft of an original artistic project**. The first month is intended for planning; this includes what form the project will take, securing collaborators, and brainstorming design. During this time, artists will meet weekly with KST Programming and Production Staff to chart out production and scheduling needs as well as utilize their outside perspectives. The intention is that KST Staff is present to pose questions that can help the artist think through various aspects of ideas.

The second month is focused on in-studio rehearsal and creation of a 30-minute draft of their project. Weekly meetings with KST Staff continue and shift focus towards actualizing production needs. The goal of the residency is for the artist to experiment and explore early iterations of ideas and share a draft of these concepts in front of an audience. At the end of the process, they will have valuable insight into further developing their project.

PC: Pria Dahiya, Courtesy Pria Dahiya