

KST PRESENTS

LOCAL & GLOBAL PERFORMANCE | DANCE

SLOWDANGER

SUPERCELL

Friday & Saturday, December 8* - 9
7:30pm

*Post-show discussion

*Warning: This performance includes haze and flashing lights.



KST PRESENTS
FALL 2023

BRAVE ACTIONS BOLD VOICES

The function of art is to do more than tell it like it is – it's to imagine what is possible.

- bell hooks

The KST Presents Fall 2023 season is about celebrating the brave actions and bold voices of the artists, audiences, and communities who call KST home. The season features new offerings from Mutual Aid Residents **Dreams of Hope** and **PearlArts**, a visual art exhibition in the **BOOM Gallery**, two **Freshworks** Performances in Progress, and premieres of **Local and Global Performances** from longtime Pittsburgh favorites and returning faces.

Our **Mutual Aid Residencies** continue to support **Dreams of Hope** and **PearlArts** with administrative facilities and space for ongoing classes and events. This fall, **Dreams of Hope** hosts the **theatriQ** educational workshop series, offering queer creatives ages 13 – 26 a space to learn, discuss, and connect through a plethora of topics pertaining to theater and the performing arts. **PearlArts** brings together **Soy Sos** and **Ali Berger**, and later **Soy Sos**, **James Johnson III**, and **Erik Lawrence** for two editions of the music and dance staple, **Synchronized with Soy Sos**. Later in the season, a dance-focused **PearlPRESENTS** will feature SPdp&SS founder **Staycee Pearl** alongside choreographers **Raphael Xavier** and **Chitra Subramanian**.

Curated by **DS Kinsel**, the **BOOM Gallery**, located in KST's historic 1914 lobby, presents **Eternal Maternal**. Featuring artworks from interdisciplinary artists **Fran Flaherty** and **Meg Foley**, the exhibition centers motherhood both as an active pursuit and a fundamental state of existence, irrespective of and subject to gender. Visit the gallery before performances from the opening on Monday, September 18 and Sunday, December 17 to experience the artists' unique interpretations of the sacred practice.

Our Fall 2023 **Freshworks** Residencies support exciting new performance works in process. On October 6 and 7, **Pria Dahiya** shares a "play-adjacent performance work" **You and Me and The End of the World** that touches on loneliness and coming of age through a pandemic. On December 1 and 2, **Andraya Rand-Mathis** presents dance, music, and drag in **Diving Within**, part of a healing process from grief, heartbreak, and childhood trauma.

KST's **Youth and Family** programs feature a revamped Halloween celebration. Bring the whole crew to join us for **Pumpkin Palooza**, An East Liberty Halloween Adventure! There will be tricks, treats, performances, and crafts from community partners. Tune in August 10 for our complete Fall 2023 offerings from **The Alloy School**.

The KST Presents **Local and Global Performance** series welcomes **Blood Baby** from Detroit/Philadelphia-based artist **Meg Foley**, featuring four works from the series (**Primordial**, **Queer Parent Convening**, **Communion**, and **Touch Library**). **Foley** shares the performance **Communion** on Friday and Saturday, September 22 – 23. Don't miss the Welcome Dinner & Artist Talk on September 18, where **Foley** will be in conversation with **Fran Flaherty**; **The Embodied Imaginary**, a workshop with **Foley** on September 20; and a **Queer Parent Convening** later that evening. On December 8 and 9, Pittsburgh's own superduo **slowdanger** takes to the KST mainstage with **SUPERCELL**, a new work addressing climate change and media sensationalism. Join artists **anna thompson** and **taylor knight** for a Welcome Dinner & Artist Talk on December 4, and their workshop **Demystifying the Box** on December 6.

Finally, the Fall season wouldn't be complete without **Suite Life**, our annual celebration of KST namesakes **Billy Strayhorn** and **Gene Kelly**! Join us on Saturday, November 25 for a VIP reception and eclectic performance celebrating these Pittsburgh legends and artistic champions.

There is so much to be explored in the voices and actions of artists across the KST Presents programs. We hope you will add **your bravery and boldness** to the mix by coming out to share in the work!

JOSEPH HALL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ABOUT KELLY STRAYHORN THEATER

Kelly Strayhorn Theater is a non-profit community performing arts center in East Liberty, with two venues running along historic Penn Avenue. KST's Alloy Studios is a cultural hub in the heart of East Liberty, and the historic Kelly Strayhorn Theater is located in the thriving business district. More than 20 years after its founding, KST is a home for creative experimentation, community dialogue, and collective action rooted in the liberation of Black and queer people.

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LOCAL & GLOBAL PERFORMANCE | DANCE

SLOWDANGER

SUPERCELL

ABOUT THE WORK

SUPERCELL is an evening-length multidisciplinary quintet performance responding to **climate consciousness, media sensationalism, desensitization, and environmental collapse**. The title refers to supercells, large storms of deep, persistent updrafts often resulting in many tornadoes. While supercells are terrifying, ominous, and harbingers of great damage, they are simultaneously breathtaking environmental events when witnessed from afar. The effect is similar to sensationalist media, instantly amplifying catastrophic events for an insatiable public consumption. The work begs the question, **how do we cultivate hope during continually uncertain times?**

ARTIST NOTE

SUPERCELL: a vortex... a brooding hiss... a chorus of breath... a collective exhale... The impetus for this work came while touring the third work in its trilogy, *empathy machine*. While on a trip to Texas to visit Taylor's family, we witnessed a supercell storm from afar. It was hypnotizing; a towering cloud form with lightning illuminating large pockets of the mammoth storm. Beneath it multiple tornadoes were born in its wake. We sat in quiet, miles away, watching this breathtaking climate event, in awe of its beauty and detrimental power. We began to gestate the apocalyptic climate event that would lead to the fallout present in *empathy machine's* sparse landscape. We questioned our own attraction to such an event and contribution to passive observance. *SUPERCELL* investigates the multitude of sensations of living in a body on a changing planet. We do not aim to solve, fix or repair the climate crisis, rather, to hold up a mirror to ourselves, to reflect, to share, to brew, to break, to fall.

CREDITS

Direction: Taylor Knight and Anna Thompson

Performance Collaborators: AJ Libert, Nile Harris, Kira Shiina

Process Collaborators: Christian Warner and Jasmine Hearn

Scenic Design by ProjectileObjects

Lighting Design by Harbour Edney

Costumes by Mad Recital

Sound Design by Slowdanger in collaboration with cast

Dramaturgical Support, Collaborating Media Design, and

Collaborating Sound Design by Jasmine Hearn

Advisory Committee: Nathan Darity, Jasmine Hearn, Heather Kelley, Michelle King, Jennifer Roberts

Project Manager: Joshua Bristow

This presentation of SUPERCELL is supported by the National Performance Network Artist Engagement Fund, The New England Foundation for the Arts's National Dance Project and Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation's ArtsConnect programs.

SUPERCELL is made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Mellon Foundation. SUPERCELL is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund Project co-commissioned by Kelly Strayhorn Theater, The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center and NPN. SUPERCELL is also supported by the Opportunity Fund, The Pittsburgh Foundation and The Heinz Endowments, with additional residency support from NCCAkron, The Space Upstairs and New York University's Tisch School of the Arts Department of Dance.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

slowdanger, taylor knight (they/them) & anna thompson (they/them) are co-founding artistic

directors of slowdanger, a multidisciplinary performance organism based in Pittsburgh, PA. slowdanger uses a systematic approach to movement, technology, found material, vocalization, and

physiological centering to produce their performance work.

Through the process of making each piece, slowdanger works with an ever deepening understanding of energy, synergy, action, gender, time, and storytelling. As a queer, non-binary led organization, slowdanger is committed to deconstructing the binaries of how performance and performers are viewed onstage.



Harbour Edney | Lighting Designer (they/he) is a freelance lighting designer and installation artist who is currently nested in the Philadelphia area. Recent designs include Always the Hour (Annie Wilson), The Wild Party (Eagle Theatre), a hit dog will holler (Azuka Theatre Company), Chaat (Usiloquy Dance Designs), Papa (The New Hazlett Theatre) and Bruise & Thorn (Pipeline Theatre Company). They have designed for other companies such as Obvious Agency, The Bearded Ladies Cabaret, The Pillow Projects, The Kelly-Strayhorn Theatre, Alumni Theater Company and INTAR NYC. Harbour has a special love for dance and is thrilled and grateful to be working on SUPERCELL with this team.

Nile Harris | Performer (he/him) is a performer and director of live works of art. He has done a few things and hopes to do a few more, God willing.

Jasmine Hearn | Dramaturgical Support, Collaborating Media Design, and Collaborating Sound Design (they/them) is an internationally-touring interdisciplinary artist, director, performer, choreographer, organizer, doula, and teacher. They are committed to performance as an expansive practice that includes a spectrum of dance and somatic traditions and techniques, sound design, garment design, cooking, and the archiving of matrilineal memories. They give gratitude to Spirit, their mothers and aunties, and all the mothering Black people who have supported their moving, remembering body.

AJ Libert | Performer (he/him), from Pittsburgh, PA, started his dance training at the age of three. He graduated from PBT's full time program, and then attended Point Park University where he received a BFA in Modern dance. AJ enjoys the complexities that movement exploration has to offer. Combining his love for the natural world with his love for movement drives AJ to continue to find deeper connections between the two, in hopes to merge both worlds seamlessly. AJ would like to thank his two beautiful mothers, without them he would not be where he is today.

ProjectileObjects | Scenic Designer and Technical Director (he/him) Cornelius Henke III is a multi-talented creative with a passion for video production and performance art. His work spans across various mediums, including music videos, motion graphics, live events, and interactive installations. Cornelius is an activist and partner at Merging Media, a boutique digital media production company based in Pittsburgh, PA. In 2021, ProjectileObjects formed an LLC that offers a range of services, including conceptual design, development, engineering, fabrication, and installations. With a wealth of experience and expertise, Cornelius continues to captivate audiences with his unique vision and exceptional talent.

Mad Recital is an avant-garde fashion label established in 2010. The designers involved in the label are Richard Ramirez (who started his own fashion label in 1997 prior) and Sean E. Ramirez-Matzus. Mad Recital focuses on deconstruction, repurposed garments, handmade techniques, alternative visions of beauty and unconventional designs. Drawing inspiration from nature, folk-lore, myths and legends, film and the arts as well as the history of avant-garde fashion, Mad Recital aims to create wearable art. The end goal, pieces that delight, unsettle, inspire and provoke. Their work has been sold at boutiques in Japan and France.

kira shiina | Performer (they/she) is a dance and sound artist based on the unceded Lenape land known as Philadelphia, PA. kira shiina attended Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts, going on to receive their BFA in Dance from the University of the Arts. In 2019, they presented their first solo work, DID YOU / FALL APART in collaboration with painter Jameelah Platt. They were a founding company member of Mark Caserta's Big Kid Dance and are currently a creative associate of choreographer Tommie-Waheed Evans, and has been a company member of waheedworks since 2019. kira shiina is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Dance at the UArts.

SPECIAL NOTES FROM THE ARTISTS

To view *SUPERCELL*'s bibliography, including writers like Octavia Butler and Ursula K LeGuin, [click here](#).

THANK YOU!

We thank the generous individual donors, corporate sponsors, foundations and agencies that provide vital support for our programs and allow us to thrive in our community. This list reflects donations and commitments made between July 1, 2022 and April 15, 2023

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