



The University of Texas at Austin

Theatre and Dance

College of Fine Arts

**For immediate release:**

**Media Contact:**

**Megan Bommarito; 512.232.5328; [megan.bommarito@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:megan.bommarito@austin.utexas.edu)**

**New Works Festival Marketing Committee, [press@newworksfestival.org](mailto:press@newworksfestival.org)**

**Gene Bartholomew; 512.471.0632; [gbartholomew@TexasPerformingArts.org](mailto:gbartholomew@TexasPerformingArts.org)**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN**

**DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE PRESENTS**

**THE COHEN NEW WORKS FESTIVAL**

**A CELEBRATION OF INNOVATION AND STUDENT-CREATED WORK**

**APRIL 15-19, 2019**

The Cohen New Works Festival, presented by the Department of Theatre and Dance at The University of Texas at Austin, returns in a biennial, five-day festival celebrating new, student-created work April 15-19, 2019 on the university campus. The 2019 Festival will present 30 new works, including works of dance, theatre, new plays, installations and site-specific performance work.

The Festival exists as a creative space for the innovative and original production of theatre, dance, music, film, design, visual art, architecture and a wide variety of alternative mediums for emerging artists. It provides a nurturing environment and resources for the development, production and discussion of new and interdisciplinary work with the help of faculty, guest artists and scholars who come together in the spirit of collaboration and critical inquiry.

“New work shapes and defines our political and cultural moment,” share the Festival’s producers (Rusty Cloyes, Erica Gionfriddo, Kirk Lynn, Dorothy O’Shea Overbey and Alice Stanley). “The student creators of these pieces are engaging with many of the most pressing issues in our society, including race, gender, sexuality, ability, neurodivergence, climate change, border politics, religious differences, the #metoo movement and the role of the artist in society. These pieces are historical, personal and fantastical. They are diverse in form and content, but unified in their boldness.”

Named in honor of former UT playwriting faculty member David Mark Cohen and established in 2001, the Cohen New Works Festival is the largest collegiate festival of its kind, run and organized entirely by a committee of graduate and undergraduate students. It exists to empower students to take responsibility for their own artistic development by encouraging new partnerships, focusing on collaboration and connection and fostering diverse and unique voices.

A selection of the Cohen New Works Festival projects include:

### **Brutal Imagination**

**Project Leads: Andrew Rodriguez, Kriston Woodreaux**

brutal (brōōdl) adj.

1. savagely violent, vicious, inhuman

*Brutal Imagination* is a solo performance inspired by Cornelius Eady's poetry anthology of the same name. In 1994, Susan Smith attempted to cover up the murder of her two small sons and that lie gave birth to mister zero: a black man of white invention; a phantom cursed both to exist forever and never at all.

### **DOPE FIT!**

**Project Leads: Michael J. Love, Kaitlyn B. Jones**

Love, Jones and an ensemble of Black artists, thinkers and collaborators use dance, rhythm, music, text and voice to create and live in their own metaphysical Black utopia. *DOPE FIT!* mixes rhythm tap and contemporary choreography with vernacular sounds and shapes as it reclaims lost archives and visceralizes freedom.

### **Lloronx**

**Project Lead: Anna Skidis Vargas**

*Lloronx* is a play with music and movement that upends the Latinx stereotypes of La Virgen, La Madre y La Punta through the lens of the folktale *La Llorona* and its origins.

### **SPILLAGE**

**Project Leads: Emily Tolson, Becky Nam, Isaac Fuentes, Hsiao-Wei Chen, Bill Ross**

*SPILLAGE* is a contemporary dance performance exploring Asian American female identity, specifically grappling with our relationship to whiteness and patriarchy. *SPILLAGE* asks how we internalize and perform societal expectations of our identity, what it means to reject certain cultural narratives and what it looks like to engage yellow female bodies in amplification of personal/collective voice.

### **The Pool**

**Project Lead: Nathan Nokes**

*The Pool* is an interactive art exhibit that explores ritualism surrounding water. The piece is a multi-sensory experience featuring digital projections and audio that invites participants to enter and wade in a pool of water. It examines vulnerability, reliance and meditation - asking participants to consider how they interact with the water and how the water, in turn, interacts with them.

## **Video Game Therapy**

### **Project Lead: Jake Brinks**

*Video Game Therapy* is an art installation that aims to teach participants a new way to play video games in a way that caters to our mental health needs. Participants will receive personal instructions and dedicated playing time.

## **XOR**

### **Project Leads: Christian Clark, Jessy Eubanks, Brian Ellis**

*XOR* (“ex-or”) is a chamber opera incorporating computer-generated, Shakespearian-style text and live electronics in an epic science fiction melodrama. A love triangle, death and artificial-intelligence are center stage as audiences explore the impact of humanity’s imperfection on machines.

*All titles, times, locations and creative teams are subject to change.*

For more information on the Cohen New Works Festival, please visit [newworksfestival.org](http://newworksfestival.org)

## **CALENDAR LISTING**

**April 15-19, 2019, The Cohen New Works Festival.** Venues in and around the F. Loren Winship Drama Building (300 E. 23rd St.). A map of the campus:

<http://theatredance.utexas.edu/about/location-directions-parking>

Performance times vary daily. All events are free. For more information about the Festival lineup and scheduling, visit [newworksfestival.org](http://newworksfestival.org).

## **ABOUT TEXAS THEATRE AND DANCE**

The University of Texas at Austin Department of Theatre and Dance is a world-class educational environment that serves as the ultimate creative incubator for the next generation of artists, thinkers and leaders in theatre and performance.

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