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Fresh Meat Festival Offers the Artistic Antidote to Trump



Jaw-dropping vogue dance, transgender opera, boundary-breaking hip-hop, world champion gay ballroom, queer bomba music and award-winning bachata dance hit the stage at the Fresh Meat Festival of transgender and queer performance June 15 through 17 at San Francisco's Z Space theater.

For three nights only, the Festival offers Bay Area audiences the artistic antidote to Trump—with exquisite, unapologetic transgender and LGBT performance that is insightful, sexy and soul-feeding. The Fresh Meat Festival is the only event of its kind in the nation, and is celebrated for its world-class artistry and sold-out crowds.

Artistic Director Sean Dorsey explains that this year's 16th annual Festival is jam-packed with world premieres and all-new work as a special treat for Trump-weary audiences. Dorsey is an award-winning trans choreographer, and his company Sean Dorsey Dance will perform every night.

Dorsey says, "I curated this special powerhouse lineup as a love letter to our LGBTQ communities—to give us much-needed spiritual nourishment, comic relief, sass, mood elevation, love and power in the face of the Republicans' continued attacks on our communities."

Acclaimed humorist-storyteller Devi Peacock says, "This current political climate is devastating. Our people—trans and gender non-conforming people of color—already go through so much, already have the world against us. But when I'm in my intense moments of despair, that's when I turn to art." Peacock adds, "Dreaming a reality better than this, this act of creation, then sharing that art in community: that's what makes Fresh Meat so special. The art is always fresh, on-point, innovative, and always, always community-focused. Fresh Meat Fest is a love fest. I need that right now!"



The Fresh Meat Festival is a longtime Bay Area favorite: "Our audiences look forward to this remarkable event all year long—the energy in the theater is palpable, positively buzzing," says singer-songwriter Shawna Virago. Every performance is followed by Fresh Meat's famous lobby after-parties with DJ Frida Ibarra, go-go dancers, photo booth and a free reception. Advance tickets are recommended.

Fresh Meat's Production Coordinator Eric Garcia says, "Vogue, opera, modern dance, bomba, hip hop, bachata, theater, live music ... there is literally something for everyone at this year's Festival. Young or old, LGBT or straight, hip or traditional, there's something for everyone at Fresh Meat!"

Trans opera trailblazer Breanna Sinclair says, "At the Fresh Meat Festival, the audience goes on a journey of queer liberation." She adds, "Every time I sing on the Fresh Meat Festival stage, feeling love from my queer/trans brothers and sisters, I feel empowered and grateful."

This year's Festival features soul-stirring opera by Breanna Sinclairé, cutting-edge humorist storyteller Devi Peacock, sweet-talking trans mestiza Elena Rose, Bomba dance and music ensemble Taller Bombalele, jaw-dropping vogue by House Of Energi, anthemic Americana singer-songwriter Shawna Virago, folk hearthrob StormMiguel Florez, trans/queer trailblazers Sean Dorsey Dance, queer bachata by Jahaira Fajardo and Angelica Medina, contemporary R&B and soul music by Tajah J, same-sex ballroom world champions Robbie Tristan and Ernesto Palma, hip-hop dance theater by Embodiment Project, award-winning theater by Rotimi Agbabiaka, and emcee Annalise Ophelian.

Founded by Dorsey in 2002, Fresh Meat Productions is the nation's first arts organization to create, present and tour year-round transgender arts programs. Fresh Meat's award-winning programs include the annual Fresh Meat Festival, resident dance company Sean Dorsey Dance's home season and national touring, national LGBT Community-Engagement Residencies, and free workshops.

Acclaimed singer-songwriter StormMiguel Florez says, "In the era of Trump, where so many would happily see our humanity disappear, we need this platform for trans and queer artists to express ourselves, whether our message is one of resistance, resilience, heartbreak or love."

Emcee Annalise Ophelian shares, "Fresh Meat is my sanctuary and my art therapy every year. The talent that Sean curates is astonishing. Having a showcase where these top tier artists perform on a stage that is by and for queer and trans folks is liberating and revolutionary."

Ophelian continues, "It is exhausting for our communities, the fight for survival. So, every year I go to the Fresh Meat Festival and get energized and recharged, but this year in particular, it feels incredibly important. We need the Festival to stay centered, we need that joy ... and that kind of joy is also a

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great way of saying f*ck Trump. Like, we'll be back in the streets tomorrow fighting for our rights, but tonight we're going to dance and sing and celebrate who it is we're fighting for."

Check the Fresh Meat Festival website for each nightly lineup. Saturday night features a special Gala Reception, and Friday night is ASL interpreted.

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FRESH MEAT FESTIVAL of transgender and queer performance

Z Space (450 Florida Street at 17th, San Francisco)

Thursday–Saturday, June 15–17, all shows start at 8 pm

ASL interpretation: Friday, June 16

Gala Reception: Saturday, June 17

Tickets: \$15+ sliding scale (advance tickets recommended)

www.freshmeatproductions.org