

ALTERNATIVE THEATER ENSEMBLE PRESENTS

**WHEN THEY
ASK IF WE
WERE REAL**

WORLD PREMIERE & INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBIT

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH @ 6:00 PM

MARIN THEATRE LIEBERMAN BLACK BOX

397 MILLER AVE, MILL VALLEY, CA

**alternative
theater
ensemble**

PRODUCED BY

alternative
theater
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THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS



WHAT IS WHEN THEY ASK IF WE WERE REAL?

Blending live music, theatre, and oral storytelling, When They Ask If We Were Real is a FREE one-night-only interdisciplinary arts project incorporating performance, art exhibition, and community conversation on the nature of curiosity.

Inspired by Pablo Neruda's Libro de las preguntas, this international arts project addresses philosophical questions from communities of all ages. Development workshops and interviews have been conducted across the Bay Area and around the world, exploring community questions like:

"What do your mountains mean?" (Age 8, Taiwan)

"What if new technologies could expand our empathy?" (Age 39, USA)

"Why didn't we see the warning signs in ourselves?" (Age 60, Serbia)

"What will be left of me if I relinquish old identities?" (Age 35, USA)

"Are we real?" (Age 5, Philippines)

Now, When They Ask If We Were Real enters a new phase of development, with a world premiere performance and international art exhibition reflecting on the questions these communities have inspired local theatremakers to confront:

As global upheaval and A.I. rapidly shift our relationship to inquiry,
what does it mean to look inward?

What does it mean to celebrate our humanity
as the definition of humanity evolves before our eyes?

Saturday, February 28 @ 6 PM

**Marin Theatre Lieberman Black Box
397 Miller Avenue, Mill Valley, CA 94941
Art Exhibition doors open @ 5:30 PM**

WHEN THEY ASK IF WE WERE REAL

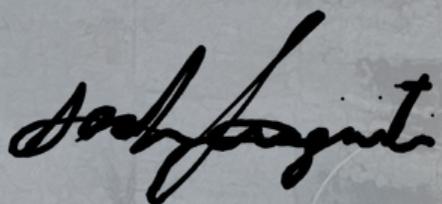
CREATOR'S NOTE:

When I began working on this project years ago, I had no clue where it was headed. On the night of the first workshop performance—an interactive 3-D and shadow puppetry show inspired by Pablo Neruda's *Book of Questions*—I was completely caught off guard by the diversity of audience turnout: a mish-mash of families with small children, college students studying poetry, professional visual artists, elementary school teachers, and theatremakers from around Java. Somehow, in this short performance, we'd found something that resonated equally with different generations and walks of life. As the performance ended and we transitioned into an art activity centered on questions about life, death, consciousness, and the nature of the world, the audience's enthusiasm to share secret curiosities inspired impromptu dialogue, intergenerational games, and a wealth of new material to carry forward.

In all the many forms this project has taken, its heart has been stewarded by its participants' and audiences' willingness to be witnessed in a state of wonder. How often do we publicly allow ourselves to feel as if we have nothing figured out? What does it take to lead with that kind of vulnerability in a world where simplified answers can be found in every direction at our fingertips?

We hope our questions and the stories that drive them make a little more space in the world for you to explore yours.

With gratitude and solidarity,



Sacha Saguti

WHEN THEY ASK IF WE WERE REAL

- THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS -

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PARTAKE ARTS

- SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS -

BERKELEY REP SCHOOL OF THEATRE

BERKELEY PUBLIC LIBRARY WEST BRANCH

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

BRI READS

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

EAST OAKLAND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER

ENSEMBLE VILLANCICO

KITKA WOMEN'S VOCAL ENSEMBLE

LISHAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MARIN THEATRE

PAPERMOON PUPPET THEATRE

STATE OF PLAY EMBASSY

- CONTENT WARNINGS -

INTERNALIZED RACISM, HOMOPHOBIA, ABLEISM, AND DESCRIBES
DETAILS OF VARIOUS GENOCIDES.

HERBAL CIGARETTES.

**WHEN THEY ASK IF
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CREATIVE TEAM



LEAH SANGINITI
Creator, Co-Director
+ Playwright



CHARLES PEOPLES III*
Actor , Composer
+ Sound Designer



EROLINA KAMBUROVA
Actor + Deviser



ZOË AIKO SONNENBERG
Co-Director + Dramaturg



CHLOË PARMELEE-LAPORTE
Stage Manager

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CREATIVE TEAM



SARA MICHELLE RUIZ
Producer



R. RÉAL VARGAS ALANIS
Producer +
Casting Dir.



ANGELA HERNANDEZ
Producer



FREDY GOMEZ CRUZ
Associate Producer



STEPHEN HITCHCOCK
Lighting and
Projection Design



ISABEL ANNE TO
Art Exhibition
Voiceover Artist

**WHEN THEY ASK IF
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CREATIVE TEAM



NATHANIEL ANDALIS
Assistant Dramaturg



ANTONIO CERVANTES
Assistant Dramaturg



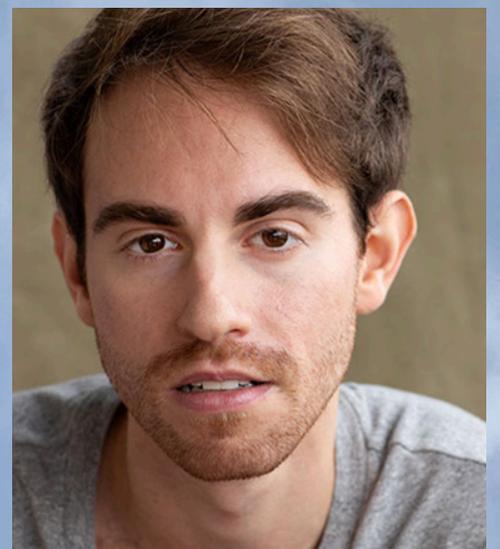
EMILIA THEOBALD
Facilitator



BRI READS
Deviser



ALI TRAVIS
Deviser



AARON M. DAVIDSON
Deviser

WHEN THEY ASK IF WE WERE REAL BIOS:

LEAH SANGINITI

(Creator, Co-Director and Playwright)

Leah Sanginiti (she/her) is a multiethnic interdisciplinary artist from Oakland, California, whose work centers accessible strategies for creativity and trust in our capacity as agents for change. Leah specializes in script development and storytelling with youth and non-theatre practitioners, and her original works and workshops have been produced throughout the United States and Asia. She currently partners with Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Alternative Theater Ensemble to train educators and community members in belonging and consent-affirming strategies in theatre, art, and everyday life. As a performer, Leah has worked with theatres around the U.S., including Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Davis Shakespeare Festival, and Golden Thread Productions, and has toured globally with Bay Area Children's Theatre and Bri Reads. leahsanginiti.com IG: chleah

CHARLES PEOPLES III*

(Actor and Composer/Sound Designer)

Charles Peoples III (they/he) is a Black and Queer AEA actor and sonic changemaker from Oakland, California. Their work encompasses performance art, music composition, poetry, and choreography. With a focus on the convergence of sound, technology, and spirituality, they create experiences that traverse realms of mysticism, queerness, and transformation. Charles has performed their music at SF Fresh Meat Festival, 9th International Sound Healing Conference, the New Living Expo, the Oakland Chapel of Chimes, Oakland Pride Festival, San Jose Pride Festival, the Leshner Center for the Arts, Northern Stage, and the Hopkins Center for the Arts. Charles has been awarded grants and residencies from the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, New Music on the Point, East Bay Queer Healing Arts Center, the Frost Place, the Lazarus Family Fund, and has been published with Ambidextrous Bloodhound Press. Currently a grad student at Dartmouth College, Charles is researching societal and individual misremembering and the therapeutic value of performance. He is now merging his interests in ancient ritual, storytelling, and shamanism with technology to create transformative, mystical, and immersive performances. cpiiiimusic.com

EROLINA KAMBUROVA

(Actor and Deviser)

Erolina Kamburova (she/her) is a Bulgarian/Turkish Roma-American multidisciplinary performer, director, designer, and educator. A recent graduate of UC Davis with dual degrees in Theatre & Dance and Design, she is a teaching artist with Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Alternative Theater Ensemble and is the inaugural Directing Fellow at Oakland Theatre Project. She has worked as a performer, assistant director and technician with theatres all around the Bay Area, including Berkeley Rep, Cal Shakes, and Shotgun Players. Her upcoming tour with Washington D.C.'s Imagination Stage will travel to schools throughout California in partnership with Kaiser Permanente.

ZOË AIKO SONNENBERG

(Co-Director and Dramaturg)

Zoë Aiko Sonnenberg (she/her) is a writer, dramaturg, and educator. She joined ATE in 2022 and, as an Ensemble Member, has worked on several projects as a producer, dramaturg, and communications leader. Zoë has worked with numerous major production companies and performing arts organizations in New York, Los Angeles, Boston, and the Bay Area, and she is dedicated to the development of new work for stage and screen. Zoë earned her B.A. in English with a minor in Theater and Performance Studies from Stanford University and her M.Litt. in Playwriting and Dramaturgy from the University of Glasgow. She is currently pursuing her M.S.W. at San Jose State University, where she is exploring narrative performance as a tool for social justice. zoeaiko.com

**Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

WHEN THEY ASK IF WE WERE REAL BIOS:

CHLOË PARMELEE-LAPORTE

(Stage Manager)

Chloë Parmelee-Laporte (she/they) is a queer Filipina actor and stage manager based in the Bay Area. A recent graduate of Saint Mary's College of California with a BA in Theatre and Performing Arts, Chloë has performed and stage-managed in productions including John Proctor is the Villain (ASM), Excavation of Mary Anning (Henry De La Beche), and A Midsummer Night's Dream (Puck/Philostrate). Passionate about fostering inclusivity, Chloë works to expand representation of queerness, ADHD, and mental health in theatre and beyond, bringing joy, curiosity, and authenticity to every performance and collaboration.

SARA MICHELLE RUIZ

(Producer)

Sara Michelle Ruiz (she/her) is a director, producer, writer, and activist from the San Fernando Valley. In 2020, she graduated with degrees in Political Science and Theatre from CSU Channel Islands. Since high school, she has been passionate about using theatre and film as tools to break down political barriers and plant seeds for a more just world. Previously, she served as president of Ventura-based theatre company, Unity Theatre Collective and is a founding member of Sana Sana Productions, a guerilla theatre and film production company based in Los Angeles. See what she's up to at: @cowgrlsara & @sanasana productions.

R. RÉAL VARGAS ALANIS

(Producer)

R. Réal Vargas Alanis (they/them - Purépecha - 2-Spirt) is an international, interdisciplinary artist originally from Winton, CA., and Sahuayo, Michoacán, MX. Réal uplifts intersectional voices through radically imaginative, innovative, and socially conscious artistic practices. Credits include: Center for Cultural Power's Artist Disruptor Awardee, National New Play Network's Producing-Playwright Cohort, Candela Writing Fellowship, and finalist for EDM Maniac's Maniac Academy and Alicia Keys' Hell's Kitchen Directing Fellowship on Broadway. Réal's disciplines include: writer (Dramatist Guild member, published via Broadway Licensing), producer, casting director, and award-winning stage director. Réal has worked in institutions such as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Yale Rep and Seattle Rep, and has taught at Princeton, American Conservatory Theatre, and NYU. They've been featured in CanvasRebel Magazine, HowlRound, Barcelona's Institute of the Arts' StageCulture. Réal is an ATE Ensemble Member, and co-founder + Core Leader of IN THE MARGIN. www.realvalanis.com | @REALVALANIS

ANGELA HERNANDEZ

(Producer)

Angela Hernandez (she/her) Oregon Shakespeare Festival: Understudy: Hermia, Court, Fairy, and Ensemble in A Midsummer Night's Dream; Ted and Ensemble in Peter and the Starcatcher. OSF Green Show: Butterfly in The Carnival of the Animals. Other Theatres: Caterina in Silkworms (a nun play), Chorus in Elektra, Belen in The Abuelas (staged reading), Alice Dearth in Dear Brutus, Angelica Bianca in The Rover, Female Swing in Small Mouth Sounds and The Arabian Nights (Oregon Center for the Arts at Southern Oregon University); Ishtar in The Epic of Gilgamesh (Oregon Fringe Festival); Gertrude in Hamlet, Adelfa in In and Out of Shadows (San Francisco Youth Theatre); Miriam Aarons in The Women, Molly Ralston in The Mousetrap (Diego Rivera Theatre). Training: BFA in Performance, Southern Oregon University. Instagram: [she_is_the_moon](https://www.instagram.com/she_is_the_moon)

WHEN THEY ASK IF WE WERE REAL BIOS:

FREDY GOMEZ CRUZ

(Associate Producer)

Fredy Gomez Cruz (he/they) is a bi-national, bilingual Mexican actor, singer, dancer, and musician working throughout the West Coast. Fredy is proud to contribute to the joy, grace, and fight his Latine community exhibits every day onstage. Credits include: Globe for All: Julius Caesar (Old Globe), Girl With the Golden Boots (Mosaic Theatricals), Bridging Turtle Island (IN THE MARGIN), Shuuluk Wechuwvi: Where Lightning Was Born (Teatro Las Hermanas), La Havana Madrid (New Village Arts), Stranger Sings (OTC), and La Lucha (Optika Moderna). He is grateful to his wife, ancestors, and community, who continuously inspire him. www.fredygomezcruz.com

STEPHEN HITCHCOCK

(Lighting and Projection Design)

Stephen Hitchcock (he/him) is a lighting and projection designer based in the Bay Area. He has lent his expertise as an entertainment technologist to productions and installations across the West Coast for over ten years, with projects ranging from major venues (the Las Vegas Sphere) to projection projects (Obscura) to fountains (WET Technologies). Recent theater credits include The Day the Sky Turned Orange (SFBATCO / Z Space, Associate Video Designer), Hip Hop Nutcracker (Peninsula Lively Arts, Lighting Designer), and 9 to 5 (Ray of Light Theatre, Electrician). Stephen is a graduate of Stanford University (B.A. Computer Science, minor Theater and Performance Studies) and a proud member of the Cowlitz Tribe.

ISABEL ANNE TO

(Art Exhibition Voiceover Artist)

Isabel Anne To (she/her) is a professional actor and voiceover artist from San Jose, California. The daughter of Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants, Isabel specializes in new work development centering intersectional stories and frequently works with PlayGround and Killing My Lobster to uplift Bay Area playwrights. She has performed with Cal Shakes, Town Hall Theatre, New Conservatory Theatre Center, and has toured nationally. Isabel has also collaborated on to-be-released film projects with Liam Kirk and Èlement Magique. Offstage, she enjoys cross-stitching, pickleball, and traveling. She is represented as a voiceover artist by JE Talent. isabelanneto.com

BRI READS

(Deviser)

Bri Reads (she/they) is a performer, puppeteer, and songwriter whose literacy and arts education YouTube channel has over 600K subscribers and 5 million unique monthly viewers from around the world. She regularly partners with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Contra Costa Civic Theatre, and Palo Alto Children's Theatre to create memorable theatre and storytelling experiences for youth and families. Her YouTube web series features artists and literacy activists from all over the United States, and includes original music, animation, and accessible arts & crafts tutorials for all ages. brireads.com

ANTONIO CERVANTES

(Assistant Dramaturg)

Antonio Cervantes (he/him) is a screenwriter and director studying Cinema and Broadcasting Electronic Communication Arts at San Francisco State University. He is a member of UC Berkeley's Bootleg Sketch Comedy, and his original work has appeared in film festivals around the Bay Area and Sketchella at University of Southern California.

WHEN THEY ASK IF WE WERE REAL BIOS:

NATHANIEL ANDALIS

(Assistant Dramaturg)

Nathaniel Andalis (he/him) is an AEA actor and writer from Hayward, California. He has appeared in productions around the U.S. and Bay Area, including SF Shakes, African American Shakes, Central Works, Z Space, and Shotgun Players. A Pacific Conservatory Theatre (PCPA) graduate, he is a company member of Oakland Theatre Project and has performed in nine productions of *Hamlet*.

AARON M. DAVIDSON

(Deviser)

Aaron is an actor, musician, and educator originally from Denver and now based in Chicago. He has a passion for creating theatre for young people and arts education. His work as a stage actor has brought him to school cafegymatoriums, national tours, and just about everything in between. Some of the theaters he has worked at include: Bay Area Children's Theatre, The Denver Center, Arvada Center, Mercury Theatre Chicago, The Royal George, Northbrook NTYA, West Virginia Public Theatre, Little Theatre on the Square, and Porchlight Musical Theatre Chicago. When not working as an actor Aaron works as a pianist/music director. He also toured as a vocalist of the Latshaw Pops Orchestra and is a current long time member of the nations premier Frankie Valli tribute group, The Four C-Notes, where he is seen all over the world. As an educator Aaron has taught/directed, and created curriculum for numerous theaters and arts organizations in the Chicagoland Area, in addition to maintaining his own private piano studio for the past 5 years. He holds a B.A in Theatre Arts from Point Park University, and was trained at Second City, and iO Chicago.

ALI TRAVIS

(Deviser)

Ali Travis (he/him) is a Black and Queer composer, musician, visual artist and performer from Antioch, California. He has spent the last decade performing across the Bay Area and the United States, with the bulk of his theatre career focused on creating and performing meaningful theatre works for children and families. He is deeply passionate about sharing the power of creative freedom with as many people as possible. He currently composes original music with artists of all ages at Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

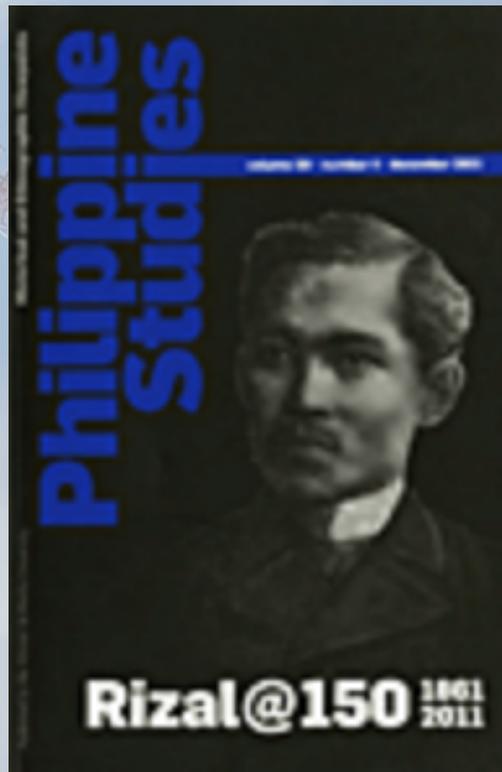
EMILIA THEOBALD

(Facilitator)

Emilia is an artist, musician and educator who is passionate about travel and cultural exchange. She serves as a TK teacher at a charter school in Alameda, where she integrates the arts into daily life with her students and community. This spring, Emilia will partner with Leah Sanginiti on a comparative folk tale project for youth.

WHEN THEY ASK IF WE WERE REAL READING LIST

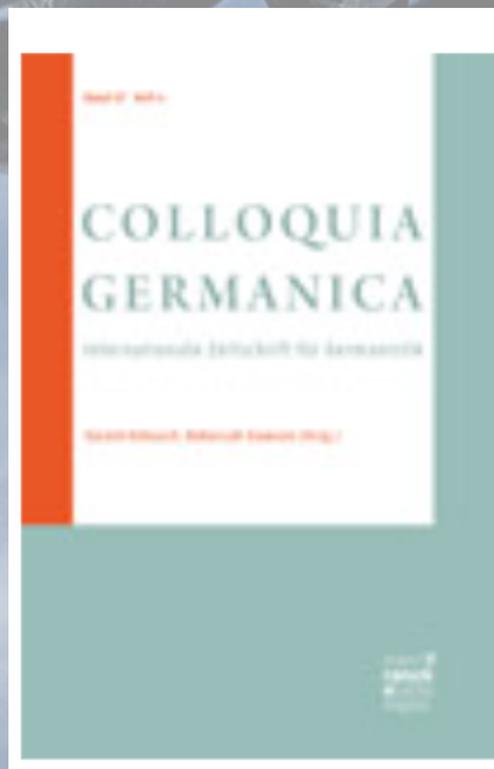
Curated by:
Hunter Candrian-Velez



**Philippine Stage Performances
During the Japanese Occupation**
by Moteo Terami-Wada



**Approaching Sa'dallāh Wannūs's Drama:
The Manifestos for a New Arab Theater**
by Asaad Alsaleh, أسعد الصالح, and Sa'dallāh
Wannūs



**The Jewish Experience and
«Vergangenheitsbewältigung» in Post-War
Austrian Drama: A Survey**
by A. FEINBERG