

**From Detroit's Future, A New Narrative:
'Memories of a Supernatural AIDS Crisis' Blends Sci-Fi with AIDS Activism**

*Copresented by Mighty Real/Queer Detroit (MR/QD)
And Theatre & Dance at Wayne State University*



Notorious Pink Flowers in *Memories of a Supernatural AIDS Crisis*. Photo: Andrew Jordan

Detroit, May 8th, 2024—In this exploration of the AIDS pandemic that combines speculative fiction with activist histories, *Memories of a Supernatural AIDS Crisis* asks: “What would happen if HIV conferred supernatural powers?” This question serves as the catalyst for a kaleidoscopic performance that interweaves theatre, dance, and song. The story tackles core HIV/AIDS challenges like stigma, racial disparities, and the accessibility of prevention and care in a dimension where characters embody memories from AIDS history and transform themselves with the mystical “Balm of Gilead.”

Set a century into the future, in a Detroit that stands as Earth's final stronghold after the ravages of global warming, this queer sci-fi drama follows Xylophlactis, an astronaut of the human body, and Pandrion, a Black trans cybernetic heroine. Together, they traverse violence and euphoria in a love story that forges a new, empowering cosmic existence.

Written and directed by Marc Arthur, an artist and Assistant Professor at Wayne State University, known for his groundbreaking work at the intersection of performance and social justice, “Memories of a Supernatural AIDS Crisis” commemorates the historical struggles associated with AIDS while envisioning a future of transformation and hope.

Join us at the [Hilberly Gateway](#) – the STUDIO, Wayne State University’s brand-new state of the art theatre at 4715 Cass Avenue, for a one-of-a-kind performance that explores the past, present, and future of HIV/AIDS in Detroit. The performance is on Saturday, **June 29th, 2024, 7 – 8pm**. [Admission is complimentary](#), with reservations strongly recommended. After the performance, the audience will be invited to a roundtable discussion about performance and HIV/AIDS in Detroit. The discussion will feature local health care workers, scholars and artists and is sponsored by [Wayne State University’s Center for Gender and Sexuality](#).

ABOUT MARC ARTHUR

[Marc Arthur](#) is an artist, scholar, and Assistant Professor in the Department of Theatre & Dance at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. Arthur completed his PhD in Performance Studies from New York University (2019) and was a Postdoctoral Fellow in Arts-based Social Justice Research and Practice at the University of Michigan (2019 – 2022) where he studied community-based performance approaches for decreasing HIV stigma and oppression. His performance work has been presented at theatres and galleries internationally, including the Martha Graham Dance Theater, La MaMa E.T.C., Dixon Place, The Living Theater, Movement Research at Judson Church, the Bronx Academy of Arts & Dance, the Wild Project, University Settlement, and Chashama in New York City; New Langton Arts and David Cunningham Projects, San Francisco; Moyses Theatre at McGill University, Montreal; Xavier Hufkens Gallery, Brussels; the Emily Harvey Foundation, Venice; Universität der Künste, Berlin; and FRISE, Hamburg. Arthur's writing and criticism has appeared in edited volumes and journals including *Theatre Journal*, *TDR: The Drama Review*, *Bomb Magazine*, and *Canadian Theatre Review*, as well as numerous edited collections. He has also written extensively for *Performa Magazine*, where he was editor (2015 – 2017). At Performa he also served as the Head of Research and Archives (2011 – 2017) where he led interdisciplinary research projects with a wide range of artists.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Notorious Pink Flowers is a Black trans artist, pleasure activist and educator, whose work is rooted in ancient shamanic, African trickster, and Brazilian Joker traditions. Pink uses Theater of the Oppressed, Art of Hosting, Navajo Peacemaking and other anti-oppression techniques, as the foundation of her theater-making, mediation, problem-solving and group healing practices. She has received broad recognition, numerous awards, and citations for her community service. She has been a faculty member at Montclair State University, Pace University, and a company member of Shakespeare in Detroit.

Yolanda Jack Yolanda Jack is Manager of Community Engagement at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History and a long-time theatre veteran. A Detroit native, Yolanda attended Cass Technical High School and studied Acting and Theatre Administration at Howard University before beginning her career at Crossroads Theatre Company on the East coast. With a call to come home, Yolanda returned to Detroit to inspire a new generation of theatre practitioners as the Technical and Touring Coordinator for Mosaic Youth Theatre and begin a family. She would go on to do that, graduate from Wayne State University with a B.A. in Acting and establish One World Theatre Company with her husband, Phillip Jack.

Joe Smentowski, A metro Detroit native, is a queer actor and singer with a focus in musical theatre. Joe has performed iconic roles like Frank-N-Furter in *The Rocky Horror Show* and even had the chance to perform as Danny Zuko in *Arts for Autism* at The Gershwin Theatre in NYC. He has performed in over 20 educational and professional theatrical productions and is currently receiving his BFA in Acting from Wayne State University. @joesmentowski

TICKETS

Tickets are free and may be reserved at: <https://bit.ly/3JSXszW>

ABOUT MIGHTY REAL / QUEER DETROIT

[Mighty Real/Queer Detroit](#) is a not-for-profit organization that provides a platform for artistic exploration of various queer perspectives crossing generations and disciplines. The organization uses the contemplative spirit of the arts to foster understanding of the diversity of LGBTQ+ experiences, which have been historically suppressed and overlooked by traditional institutional systems. It will achieve this through programming that promotes educational, civic and cultural engagement.

[I'll Be Your Mirror: Reflections of the Contemporary Queer](#) is a 2nd edition of the biennial and includes a month-long exhibition featuring over 170 artists and over 800 works spread across 12 Detroit venues – plus film screenings, artist talks, live performances, panels, and poetry readings. The exhibition explores the mirrored relationship between art and self as well as art and community, highlighting the role of art in achieving personal visibility and social connection. At once a rhapsodic celebration of queer culture and a testament to the power of representation through art, the exhibition marks a significant and joyful milestone for the art world, beginning a biannual tradition of showcasing and celebrating LGBTQ+ art on an international scale.

ABOUT THEATRE AND DANCE AT WAYNE

[The Maggie Allesee Department of Theatre and Dance](#) is housed in Wayne State University's College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts, which is home to today's aspiring artists, performers, technicians, scholars, dancers, debaters, entrepreneurs, and communication professionals who all represent the college's legacy of excellence in our respective fields. The college serves students majoring in 17 undergraduate programs, 10 graduate programs and three graduate certificates through its departments: the James Pearson Duffy Department of Art, Art History and Design, the Maggie Allesee Department of Theatre and Dance, and the Departments of Communication and Music. From debate to dance, jazz to journalism, and fashion design to center stage, our students create captivating performances, inspire artistic and academic excellence, and conduct innovative research on behalf of our Detroit community.

Wayne State University is a premier urban research institution offering approximately 350 academic programs through 13 schools and colleges to nearly 24,000 students. Through its multidisciplinary approach to research and education and its ongoing collaboration with government, industry and other institutions, the university seeks to enhance economic growth and improve the quality of life in the city of Detroit, state of Michigan and throughout the world. For more information about Wayne State University, visit wayne.edu.

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