

The **BAY AREA REPORTER** *Serving the San Francisco Bay Area LGBTQ community since 1971*

Fresh Meat Festival: a celebration of queer and trans dance, theater & music

by David-Elijah Nahmod Tuesday June 11, 2024



Ishami Dance Company at the 2024 Fresh Meat Festival

With unprecedented attacks on trans and gender non-conforming people continuing to escalate, events like the Fresh Meat Festival are more important than ever. This annual show, the brainchild of Fresh

Meat artistic director Sean Dorsey, celebrates queer and trans performance through music, dance, hip hop, comedy, and much more.

The show features a diverse cast and will feature voguing, Salsa, trans-Americana music, taiko, South Asian contemporary dance, and deaf performers. It all happens June 21-23 at Z Space, Fresh Meat's San Francisco home. All performances will be ASL interpreted.

The show includes several world premieres, commissioned especially for this, Fresh Meat's 23rd show. In an interview with the Bay Area Reporter, Dorsey talked about the Festival and about reaching the 23 year milestone.



Sean Dorsey Dance at the 2024 Fresh Meat Festival (photo: Kegan Marling)

David-Elijah Nahmod: What exactly can the audience expect when they attend the Fresh Meat Festival?

Sean Dorsey: Audiences can expect to enjoy queer and trans excellence. This is truly the creme de la creme of local and national dance, music, performance and theater.

Who are some of the featured performers this year?

This year we're presenting world premieres commissioned especially for the festival by our 2024 Fresh Works! commissioned artists: LBXX, Christopher Smith, Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi and Mark Travis Rivera. Plus there's Batey Tambo, Ka'Lonji, Moschino Escada, Iman, Ishami Dance Company, Lottie Riot, In Lak'ech Dance Monarchs, Queer Taiko, Sean Dorsey Dance, Shawna Virago, all hosted by femme-cee extraordinaire Churro Nomi of Clutch the Pearls and more.

23 years! When you began did you ever think it would last this long?

This festival is fresh! We're super proud that 23 years in, every year is totally fresh and exquisite. Back when I organized the first festival in 2002, I thought it'd be a one time thing, but the sold out crowds and extraordinary community response demanded otherwise.

Given the anti-trans backlash currently going on, can you say something about the importance of visibility?

We all need and deserve to see ourselves reflected in arts and culture. Right now, the alt-right is trying to shut trans and queer communities down, so the Fresh Meat Festival is doubling down on commissioning artists, presenting gorgeous world premieres, and creating a fabulous, fun unapologetic celebration for our communities.

You have so many varied types of performances in the show. How did you go about deciding which performances to feature?

Something our audiences love about the Fresh Meat Festival is not just the incredible caliber of artistry, but how much variety there is. You literally have a world-class hip hop artist followed by uproarious trans comedy followed by soulful contemporary dance.



Batey Tambo at the 2024 Fresh Meat Festival

Is this a show that only queer people will enjoy, or does it have more general appeal?

These artists are incredible, period. So trans and queer folks love seeing ourselves, our culture, our aesthetics, and our lives reflected on stage, but anyone who loves outstanding

performance will love the Fresh Meat Festival.

Last year you had performances all over the Z Space building, not just on the stage. Will that be the case again?

This year we're thrilled to return to our usual format. We'll be featuring all artists on the gorgeous main stage at Z Space.

What do you like about performing at Z Space?

Z Space is our artistic home, both for the Fresh Meat Festival and for our resident company Sean Dorsey Dance. Z Space is a stunning, gorgeous theater. Our community doesn't often get to gather and perform in spaces like this. Plus, the Z Space staff includes awesome queer and trans folks, their bathrooms are all gender, and the entire space is wheelchair and mobility-device accessible. We have lots of access info on our website if folks want to learn more.

Fresh Meat Festival, Program A on Friday June 21, 8pm and Saturday June 22, 2pm, program B on Saturday June 22 at 8pm and Sunday June 23 at 2pm. ASL interpretation. Z Space, 450 Florida St. \$15-\$30. www.freshmeatproductions.org