



Fairytales Presentation Society and Swallow-a-Bicycle Theatre present
Calgary's first Queer Arts & Culture Festival:

Q the Arts

For Immediate Release: Thursday, February 3rd, 2011 (Calgary, AB) – This spring, Calgary adds a new festival to its roster: **Q^{the Arts}**, Calgary's first Queer Arts & Culture Festival. Featuring a diversity of artistic genres, including visual art, theatre, music, dance and spoken word, this festival unites a gamut of exciting artists under the umbrella term "queer". In a city that is neither known for its "queerness" nor for its comfort with the term, this festival is a celebration of Calgary's diversity and inclusivity.

Q^{the Arts} is a new initiative by the **Fairytales Presentation Society**, best known for the highly acclaimed Fairy Tales Queer Film Festival. Jessica Dollard of Fairy Tales explains, "The film festival is entering its 13th year and it has become an important voice for Calgary's queer community. The increasing success of the film festival has shown us that there's room for more – more artists, more voices, more forms of expression."

Fairy Tales is joining forces with **Swallow-a-Bicycle Theatre** to bring **Q^{the Arts}** to life. "It seemed like a natural fit," says Mark Hopkins of Swallow-a-Bicycle. "Our company is dedicated to building and fostering community through the arts, and that's exactly what we intend to do with this festival. Calgary has an incredibly strong LGBTTQ community, and **Q^{the Arts}** will be a showcase for some of its culture and creativity."

As Calgary's "Queer" Arts & Culture Festival, **Q^{the Arts}** will embrace artists who are LGBTTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit and questioning), and also those who subscribe to culturally, politically, artistically and otherwise alternative and innovative ways of contributing to society. Queer is a vista, a way of looking at the world differently, with an eye towards diversity, critical thinking and inclusion.

"Queer isn't an exclusive term," says Charles Netto of Swallow-a-Bicycle. "We see it as the most inclusive term available. We want to celebrate Calgary's multiplicity of voices and viewpoints, and make **Q^{the Arts}** something that everyone can enjoy."

Q^{the Arts} will feature eleven artists working in visual art, theatre, music, dance and spoken word, including several local artists: singer-songwriter **Chantal Vitalis**, multidisciplinary artist **Jamie Tea**, actor **Julie Orton**, musician **Lindsay Brandon**, the **Backyard Betties** and textile artist **Brianna Strong**. From farther afield, **Q^{the Arts}** welcomes Edmonton's **Travis McEwen** (painter) and **Laurie MacFayden** (spoken word poet), Vancouver's **Emanuel Ilagan** (photographer), Winnipeg's **Jessica McMann** (hoop & shawl dancer) and the festival headliner, Toronto's **Light Fires**. **Light Fires** is the collaborative creation of Reginald Vermue (AKA **Gentleman Reg**) and **James Bunton** (of Ohbijou), who create a colourful and cheeky brand of electro-soul.

Q^{the Arts}, Calgary's first Queer Arts & Culture Festival, takes place on **Saturday March 5th, 2011 at 8:00 pm** in the **Arrata Opera Centre** (1315 7th Street SW). Advance tickets are \$20, available online at www.fairytalesfilmfest.com or by phoning 403-263-0079. Tickets will be sold at the door (cash only) for \$25. Ticket purchase includes a one-year membership to Fairytales Presentation Society.

For more information on **Q^{the Arts}, please contact:
Jessica Dollard, Programming & Producing Director**

Fairy Tales Presentation Society

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Q *the Arts,* *Artist Biographies*



Backyard **B**etties

You want Country? You want Folk? You want Contemporary? Put it all in a blender, sit back, relax and enjoy a serving of the Backyard Betties! This fun group is made up of friends who love to perform as much as they love creating original music. The Backyard Betties have all the ingredients that you need to have a good time. Enjoy!



Chantal **V**italis

My name's Chantal Vitalis and I write songs and play the electric guitar. I've toured in Canada, Europe, USA and Australia as a solo artist and as a member of The Lovebullies, Kris Demeanor's Crack Band and my former bands Same Difference and maud.

I'm really proud to say that I have been credited as a songwriter, singer, composer and/or musician for many great albums, films and theatre shows. Recent albums include "Swang Swang Swang" (on vinyl!) by The Lovebullies (songwriting) and "These United States" by Kris Demeanor & his Crack Band (guitarist). I've composed for film (*The Girl Who Married a Ghost*, *The Riders (male)*, *Gens de Foque*, *The Road Project*) and theatre (*Bluto*, *When Bush Comes to Shove*, *Rising Out of Love*) and was nominated for the fourth time by the Alberta Motion Picture Industry Association (AMPIA) for my score for *The Artistic Taxidermist*. I performed in *Buzz Job*, a play/theatrical concert featuring the songwriting of Cal Cavendish and Kris Demeanor, icons who represent different eras in Calgary's vibrant and often under-appreciated musical history. My solo CD, "Today's Special," features many songs about food, animals and people.

MySpace: www.myspace.com/chantalvitalis

Electronic Press Kit: www.sonicbids.com/epk/epk.asp?epk_id=17924

Lovebullies: www.thelovebullies.com
www.myspace.com/lovebullies

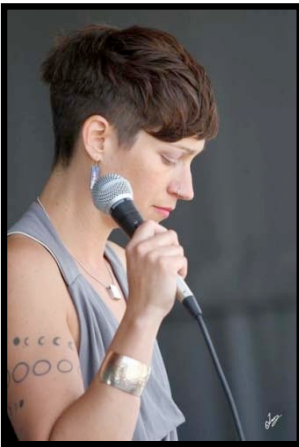
Kris Demeanor & His Crack Band: www.myspace.com/kdcrackband



Jesse McMann-Sparvier

Jesse McMann-Sparvier (AKA Jessica McMann) has been dancing for 8 years and performing for 6 years. Her talents include flute performance, music and dance. Her career focus has been on Hoop Dance and contemporary movement. She has studied under Alex Wells, three-time world champion hoop dancer, Dallas Arcand, world championship winner 2007, Brian Clyne, Raven Spirit Dance Training (Vancouver), Red Sky/Toronto Free Gallery Performance Art Residency, and currently, Promenade Dance Academy. Her dancing has taken her as far as New Mexico, Inuvik, Vancouver and Sweden.

Currently Jesse is working on a film, working for the Winnipeg Aboriginal Film Festival Cultural Connections for Youth program, working in many Winnipeg schools, establishing a Native Creative Arts Salon program, setting tours for Sweden, Norway and Finland, and creating new choreographies that explore our relationship with the earth, with each other and her native and queer identities. She learns from all cultures and integrates theory, knowledge, practice and ideologies into her dance, yet never loses the root of traditional powwow forms and traditional practices.



Lindsay Brandon

Lindsay Brandon is a multidisciplinary artist and musician from Calgary, Alberta. A solo performer and video artist, she plays a wide variety of acoustic instruments (guitar, keys, percussion) which she records into her loop station and uses digital synth to create multi-layered songs with live vocal mixing overtop. Video backdrops often accompany her with images of moving light in a textured painting style.

A background in drama from her youth has been re-awakened as of late and she is currently collaborating to create sound and video for theatre. She strives to combine her talents as a video artist, musician, dancer and actor to create a show which has many levels of artistic expression. Inspired by current events and our relationship with what she refers to as '*Tricknology*', Lindsay explores the duality of soulful acoustic sound and combines it with digital synth to create a sound that is both contemporary and exciting.



Emanuel Ilagan

Having a creative propensity since childhood, Emanuel Ilagan only began to see himself as an artist after getting involved in emerging queer and art scenes of Alberta's capital city. Born and raised in Edmonton, he received a BSc at the University of Alberta, majoring in Biological Sciences with a minor in Film Studies.

Earning praise for his amateur film photography, he received his first show at the visual.arts@Nextfest group exhibition in 2010. The same summer marked the debut of NECKNACKS, his handmade line of neck-wear. Moving forward with this momentum, Emanuel now resides in Vancouver, British Columbia where he continues to explore and inform his identity as an artist and image-maker at the Emily Carr University of Art and Design.

Much of Ilagan's work seeks to explore, deconstruct and/or reappropriate the visual discourse of Western patriarchy, while still being representative of his own *joie de vivre*: a celebration of lived experience and lived spaces. After relocating to a new city, he keeps his quiet inspirations to himself: wearing tights under his pants, remembering the bell jar in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, associating the sea with melancholy. His art can reveal these secrets.

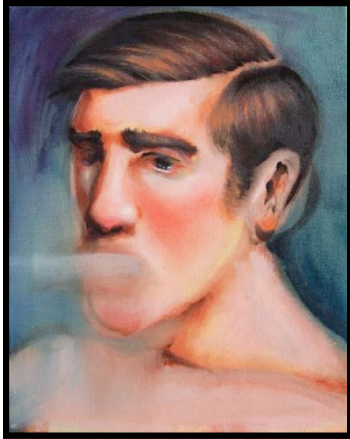
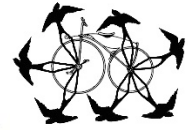


Laurie MacFayden

Laurie MacFayden wears many hats as writer, spoken-word poet, photographer and painter. After three decades as a sports journalist, she left the news media in 2007 to focus on her own creative projects. Her debut collection of poems, *White Shirt* ("a bust-out-of-the-closet voice ... this is Sappho crossed with the Supremes") was published by Frontenac House in April 2010 and long-listed for the Alberta Readers Choice Awards.

Her writing has also appeared in *The New Quarterly* literary magazine, the Spire Poetry Poster and The Ontario Poetry Society's Chapbook Anthology *Love: The First Course*. She was a regional finalist in the 2008 CBC National Poetry Faceoff, and contributed to the inaugural online cycle of Dailyhaiku.org, and its first print offshoot, *DailyHaiku I: A Daily Shot of Zen*. Her work has been performed at Edmonton's annual Loud & Queer Cabaret, Exposure (Edmonton's Queer Arts and Culture Festival) and Acts of Pride.

She performs regularly on Edmonton's Raving Poets open-mic stage and is a member of the League of Canadian Poets, the Writers Guild of Alberta, Edmonton Arts Council and Visual Arts Alberta. Her art lives at www.lauriemaacfayden.com.



Travis McEwen

Travis McEwen is an Edmonton-based painter with a BFA from the University of Alberta who often works from notional subjects.

I am continuously exploring my own visual and emotional responses to ideas and conceptions surrounding otherness, exclusion and normalcy and how they intersect/interact with the ideas and constructs of gender and sexuality. I create and invent individual and isolated portrait subjects as a structure to exemplify and communicate the emotional psychology related to these ideas.

These subjects are youths, people discovering themselves, people whose bodies are betraying them and becoming different without their consent. And yet these isolated subjects are already marked by sociality— the ungainly, fraught relationship of the self to itself here has been fashioned by its encounter with social pathologies. The inner experience of self-estrangement begins with the encounter with another. The paintings' titles seek to restage this relationship between the external remark and the internalized insecurities and self-understandings of the subjects themselves.



Jennie and Julie Orton

“The Pride of the Calgary Ortons”, as they have become known in their own minds, are two moderately talented young artists living off their parents’ good graces.

The eldest, Jennie Orton, has been writing since she was 12, penning masterpieces such as “Hazzardous Times: The Dukes of Hazzard movie” and poetry about Matthew McConaughey. She earned her Broadcasting diploma from Mount Royal and shifted into journalism. She is currently resides in Vancouver with her little black dog working as senior editor for sceneinthedark.com where she reviews concerts and events in the Vancouver area.

The youngest, Julie Orton, earned her theatre degree at UofC, giving her official licence to indulge her already overbearing love of dramatization, much to the relief of her long-suffering family. It has served her well, she has appeared onstage at Vertigo Theatre, Alberta Theatre Projects, Ground Zero Theatre, Lunchbox Theatre, Urban Curvz, Downstage, TheatreBOOM, and three seasons of Shakespeare in the Park. Julie received three Betty Mitchell Award Nominations, and one win for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role (*Shakespeare's Dog* - Alberta Theatre Projects). She frequently guest stars on *Dirty Laundry*, Calgary's only improvised soap opera.





Jamie Tea

Jamie Tea is a local transdisciplinary artist, specializing in voice, musical theatre, eccentric performance, animation/installation and circus arts.

Recent feature appearances include the Calgary Animated Objects Festival 2011 (La Famiglia animated installation), Midway (High Performance Rodeo) 2011, Fire & Ice NYE Celebration (emcee of the official City of Calgary countdown event), Fluid Movement Arts Festival Physical Therapy Cabaret, Exposure Queer Arts Festival (Edmonton), Le Chic III (Hawaii) with members of Cirque du Soleil, Lhasa: Land of the Gods (Swallow-a-bicycle Performance Coop), Calgary/Edmonton Fringe festivals, & Toxic Avenger: the Musical (Broadway West Productions). In 2009, Jamie played Cheryl in Evil Dead: the Musical (Calgary and Vancouver, GZT/H&M).



Brianna Strong

Brianna Strong is an emerging artist currently attending the Alberta College of Art & Design. She has studied and practiced in multiple cities and is continuously hunting for parallels between her work and other disciplines.

While Strong has been an observer to several areas of study and different tribes – from astronomy to athletics to magazine production - she sees art and culture as points of intersection for people. She is compelled to produce these unique states of encounter in a variety of contexts. Drawing has always been her primary way of navigating the world and remains as the preferred scheme in drawing people together over a distance. Current projects include queer photo initiative “tri” with local artist Laura Kelly, street art campaigns and collaborations with her twin sister an art historian, flamenco dancer and writer based out of Vancouver.



Headliner

Light Fires



Light Fires is the collaborative creation of Reginald Vermue (aka, Gentleman Reg) and James Bunton (of Ohbijou). The band is a colourful and cheeky brand of electro-soul, reminiscent of Hot Chip (though less kitschy than their early stuff) or Hercules and The Love Affair (but less opulent). It is sugary sweet, but anchored by the deep, icy synths of songs like “10 Feet Tall” or the gauzy, down-tempo atmospherics of “The Better”. The Light Fires’ music exudes a playfully coyness and mischievous confidence that is immediately contagious; insidiously creeping into you, and taking over your body until you are dancing ecstatically in the neon lights of some hedonistic den of bodily delights.

For more information, visit www.fairytalesfilmfest.com or call 403.244.1956.