

WMDF

FILMFEST

& FUNDRAISER

Welcome to West Michigan Dance Festival's inaugural FilmFest and Fundraiser! We are excited to highlight some amazing artists in our community and beyond, and your support makes that possible! Thank you for being here and joining us in celebration.

Special thank you to our FilmFest Adjudicators who volunteered to provide thoughtful feedback and selected the featured films for this evening.



Kelsey Lee
Executive Artistic Director
Dance Playhouse



Michaela Neild
Interdisciplinary Artist
Buffalo, NY

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The Fruits **Essence Movement Collective**

*In collaboration with author Alexandra Bos

Choreography: Megan Corey, Lena Sigurdardottir, Kate Hyman

Dancers: Megan Corey, Lena Sigurdardottir, Kate Hyman, Tyler Plets, Isabella Croce, Vanessa Castillo, Taina Rodriguez, Jada Sheriff, Ashley Jean, Aleiha Gates, Savannah Pryor

Videography: Opeyemi Akinbola and Jim Sauter

Music: The Fruits by Paris Paloma

A collaboration between Essence MVMT Co. and local author, Alex Bos, The Fruits is inspired by Alex Bos's recent release, SheWolf. This film translates the themes of SheWolf – feminine rage and the taboo of feminine desire – into three unique choreographic voices. Set in three phases, choreographers Megan Corey, Lena Sigurdardottir and Kate Hyman each confront the confines of palatable femininity. At the forefront, this film maintains the question poised by SheWolf: what do you do with your (feminine) desire?

Trial

Choreography and Direction: Sarra LaCour

Director of Photography and Editor: Liam Briese

Dancers: Makayla Henline, Makenna Iverson, Katie Langejans, Caroline Peters, Natalie Richards, Colin Van Soest

Music: Held Breath by Victor Vigil

We are born into a world where we immediately feel life's burdens. The central conflict focuses on our internal struggles—how we confront and cope with these invisible battles shapes our external selves and, more importantly, what remains unseen. As we navigate these “trials,” alone and with others, our perspective ultimately becomes the measure of our journey.

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Descent **Ballaro Dance**

Direction: Marisa f. Ballaro and Zoran Prodanovic

Writing and Production: Marisa f. Ballaro

Cinematography and Editing: Zoran Prodanovic

Dancers: Marina Vianello, Hannah Dillenbeck, Tessa Fungo, Jen Silver,
Christina Tribo

Music: Ardie Son

Location: The LUXE Galore (New York, NY)

Descent is a 'silent film era meets period-piece'-inspired narrative dance film. Almost fairytale-like, it tells the story of an evil queen being dethroned by those she trusted most.

To Be Docile

*Flashing Light Warning

*This film references abuse and intended for mature audiences

Created and Performed by: Katerina Willis

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE

To Be Docile is the first installment of the Under New Management series, a long term project with no set timeline depicting my experience navigating the onset of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder from repeated sexual violence. To Be Docile reframes the narrative of my solo Docile Bodies (2023). While the original work was not autobiographical, it was created/performed in the time when I was still in contact with my main abuser. While trauma can cause memory to distort and identity to fracture, there is catharsis in the act of directly confronting your lived experience.

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THGISDNIH:HINDSIGHT

Dance in the Annex and BomDiggs

Choreography: Bonnie O'Rourke & Hannah Sullivan

Movement Coach: Amy Wilson

Director and Editor: Seth Thompson

Production Assistance: Jessica Salvatore & Brandon Ruiter

Dancers: Bonnie O'Rourke & Hannah Sullivan

Music: Original Score/Recording by Jeremy Verwys (mixing by Alex Hamel)

This short screendance film abstractly explores the relationship between human and harmer. Harm done by a substance, a mental health disorder or abuse-- the specific subject is the viewer's choice. Presented by Michigan's Dance In The Annex (DITA) and New York's Bom Diggs.

Conform Me Not

Director, Choreographer, Editor: Jasmine Mejia

Dancer: Shannon Rodriguez

Music: Michael Wall/Sound for Movement

"Conform Me Not" mirrors the overwhelming pressure of societal expectations

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We Are Lauren Blair Smith Dance Company

Director, Choreographer, Producer: Lauren Blair Smith

Director of Photography and Editor: Richard Prayoga

Dancers: Adly Azizi Azamin, Han Xin Yi, Iswarya Jayakumar, Krystal Tan, Lauren Blair Smith, Melise Wang, Stanton Soh, Xiao Jing

Music Producer: Alif Aircho / AirchoTRK

"We Are" celebrates vibrant collaboration and fosters appreciation for the various cultural narratives within Singapore's dance and art community. The short dance film utilizes dance as a universal language, bridging cultural differences and strengthening shared human experiences. "We Are" inspires cultural exchange both within Singapore and between Singapore and the world.

**THANK YOU
for being a part of our inaugural
FilmFest and Fundraiser!**

To help us continue bringing events, classes, and performances to our community, visit westmichigandancefestival.com and sign up for our newsletter or make a donation!