



REJECTS COHORT 2026

FRIDAY

Producing Team: [Lily Conforti](#) & [Javan Mngrezzo](#)

Lighting Designer: Alice Endo

First off, thank you so much for being here!

You are about to see a series of short works from MN dancers/choreographers. Each short work, born from rejection, is a testament to the resilience and innovation of the artists behind them, offering a fresh perspective on the intersection of art, access, and opportunity.

This show serves as a place to take a breath together, share art together, and be in community together. As a cohort we feel as though it is vital to continue to offer and create these spaces amidst the fear, grief, and fatigue we are facing.

We will not give in, We will keep making art, We will use art as resistance and as healing.
Thank you for being here.

MUTUAL AID DONATIONS

This link will take you to a list of local organizations that need donations to continue their work with activism programming, and emergency relief for those that need it at this time.

THANK YOUS

We would like to thank The Mixed Blood Theater for their care, flexibility, and hospitality. Gregory Addison for videoing, Michael Coleman for photographing, Alice Endo for her amazing light design and tech help, our beautifully talented and kind 2026 cohort, and lastly, thank YOU for being here!

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that Mni Sota Makoce, the land of the Dakota people, is unjustly stolen Native land. We stand behind the statement that NO ONE IS ILLEGAL ON STOLEN LAND. We commit to learning, understanding, and supporting efforts toward justice, healing, and

the restoration of rights for Indigenous communities. We fully support community resistance against authoritarian, fascist regimes that endanger not only our indigenous Minnesotan communities but all people of color in our state. May we walk empathetically together in a spirit of respect, reparation, and reconciliation.

Land acknowledgment is only one small part of supporting Indigenous communities and what is happening in Minnesota right now. We hope our land acknowledgment statement will inspire others to stand with us in solidarity with Native nations and all communities facing injustice.

Around the theater you will see many ways that you can be involved in community resistance. We have resource sheets in the lobby and a link for mutual aid funds to donate to. We are in this together.

out to dry (birthday/funeral edition)

Choreographed by: O.V.A. (Other Various Artists) - Kate Sebes, Holly Trenbath, Elise Wilson

Performers: Kate Sebes, Holly Trenbath, Elise Wilson

Set Design: Kate Sebes, Holly Trenbath, Elise Wilson

Text: Holly Trenbath, in collaboration with and edited by Kate Sebes and Elise Wilson

Music Credits: "No One Ever Tells You" by The Crystals, "9" by Dean Blunt, Panda Bear

Piece Description: *You're Invited!*

A piece centered around grief found living on our dying planet reflected in the grief found from girlhood to womanhood. It is both a celebration and a funeral, both a sleepover and a tragedy, both a fantastical reimagination of nostalgia and a deeply sorrowful premonition of what is coming.

Notes: mild profanity

O.V.A, Other Various Artists, is a new and evolving collaboration between three women brought together by chance and kept together by creation. Kate Sebes, Holly Trenbath, and Elise Wilson met in the summer of 2025 during Third Act Minnesota's Open Call for its Sun Day Festival's dance performance program. Their chemistry perforated the ethers and, in deciding to join forces to develop a piece, O.V.A. was born. Together, Elise, Holly, and Kate explore the depths of celebration, whimsy, patience, and action through their movement.

[@katesebes](#)

[@holly.go.lucky](#) / [@shivernshake](#)

[@sunlitresilience](#) / [@sunlitprints](#)

Didn't need to go so far

Choreographed and Performed by: Remi Blakesley and Claudia d'Auria

Music Credits: "Adventures in Your Own Backyard" by Patrick Watson

Remi Blakesley & Claudia d'Auria, Remi is a dancer and choreographer originally from the Twin Cities and is currently dancing with TU Dance as a CULTIVATE Trainee. She is a recent graduate from the Alonzo King Lines Ballet Training Program in San Francisco, where she collaborated with renowned artists including Maurya Kerr, Moscelyne Parke Harrison, Brett Conway, Alejandro Perez, and Natasha Adorlee. During her time in San Francisco, Remi danced with Decentered Arts, blending improvisational movement with spoken word poetry and her choreography was featured in Mark Foehringer's emerging choreographers forum, performing at Joe Goode Annex and Dancing in the Park SF.

Claudia d'Auria, originally from Pasadena, CA, graduated in 2024 with a double major in dance (with distinction) and psychology from Carleton College, where she received performing arts awards and danced in works by Elayna Waxse, Shapiro and Smith Dance, Mathew Janczewski, and other twin cities choreographers. She is now in her second year as a trainee in the CULTIVATE Program at TU Dance Center, where she has performed in works by various choreographers including Gregory Dolbashian, Yusha-Marie Sorzano, and Ronald K. Brown, while also furthering her passion for teaching and choreography.

[@RemiBlakesley](#)

[@Claudia_helen](#)

Tallos

Choreographed and Performed by: Taja Will

Music Credits: Original music by RØ Lorenzen

Piece Description: This is a limpia, a cleansing, an offer of healing, a channel from ancestors close to and far away from us, all of us, right now.

Notes: Scented plants will be used, including eucalyptus

Taja Will (they/them) is a non-binary, chronically ill, queer, Latinx (Chilean) adoptee. They are a performer, choreographer, somatic therapist, consultant and Healing Justice practitioner based in Mni Sota Makoce, on the ancestral lands of the Dakota and Anishinaabe. Taja's approach integrates improvisation, somatic modalities, text and vocals in contemporary performance. Their aesthetic is one of spontaneity, bold choice making, sonic and kinetic partnership and the ability to move in relationship to risk and intimacy. Will's artistic work explores visceral connections to current socio-cultural realities through a blend of ritual, dense multi-layered worldbuilding and everyday magic.

[@tajawillxo](#)

Friend (an excerpt from “Compost”)

Created by: Kendall Edstrom and Addie Smith

Performed by: Kendall Edstrom

Music Credits: Heitor Villa-Lobos, Nashville Symphony Orchestra, Rosana Lamosa

Piece Description: I want to honor - and I want to keep - my most prized friend.

Addie Smith & Kendall Edstrom have been dancing together in Minneapolis since 2022. Their project “Compost” began from their desire for an informal container to make bad dances and a shared curiosity towards cycles, perfection, tragedy, and tomatoes. They are excited to present another excerpt from this work at this year’s Rejects.

Lines I Didn't Draw

Choreographed and Performed by: Erin Evans

Music Credits: Both Sides Now - Joni Mitchell

Piece Description: A work in progress, tracing how the self is assembled from inherited gestures. Unseen influences surface through the body, shaping what we become before we know it.

Erin Evans is a freelance dancer, teacher, and choreographer based out of Minneapolis. Erin received her BFA in Dance from The University of Iowa in 2021. During her time at Iowa, Erin had the opportunity to perform works from artists such as Monica Bill Barnes, Brian Enos (Big Muddy Dance), Tony Oricco, Christopher Rasheem-McMillan, Melinda Meyers, Charlotte Adams and Armando Duarte. While in school, Erin received her Hatha Yoga Teacher Certification and has been teaching yoga for dancers since 2020. After graduating, Erin has continued her education with many companies including Jose Limon Dance Company, Alexandra Beller Dance, Chicago Dance Works, and Ground Grooves. Erin currently teaches ballet and modern throughout the twin cities and west metro. Erin has been performing with Corpus Dance Works since 2023.

With every movement, I begin again...

Choreographed and Performed by: Michelle Lowden

Music Credits: "Illumination" by Kai Engel, "your name" by Liston, ft Julien Marchal & Lowswimmer. Edited by Michelle Lowden

Piece Description: With every movement my journey as a dancer begins again. There are gaps, injuries, pauses, and limitations, but also growth, strength, new ideas, and inspirations that come and go. What does it mean to be a dancer in the mind, body, and soul? How do they connect? How do I connect?

Michelle Lowden is a free lance dancer and choreographer. I have been dancing my whole life and have learned from and danced with many influential people. I graduated in 2024 from Mankato State University with a degree in Dance, specified in dance therapy and received a minor in psychology. I am continuing my journey near the cities by taking classes and collaborating with a variety of different artists and I am very open to exploring new ideas and movement styles.

[@Ms.beautiful_tragedy](#)

Remnant

Choreographed by: Romero Cannady

Dancers: Saints Ballet

Music Credits: "The Lord Is With Me" — SAULT

Piece Description: Remnant explores the idea of having a firm foundation holding fast to belief, truth, and purpose without losing one's grip. The work reflects spiritual endurance and the quiet strength required to remain rooted, even when pressure and uncertainty surround you.

Romero Cannady is a licensed educator, choreographer, and artistic director of Saints Ballet Center. Their work is grounded in faith, discipline, and storytelling, with choreography that explores resilience, spiritual endurance, and embodied devotion. Through movement, Cannady creates spaces where dancers are invited to stand firm in purpose while honoring both technical excellence and spiritual integrity.

<https://saintsballetcenter.org>

Gleditsia

Choreographed and Performed by: Sophia McLaughlin

Made in collaboration with Honey Locust, *Gleditsia triacanthos*

Music Credits: Solitude by Louis de Mieulle

Sophia McLaughlin is a dance artist who centers her practice on the intersection of botany and dance. Drawing on botanical field methods, her work exposes plants' inner worlds, relationships, and uniqueness by transferring the specificity of plant attributes to the body. She sees this research as an aspect of repairing our societal disconnection from the earth by listening through embodiment to plant species and their processes. She holds an MFA in Dance from the University of Iowa and a BA in Dance and Botany from Connecticut College. Her work has been shown at attended colleges, ACDA 2019 and 2024, Prompt for the Planet, and as an artist in residence at the Sable Project and Oak Spring Garden Foundation. During her time at attended colleges, she has worked with choreographers Stephanie Miracle, Zena Bibler, Christopher-Rasheem McMillan, David Dorfman, Heidi Henderson, Lisa Race, Shawn Hove, Ellie Goudie-Averill, and performed in the restagings of works by Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, Kate Weare, and Ohad Naharin, and worked with botanist Chad Jones on the spread of invasive species

Aathiram

Choreographed and Performed by: Sudarsna Mukund

Music Credits: Igor Stravinsky, Rite of Spring

Piece Description: Aathiram means rage in Tamil. I think we're all feeling some rage at the moment.

Sudarsna Mukund (she/her) is a movement artist and engineer. She enjoys working with a wide variety of movement styles and modalities. She also seeks to bridge the gap between technology and movement in her work.

[@sudarsnak](https://www.instagram.com/sudarsnak)

Flailing Tube Love

Choreographed and Performed by: Lillian Kline

Movers: Sam Albright, Rosemarie Dunn-Wright, Lillian Kline, and Gillian Wheaton

Music Credits: "Feels So Good" by Chuck Mangione

Piece Description: This slice-of-life piece asks a simple question: what would happen if the air dancers outside rival car dealerships fell in love?

Lillian Kline is a Minneapolis-born performing artist and is very excited to be a part of this year's Rejects cohort! Growing up, she studied theater, dance, stilt-walking, puppetry, and aerial arts, and is currently a coach at Circus Juventas. She has worked with choreographers Ray Terrill, Zoë Koenig, Shane Larson, and Tessa Longshore, and received a B.A. in Theatre Honors and Dance from Gustavus Adolphus College in 2022.

[@lillian.g.kline](https://www.instagram.com/lillian.g.kline)

The Farther We Fall

Choreographed by: Arcelia Y. Rivera

Performed by: Allison Durham, Jordan Garrison, Rachel Holmes, Lauren Kaiser, Emily Saba, Allison Wheeler

Music Credits: "Carry" by Martyn Heyne

Piece description: To fall in love, to fall back on, to fall apart.

Arcelia Y. Rivera is from River Falls, Wisconsin. She graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato with a BFA in Dance and a Minor in Art History. While at MNSU, Arcelia studied a variety of dance styles under the instruction of Julie Kerr-Berry, Daniel Stark, and Allison Doughty Marquesen and she was the first dance major in the Department of Theatre and Dance to receive the prestigious Toy Wilson Blethen Fine Arts Award. Her choreography was competitively selected to be performed in the Fall 2018, Spring 2019, and Spring 2021 Dance Concerts at MNSU, Mankato with two of her works receiving awards for Outstanding Choreography. Currently, Arcelia is a company dancer with Threads Dance Project and has been involved in projects throughout the Twin Cities, including: Hatch Dance, HoneyWorks, Flying Foot Forum, Contempo Physical Dance (working with Brazilian choreographer, Mário Nascimento), and 8:20 Dance Company. In addition to performing, Arcelia has a passion for teaching the next generation of movers at several dance studios, where she has been awarded for her choreography at multiple dance competitions.

[@arcelia_rivera](#)