



STUDIO 2022: SARA LYONS

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STUDIO 2022: SARA LYONS

During the week of their residency at REDCAT, Sara Lyons will develop *This Emancipation Thing*, a new devised, interdisciplinary theatre work, in collaboration with media artist and activist Joseph Amodei and members of feminist arts communities in LA. Through process and performance, the project embraces feminist histories as embodied and linear, demanding that feminists of different generations see and hear one another in an ever-shifting environment, alive with the voices of the masses.

This Emancipation Thing dramatizes “Woman Rap about Sex,” an archival transcript of a 1968 consciousness-raising (CR) circle led by radical feminist group the Redstockings. Driven by the transformative potential of dialogue, CR was the cornerstone of second-wave activist strategy, which responded to women’s actual lived experiences, not theory. In the text, anonymous young women vulnerably unpack sex, pleasure, and power through stories from their private lives. Their dialogue is brutally sharp, funny, and raunchy; shared vulnerability is palpable just under the surface. Woven through the discussion are also shades of the racism, classism, homophobia, and transphobia which permeated second-wave feminism.

At the core of the project is the question, “How do we move forward from this history, rife with contradictions?” The piece both illuminates the paradigm-shifting wisdom of generations past, and intervenes on its violence, embracing repetition, non-linearity, and glitch as tools for disempowering whitewashed, queerwashed feminist histories.

The work’s eventual form will nod to the CR circle through the embrace of non-hierarchical simultaneity. The adapted play will be surrounded by a multimedia installation which prompts audiences to respond through writing, gesture, and CR-style conversations between audience members. Feminist history becomes a hyperobject, spatially pervasive, and fractured through our digital identities and technologies. The audience can choose to engage with the installation, live performance, or both. Their responses—snapshots of our values, frustrations, and future imaginings—will gradually be fed back into the central performance via monitors and in-ear directives to performers. Over the course of a day, the performance repeats and changes—voices of the audience will intervene and guide its shifts, creating a unique document of collision and communication across decades. As the piece tours, Lyons will maintain a free online archive of each unique performances creating a living reference document for feminist praxis and thought in everyday life.

Feminist activism continues to articulate and complicate boundaries between public and private. In celebration and continuance of this tradition, the public is invited to visit the gallery throughout the week to observe, engage with, and contribute to the development of this work.

ABOUT THE SERIES

REDCAT's STUDIO series is an annual program supporting multidisciplinary work-in-progress. Responsive to changing needs and concerns, the series adopts various formats and locations, from performances and workshops to public interventions and commissions, to support the development of new work and novel reflections from within the communities of LA-based artists. STUDIO 2022 features the work of Tarrah Krajnak, Sara Lyons, Christina Catherine Martinez, Pastiche Queen, The Revolution School, and DeLanna Studi. Occupying the gallery at REDCAT as an informal space for gathering, storytelling, and performance, STUDIO 2022 focuses on exploratory works across disciplines and media, activating REDCAT's gallery with a variety of practices in a setting for convening with furniture from local designer Sean C. Flaherty.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Sara Lyons is a Los Angeles-based director staging feminist legacy and feminist futures in critically embodied new theatre and performance works. Working frequently in adaptation, social practice, and new media as well as theatre, their work has been presented at numerous venues nationally and internationally by The Kitchen, REDCAT, Los Angeles Performance Practice, OUTsider, SFX Festival, Ensemble Studio Theatre, HERE Arts Center, LaMaMa, Edinburgh Fringe, and more.

Recent projects include Sophia Cleary's *One & Only* (The Kitchen), an experiment in theater for an audience of one, and Paul Outlaw's *BBC (Big Black Cockroach)* and *BigBlackOctoberSurprise* (REDCAT 2019), a Kafka-inspired live horror farce in which a white Tr*mp-supporting woman wakes up as a monstrous vermin—a black man.

Lyons has received residencies from Ucross Foundation, Thymele Arts (2020 Resident Artist), PAM Residencies, and Los Angeles Performance Practice/Automata LA.

Lyons holds an MFA in Directing from Carnegie Mellon University and is an alum of the Hemispheric Institute's EMERGENYC program for artists working at the intersection of performance and politics at NYU. They currently teach at UCLA and Sarah Lawrence College, and their critical writing has been published by ContemporaryPerformance.com and Riting.org.

There will be an open rehearsal for THIS EMANCIPATION THING
on Sunday, April 3 at 2pm.



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