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## Wild Dancing West



Dancer-choreographer Naomi Elizabeth Montoya collaborated on *SITE UNSEEN* with filmmaker Su Hudson. Photo by Jessica Hudson.

# W

Wild Dancing West 2013 focuses on the intersection of film and dance, creating a visual spectacle that celebrates focal points in film and physicality. Presenting art that is always innovative and always relevant, N4th Theatre/North Fourth Arts Center offers thought-provoking programming that is affordable, accessible, and above all, finely wrought. Through N4th Theatre's annual film festival, Wild Dancing West, artists are given a platform for expression and an outlet that nurtures creativity.

The opening evening of this week-end-long celebration, *Dance For Camera*, will concentrate on one-hour film screenings by New Mexican film and dance makers who include: Zsolt Palcza and Readymade Dance Theatre; Jennifer Predock-Linnell, Paniotis, Joyce Neimanas and Moira Ellis; Vladimir Conde Reche and Estevan Ramirez; along with current works by the Public Academy for Performing Arts' Advanced Film and Contemporary Dance Ensemble, directed by Su Hudson and Naomi Elizabeth Montoya.

The featured performance of Wild Dancing West's *Dance for Camera* weekend, *SITE UNSEEN*, is a recent work created by Albuquerque-based dancer/choreographer Naomi Elizabeth Montoya and filmmaker Su Hudson. Merging movement with diverse New Mexico landscapes through the unconventional angles captured by camera in dance for film, *SITE UNSEEN* is a multimedia dance performance that explores interpersonal relationships and the relationships humans have with their natural and contrived environments.

Colleagues on the faculty at the Public Academy for Performing Arts in Albuquerque (PAPA), the works of Montoya and Hudson focus on dance for camera, dance installations, and multi-media dance performance pieces. Su Hudson is an award-winning filmmaker who has worked in the film industry as an independent filmmaker, a producer, and a film instructor for nearly twenty years. Naomi Elizabeth Montoya pulls from her background of ethnic and modern dance to choreograph, teach and direct. Su Hudson teaches film and Naomi Elizabeth Montoya teaches contemporary dance and directs PAPA's Contemporary Dance Ensemble.

First place winners of the 2009 New Mexico State Fair category for Moving Images, the two have taken their local notoriety and elevated it to national and international levels. Their films have been shown in international festivals such as Video Dança Film Festival in São Carlo, Brazil. Additionally, their work has toured from Albuquerque to St.

Petersburg, Russia, and to Martha's Vineyard with the International Experiments in Cinema.

Of the work, *SITE UNSEEN*, Naomi Elizabeth Montoya describes it as "taking dance out of its normal realm and incorporates stand-alone film pieces, with movement, placing it on the stage." In creating site-specific work of art, Montoya and Hudson traveled throughout the state, working within the natural landscapes that reach from Santa Rosa in eastern New Mexico to White Sands National Monument in the south.

*SITE UNSEEN* features a cast of twelve dancer/performers who will explore movement, sound, and visuals, playing with the connections within these media and highlighting their ease of disconnect. "I enjoy theatre and performance, and I have always enjoyed playing with lights, costumes and props. This is really going to be a surprise," says Montoya.

In 2006, the collaborators attended the Dance Camera West Film Festival in Los Angeles where the works of Belgian musician and filmmaker Thierry De Mey were featured. Known for his unique style that combines musical composition with complex natural imagery De Mey is regarded for working with his dancer-sibling to change the way dance is presented on film. Montoya regards De Mey's work because he uses a wide variety of camera angles, which she describes as "making movement more exciting." By incorporating this style with their own visual perspectives, Montoya and Hudson are playing with space and time in a way that calls upon audience participation, and above all is intelligent.

In creating films whose primary focus lies in dance, a traditionally three-dimensional form, Montoya and Hudson are creating art that is removed from its intended context, and is replaced with unconventional viewpoints that focus on the natural state of life. With N4th Theatre's visionary approach to contemporary arts that are relevant and galvanizing, Wild Dancing West 2013 and *SITE UNSEEN* is creating a greater network for exposure - and it is that forward-looking disposition that advocates for artistic progression and allows for cerebral stimulation.

For more information on Wild Dancing West 2013 *Dance For Camera*, May 17, 8 pm; and *SITE UNSEEN*, May 18, 8 pm, contact N4th/North Fourth Arts center by calling 344.4542 or visiting [www.vsaartsnm.org](http://www.vsaartsnm.org). Ticket prices range from \$5-\$12 and may be reserved by phone.

—Christine Vigil is the contributing dance editor for *ABQ Arts & Entertainment*.

## Farce equals fun for Adobe audiences



Directors Jane Hoffman (l.) and Cy Hoffman (r.) maintain control of hilarious chaos in "Lend Me a Tenor." Standing: Thom Hinks as the impresario, Saunders; and Angle Alley as Julia. On the couch: Avery Scott as Maggie (l.), Ryan Montenery as Il Stupendo (Tito Merelli, the Tenor), and Tasha Waters as Diana. Photo by Michael L. Miller.

Local directors Jane and Cy Hoffman want Albuquerque audiences to find a happy place to laugh away some stress at the upcoming performance of "Lend Me a Tenor."

"Doors will be slamming, people will be hiding behind doors," Cy said. "There are miscommunications and constant surprises."

Comedies can be ranked by how many doors are slammed and this one is a six-door farce. "Except it's funnier!" joined in Jane.

In a recent interview with the directors, their pleasure in directing this 1989 play written by Ken Ludwig was evident. "We're in rehearsals now," Cy said. "And it's hard not to laugh your socks off, it's so silly."

"Lend Me a Tenor" is set in a Cleveland hotel in 1934 where the opera company awaits the world famous tenor, "Il Stupendo" of Italy. There's much anxious anticipation as the tenor is late and, when he finally arrives, through a series of complications is drugged and believed dead. The opera manager's assistant attempts to stand in for the tenor for the single performance, while a few star-struck fans jockey to get close to the famous tenor. Mayhem ensues with mistaken identities, double entendres and the aforementioned door-slaming fun.

"There are fights all the time, everyone's screaming and yelling," Cy said. "Comedy takes a knock, for sure."

"The timing is very tight and particular in a comedy," Jane conferred. "That's the hardest thing for the cast, but we think we have a great cast for that." The directors included several of their usual actors in this show as well as some exciting talent new to Albuquerque.

The Hoffmans said they chose this play in part because of the storyline. The couple run an opera camp for children in the summer, and they're familiar with the personalities who inhabit that world.

"This will be the third straight-ish drama play that we've done since we've moved here while the rest have been singing and drama musicals. It's something we know," Jane said.



## Student artists create and show their work at Warehouse 508



Photo by Noah De St. Croix.

The latest incarnation of the old Wool Warehouse on First Street just north of the convention center is a dynamic, youth-focused center for pop arts and performance for young people. Called Warehouse 508, it is a place where youth can acquire skills in art, music, poetry, film editing, and graphic design. Also wakeboarding, snowboarding and retailing! The whole non-profit enchilada is safe, structured, supervised and affordable.

One offering involves Xpression Sessions, regularly scheduled art workshops and open-studio labs with prominent, youth-friendly artists, including James Black, Albert Rosales, Kailani, Al' Nair, John Paul Gutierrez, Rey Melendez and Noah De St. Croix. Twice a month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays, youth gather at the 508 Warehouse from 5 to 8 pm to learn and do art from these local masters of drawing, painting, spray painting, photography and collage.

Xpression Session workshops are free. So are the student gallery openings on the first Friday of the month, also at 508 Warehouse.

The art program was started by Noah and Simon Kessler de St. Croix, two brothers – both UNM students studying, between them, art, social change, sustainability and communication. They began scheduling the art workshops in February with funding from the community, including

Warehouse 508, La Montañita Food Coop, Artisan, Dick Blick, the Albuquerque Community Foundation, and The Community Project (aka the Brothers St. Croix).

The workshops are scheduled to run through the end of June. So far, attendance has been outstanding.

"We had 28 kids in the first workshop, and they've all been high-energy gatherings," reported Noah de St. Croix, who is a painter and one of the featured artists. He is especially excited that the youth come from all economic and ethnic backgrounds.

The idea behind these workshops, he added, is to, "empower young people to create, learn and express themselves through art in a safe, inspiring, and educational environment."

—*Mary Montañó is the author of Tradiciones Nuevomexicanos (UNM Press) and teaches "Cultural Traditions of New Mexico" at UNM's College of Fine Arts.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays of each month through June 28**  
**Xpression Sessions Art Workshops for Youth**  
**Warehouse 508, Free**  
**video link <http://vimeo.com/61502752>**  
**For full schedule through June, go to**  
**[www.communityproject.me](http://www.communityproject.me)**  
**508 1st Street NW, 296.2738**

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Producing a period piece requires special attention to details that the Hoffmans believe make the production richer. "There are two telephones on the set and you can't have the Princess phone with push buttons since it's 1934," Cy said. "You've got to make it believable." Noting their superior costumer and prop person, Jane said there are challenges unique to each show, including preparing the hair, which she does herself.

"But that's why you put on a show, as Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland used to say," Jane

laughed. "So you can play with all this stuff." The Hoffmans have been producing plays at the Adobe Theater for ten years now, quite successfully. "It's a wonderful space with audience on the sides and front," Cy said. "There are things you can do there that you can't other places."

"We're very comfortable there," Jane agreed. "Since we came from Los Alamos where we were directing, the Adobe Theater was the most welcoming, and it's been home ever since."

With around 40 theaters in Albuquerque,

the Hoffmans said the local scene is booming, but this sometimes spreads the local actors a little thin. "And nobody does it for the money," Jane said.

"Most of the local theater scene is amateur, or community theater," Cy said. "The actors, the backstage crew, the designers, they don't get paid." The directors earn a small stipend, they said, but they choose to reinvest it in the production.

"The theater community in Albuquerque is very close," Jane said. "We've happily worked with a steady crew for a long time who we're

very grateful for, who consistently meet our expectations."

— *Cristina Olds is a writer, graphic designer and teacher who loves writing about the fabulous people and fascinating places that abound in the Southwest.*

**May 17-June 9**  
**Fridays and Saturdays, 8 pm; Sundays, 2 pm**  
**Lend Me a Tenor by Ken Ludwig**  
**The Adobe Theater**  
**Tickets: \$15, senior/student/member discounts. 9813 Fourth St NW, 898.9222; [adobetheater.org](http://adobetheater.org)**

Three special arts events get you out-of-doors into our beautiful May weather with art all around you.



Janet O'Neal, "Persephone's Box," mixed media, 8"x13"x18," can be viewed on the Eldorado Studio Tour.

### 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Placitas Studio Tour

Open Studios: Mother's Day Weekend, May 11-12, 10-5 pm  
 To begin the tour, take I-25 to exit 242.  
 Go east on NM 165 and watch for the signs.  
 Download a brochure and map: [placitasstudiotour.com](http://placitasstudiotour.com)

### Wright's Indian Art, May 11-12

Mother's Day Weekend Indian Market and Grand Opening  
 Dancers, music, and more than 40 artists  
 2677 Louisiana Blvd NE, 266.0120; [wrightsgallery.com](http://wrightsgallery.com)

### 2013 Eldorado Studio Tour

Open Studios: May 18-19, 10am-5pm  
 Artist Reception: Friday, May 17, 5-7pm  
 Preview Gallery/Exhibit Space: La Tienda at Eldorado  
 7 Caliente Road, Suite A-6, Santa Fe, NM  
 Preview Gallery: May 4-17, 11am-4pm;  
 May 18-19, 9am-5pm  
 More information: [eldoradostudiotour.org](http://eldoradostudiotour.org)