

UCM Theatre & Dance 2023-2024 Guest Artists



Marika Reisberg (she/her)

Sustaining Creativity Workshop Series — August 2023

Mari Reisberg, MA, LPC is a therapist, performer, certified creativity and innovation coach, and host of the Sustaining Creativity Podcast. She holds a BFA in Acting from the Hartt School and an MA in Somatic Counseling Psychology, Dance/Movement Therapy, from Naropa University. She currently splits time between the traditional 9-5 world as the director of utilization review and internship programming for a substance abuse treatment center, and her own Sustaining Creativity business where she works with performers and non-performers to spark, grow, sustain, share and transform creativity in their lives.

Funding provided by UCM Digital Learning and Instructional Innovation's Speaker Series Grant

Megan Helmers (she/her)

Cinderella Choreographer — October 2023

Megan Helmers is a Minneapolis-based choreographer whose work has been featured across the Midwest. Megan's recent choreography includes *Cabaret*, *The SpongeBob Musical*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *The Sound of Music and Hello, Dolly!* for Theatre Cedar Rapids; *Titanic*, *Oklahoma!* and *Chaplin* for Revival Theatre Company; *Kinky Boots*, *Cabaret*, *Godspell*, *A Christmas Story*, *Disney's Newsies*, *Elf the Musical* and *Billy Elliot* at the Des Moines Playhouse; and *Adore Us!* *Line*, *Fun Home*, and *Company* at Iowa Stage Theatre Company. In addition to her work with area theaters, she has choreographed productions for Simpson College, Iowa State University, Grandview University, and many more.

Megan's work as a Director/Choreographer includes Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre's *Heathers: The Musical*, *Bring it On*, *The Des Moines Playhouse's A Chorus Line* and *Disney's Freaky Friday*; *Noce's Tick, Tick . . . Boom!* and *Murder Ballad*; Tallgrass Theatre's *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, *The Revolutionists*, *The Bridges of Madison County*, and *Ordinary Days*; and many more.

Megan works in digital marketing for the arts at Capacity Interactive and spent the last three years teaching various dance styles for the Drake University Theatre. Website: www.meganelmers.com

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Aubrey Deeker Hernandez (he/him)

Demystifying Shakespeare: The Clues Are In The Text Workshop

February 2024

As an actor, Aubrey has appeared internationally in *Love's Labor's Lost* at The Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon, Off-Broadway in the world premiere of *The Liar* by David Ives at Classic Stage Company, and in thirteen productions as an affiliated artist at the Tony Award-winning Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC, including *King Lear* directed by Bob Falls, *Mercutio* in *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Octavius Caesar* in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Other credits include the title role in *Hamlet* and *Tom* in *The Glass Menagerie* (Denver Center Theatre Company), *Prior Walter* in *Angels in America* (Wilma Theater, Barrymore Nomination), *An Enemy of the People* (Goodman Theatre), *Boom* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Helen Hayes nomination), *The Walworth Farce* (Studio Theatre, Helen Hayes nomination), *A Fox on the Fairway* (Signature Theatre, Ken Ludwig world premiere), *The Grapes of Wrath* (Ford's Theatre, dir. David Cromer), and productions at The Old Globe, South Coast Rep, The Kennedy Center, Round House Theatre, Folger Theatre, Theatre J, and Everyman Theatre, among others.

Aubrey is a proud member of the National Alliance of Acting Teachers and currently serves as Associate Professor of Acting at Shenandoah Conservatory in Winchester, Virginia. Aubrey is a former Kenan Foundation Artist-in-Residence at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, a Boomerang Fund grant recipient for excellence in the arts, and a Theatre Lobby Award for an emerging artist.

He received his undergraduate degree from The School of Drama at The University of North Carolina School of the Arts and his MFA from The Old Globe and the University of San Diego Shiley Graduate Theatre Program.

Funding provided by UCM Division of Theatre & Dance

Lauren Smith Bearden (she/her)

Romeo & Juliet Costume Designer

Spring 2024

Lauren Smith Bearden is a costume and event designer based in St. Louis, Missouri and is a proud UCM Theatre & Dance Alumni (2015). After graduation, Lauren worked as the Wardrobe Supervisor for New Harmony Theatre, then as an Apprentice at the Purple Rose Theatre Company before going on to complete her MFA in Theatre with an emphasis in Costume Design at the University of Florida. Upon moving back to Missouri with her husband, Neil (also a UCM Theatre & Dance Alum!), she now works as an event designer for Exclusive Events Inc., while designing costumes and directing in the St. Louis Metro area, and serving on the board for First Run Theatre. Favorite design credits include: *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (the Q-Collective) *Into the Woods*, *Peter and the Star Catcher* (MO Baptist University), and *The Gondoliers* (Winter Opera Saint Louis).

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Lily Blouin (she/her)

Romeo & Juliet Fight Choreographer - February 2024

Lily Anna Blouin is a professional actor, director, fight/intimacy choreographer, and theatrical movement instructor based in the Quad Cities. With over 15 years experience in the industry, Lily's choreography has been featured in several productions throughout the Midwest, including *Romeo and Juliet* (Genesis Guild), *Almost Main* (Starry Night Repertory Theatre) and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief Musical* (Spotlight Theatre), as well as internationally at the Shanghai Theatre Festival. She is the founder of Bellum Momentum Combat Arts, and Co-Director of the Community Play Project in Galesburg, Illinois, as well as a resident instructor with The Spotlight Theatre in Moline, Illinois.

Lily holds a B.F.A in Musical Theatre and M.A. in History from Western Illinois University, and is a certified stage combat instructor with Dueling Arts International. She is also a member of the Illinois Theatre Association, Society of American Fight Directors, and the National Dance Education Organization.

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Kareem Dixon (he/him)

Sacred Concert Choreographer— March 2024

Born in California, Kareem R. Dixon began his life in the arts as a child in New York City, as a vocal performer in various musical theater productions. It was at Tri-Cities VPA Magnet High School just outside of Atlanta that he discovered his passion for dance, doubling as both a Vocal and Dance major. He continued his education in the arts, receiving a Minor in Dance along with a BS in Biology/Pre-Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State University. Since living in Chicago, Kareem, also a choreographer, actor, and writer, has had the opportunity to perform in movies and music videos, travel both domestically and internationally, and collaborate with various Chicago-land companies and artists/talents such as Alliance Dance Company, Nick Cave,



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