

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Celebrating rural LGBTQ+ stories through dance:
OUT Dance Project goes on a virtual tour across rural Oregon**



OUT Dance Project

March 25-28, 2021, online

Tickets are free; donations benefit local rural LGBTQ advocacy groups
beyondboomandbust.com

CAVE JUNCTION, March 1, 2021 - Countering the myth that all LGBTQ+ people live in the city, the OUT Dance Project is launching a virtual tour of stories and dance from rural LGBTQ+ people from across Oregon.

OUT Dance Project is a community-engaged dance project based on stories collected from rural LGBTQ+ people across Oregon. The mission of the project is to lift up these stories and create opportunities for rural LGBTQ+ people across the state to connect. Lead artists Eliot Feenstra & Sophie Traub, who live in the Illinois Valley, are working with renowned choreographers Mizu Desierto, Crystal Sasaki, and Snowflake Calvert to create original dance pieces based on 10 rural LGBTQ+ stories from across Oregon. The virtual performances will be livestreamed March 25-28, 2021.

The process has brought together LGBTQ2S+ artists from across Oregon who are working together on Zoom. The stories paint a vibrant and complex picture of rural queer lives. “As queer folks living in rural Oregon we know how hard feeling like ‘the only one’ can be--even though we *are* here,” said artistic director Eliot Feenstra. In response to a 2020 survey from the Rogue Action Center for LGBTQ+ people in Josephine & Jackson counties, 100% of queer youth between the ages of 13 and 17 reported feeling lonely, and 86% of people who responded reported feeling like they need to leave the area to live a good life. Co-director Sophie Traub added, “Hearing stories that reflect your experience is a critical part of addressing the loneliness that often accompanies being rural & queer.”

The project is supported by Oregon's Alliance for Suicide Prevention which is focusing on the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ communities. This is the third project of Beyond Boom & Bust, an initiative exploring the cultivation of rural economic and social resilience through the performing arts.

Audiences can register online at beyondboomandbust.com to receive a link to the performance, which will be livestreamed on HowlRound, an online streaming platform for performance. The shows are free but each show will be "hosted" by a local rural LGBTQ+ advocacy organization that will receive half of any donations. The performances will also be recorded and archived at the Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest.

Tickets & event information

OUT Dance Projects performances will take place online on Thursday, March 25 at 6pm; Friday, March 26 at 6pm; Saturday, March 27 at 1pm and 6pm; and Sunday, March 28 at 1pm and 6pm. Tickets are free, with a suggested donation that will benefit a local organization supporting LGBTQ+ people. For tickets, visit www.beyondboomandbust.com or email boomandbust.info@gmail.com.

OUT Dance Project performances will be livestreamed through Howlround, an online streaming platform for performance, and the link will be public. We ask audience members to RSVP for shows through Brown Paper Tickets (links available on website). The Howlround link will be sent to everyone registered before the show.

Facilitated community dialogues will take place on Zoom after each performance with the local co-hosts and the OUT Dance Project artists. Zoom links for the Dialogue will be provided during each livestream performance.

The shows are in two sets of five pieces (Set A and B). If there is a show hosted in your community, you are encouraged to attend that performance; all shows are open to everyone. Shows will be virtually 'hosted' in communities across the state, as follows:

Set A: Thursday at 6pm in Wallowa County in partnership with Safe Harbors; Saturday at 6pm in Josephine & Jackson County in partnership with Native Womanshare and the LGBTQ+ Listening Project; Sunday at 1pm in Klamath Falls in partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Klamath County Social Justice Committee and Klamath Falls Friends Church

Set B: Friday at 6pm Lincoln City in partnership with the Lincoln City Cultural Center and the Bravery Center; Saturday at 1pm in Harney County in partnership with the Rural Alliance for Diversity; Sunday at 6pm in Prineville in partnership with H.O.R.S.E.S. on the Ranch and Prideville.

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About the artists

Lead Artists: Eliot Feenstra and Sophie Traub are LGBTQ+ artists living in the Illinois Valley in southwestern Oregon. Eliot Feenstra is a transgender activist and artist who has been engaged with rural queer organizing in southern Oregon since 2012, including hosting workshops, gatherings, and working with the Rogue Action Center's LGBTQ+ Listening Project. More info about his work can be found at www.eliotfeenstra.com. Sophie Traub is a genderfluid queer performing artist, actor and theatre/film creator with extensive strategic, artistic leadership experience through their work as Programming Director for The School of Making Thinking.

Choreographers: Snowflake Calvert, Mizu Desierto, Crystal Sasaki

Dancers: Link LoPresti, Lara Pacheco, Emanuel Colombo, Chaya, Fern, Amanaka, Mary Rose, and Juniper, z behlen, Nicholas Wakeman, Mia OS, Bianca "Fox" Ballara, Sophie Traub, Eliot Feenstra

Writers: Alex Sylvester, Bridgette Extraordinaire, Casifer Nash, Joni Renee Whitworth, H. Ní Aódagáin, Kelly Riggie, Kayla Wade, Casey Davenport, Lycan Coss

Production Team: Eliot Feenstra, Megan Cornelius, Alex Gaylon

About Beyond Boom & Bust

Beyond Boom & Bust is a multi-year initiative exploring the cultivation of rural economic and social resilience through performance. The project launched with the development of the original documentary dance-theatre piece *The (w)HOLE*, based on interviews with Illinois Valley community members about the economy, visions for the future, and what wealth means. Since then, Beyond Boom & Bust co-produced *Shelter-In-Plays*, a responsive online theatre festival of original works presented at the onset of COVID 19 and aimed at raising morale and connecting people virtually during a time of physical isolation. *Shelter-in-Plays* raised over \$3000 for local COVID relief efforts. *OUT Dance Project*, Beyond Boom & Bust's third initiative, aims to build resilience by connecting rural queers through story and dance.

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