

## **Buddies announces programming, and a new format, for The Rhubarb Festival**

**February 2021**

[buddiesinbadtimes.com/rhubarb](http://buddiesinbadtimes.com/rhubarb)

Amidst an absence of live performance on our stages (and across the city) this season, **The Rhubarb Festival** leans into its spirit of experimentation with a new incarnation as a performative publication. In an intentional turn away from the digital, this year's Festival takes the form of a limited edition book that seeks to embody live performance and the essence of Canada's longest-running festival of new works. The format allows the audience to engage with the works however, whenever, and wherever they please.

*"In our readiness to port live performance onto our screens, I've craved liveness and its inherent insistence on attention. The Rhubarb Festival seeks to be a balm from the hours we've spent staring into Zoom or doomscrolling on the Internet. Where many have already reinvigorated their relationship to printed material over the course of the pandemic, this year's Rhubarb has artists imagining live performance for this form in ways that are at once inventive and subtle, challenging and pleasurable."* says Festival Director **Clayton Lee**.

Responding to the prompt to create performances for the page, this year's Rhubarb artists go well beyond submitting scripts. Programming ranges from a choreographic score stemming from a consent-based practice, to a fever-dream drag performance; from a meal to music inspired by the sound of turning over a page; and from colouring pages to traces of conversations that look towards the future. In addition to the projects printed in the festival publication, a number of artists will be staging interventions on the books before they're received by audiences. These projects include a plantable love note from the future, a project using electronic components and reactive ink, and custom textile book-bag. The interventions will be performed and distributed by chance across the entire set of books, making each copy truly distinct from the others.

The limited edition run of 888 books is available for pre-order now, with shipments beginning shortly before the festival's opening night on February 10.

- Festival highlights include:
  - An invitation from activist and artist **Ravyn Wngz** into a conversation about her work with Black Lives Matter - Toronto, with *Black Liberty*.
  - A set of intimate performance scores from **[ field ]** (artistic and life partners **Coman Poon** and **Brian Smith**) that hint at and experientially diffract from their ritual/performance, *1+1=0: performances in preparation for death*, a death meditation on intergenerational, queer and cross-cultural sites of love.
  - Drawings of past works by performance artist Louise Liliefeld, who asks the audience to add to the work, presented here as colouring pages.

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- **楊光奇 · Njo Kong Kie's** *Score for Page Turning* - a series of short compositions associated with an emotion evoked by turning a page.
- ***History Haunts the Body*** by British-Caribbean artist **Ashanti Harris**, a text to be read aloud as a process of embodying and amplifying the quiet history of four Guyanese women in 18th and 19th century Scotland, accompanied by incantations of care.
- New works from **Natasha "Courage" Bacchus** and **Gaitrie Persaud, Sue Balint, Marshal Vielle, happy/accidents, Ashleigh-Rae Thomas, Nicholas Herd, Ishan Davé**, and more.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

The book purposely exists in a single print run of 888 copies. It is written primarily in English, with one contribution written in English and in illustrated ASL symbols and another written partially in Chinese.

This book does not and will not exist in digital book form. We will, however, be creating an audiobook version of the book - the link to this will be e-mailed to everyone who receives a copy of The Rhubarb Festival book.

## **MEDIA INFO**

**INTERVIEWS** - Festival artists and Festival Director Clayton Lee are available for interviews in English. A list of ASL, Cantonese, French, Jamaican Patois, and Mandarin-speaking artists is available on request.

**REVIEW POLICY** - Media are invited to participate in the entire festival, but Rhubarb has a strict no review policy. For a press copy of the book, contact Aidan Morishita-Miki at [aidan@buddiesinbadtimes.com](mailto:aidan@buddiesinbadtimes.com).

**ON-LINE RESOURCE** - The Buddies website includes a Media Centre that houses press releases, images, and other pertinent information for easy download.  
[www.buddiesinbadtimes.com/media](http://www.buddiesinbadtimes.com/media)

## **Please add to your listings/announcements**

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre presents

**THE RHUBARB FESTIVAL**

Festival Director **Clayton Lee**

February 10-20, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 14, 2021

Media Contact: Aidan Morishita-Miki

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Canada's longest-running new works festival is a hotbed of experimentation, where artists explore new possibilities in theatre, dance, music, and performance art. This year, Rhubarb proposes an alternative: the creation of a physical performative publication that attempts to capture the energy of Rhubarb and, perhaps, recreate the live performance experience itself.

Over 20 artists respond to the prompt to bring performances to the page, with some projects published in the festival publication itself, and other interventions performed on the book after printing. Contributions range from colouring pages to a fever-dream drag performance; from a meal to music inspired by the turning of a page; and from choreographic scores to unearthed histories, real or imagined.

The limited edition run of 888 books is available for pre-order now, with distribution beginning shortly before the festival's opening night on February 10.

\$20 (+ shipping and handling)

[buddiesinbadtimes.com/rhubarb](http://buddiesinbadtimes.com/rhubarb) or [tickets@buddiesinbadtimes.com](mailto:tickets@buddiesinbadtimes.com)

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander Street, Toronto ON

**Contributing artists:**

Cole Alvis

Natasha "Courage" Bacchus

Sue Balint

Renato Baldin

Seika Boye

Ishan Davé

Aria Evans

[ field ]

happy/accidents

Ashanti Harris

Red Hauser

Nicholas Herd

lallafral

Louise Liliefeldt

楊光奇 · Njo Kong Kie

Gaitrie Persaud-Dhunmoon

seeley quest

Mari "Dev" Ramsawakh

Rockwell Pasta

Frankie Swift

Ashleigh-Rae Thomas

Marshall Vielle

Ravyn Wngz

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Established in 1979, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre is a professional Canadian theatre company dedicated to the development and presentation of queer theatre. Over the course of its history, it has evolved into the largest facility based queer theatre company in the world and had made an unparalleled contribution to the recognition and acceptance of queer lives in Canada.