



For Immediate Release: Theatre

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Peacock Rebellion & Lafemmebear Music Present

What Remains: Strong AF TWOC

QTPOC orgs join forces for post-pandemic storytelling at National Queer Arts Festival
June 8, 2021

May 10, 2021, San Francisco - What does post-pandemic life look like for queer and trans communities of color? "I have no fucking idea," answers LeahAnn "Lafemmebear" Mitchell. "The idea of a 'post-pandemic' is elitist because yes, this rich-ass country we live in has vaccines now, but it's not always getting to the right people, and folks in power aren't considering all bodies and the way this vaccine might affect them ... but the complexity is, it's beautiful to get vaccinated, to an extent, especially as a person who got sick with the virus. I'm happy to see people again, when it's safe. I'm just glad that we can do this, and have the art to get us through and connect when we can."

Composer, music producer, and Grammy-winning sound engineer Lafemmebear is the artistic director of *What Remains: Strong AF TWOC*, a showcase co-produced by Peacock Rebellion and Lafemmebear Music that displays Black and brown trans femmes' visual artwork in response to the past year. *What Remains* will be streamed on Youtube on June 8 at 7 PM as part of this year's National Queer Arts Festival.

In addition to co-hosting the evening, Lafemmebear is producing and directing an independent documentary on the life and work of community advocate, activist, leader, and elder Ms. Billie Cooper, an excerpt of which will premiere as the closing piece of the show. "I want people to see the importance of a Black trans narrative being told by Black trans people, holding our own legacies and honoring them for each other," says Lafemmebear.

"I've been an advocate and an activist in the community for over 35 years, and this is a time in my life that I'm going to shine," says 62 year-old Ms. Cooper, who in addition to being one of many voices for transgender and Black communities is a US Navy veteran and survivor. "I stand on the shoulders of many trans women, especially Black trans women - Ms. Major Griffin-Gracy, Sharon Grayson, Sylvia Rivera, Briana McCree, Adele Cuba, Felicia Flames, Tamara Chang, Jasmine Gee, the list goes on and on and on." The full version of her documentary contains

nearly an hour of conversation between Ms. Billie Cooper and Lafemmebear, two Black trans women speaking across generations.

What Remains will also feature the work of multidisciplinary drag artist KaiAnne Pepper, who presents two short pieces exploring themes of drowning and hopelessness, alongside the reclamation of body and joy. “We have to choose the moments we have in life that we have joy; joy is revolutionary. People of marginalized identities aren’t allowed to have joy; we’re reduced to our trauma only. Reclamation of joy, realizing that we have a responsibility to ourselves to sustain ourselves - if we can’t take care of ourselves, we can’t get anything done,” they say. “While our trauma can impact so many parts of our lives and creativity, it’s not my whole story and I am learning to honor that.”

The third featured artist is filmmaker, performing artist, and musician Davia Spain, who will premiere part of an Afro-futuristic sci-fi film about a woman with special powers escaping those who want to exploit her, finding a space where she can be free to enjoy time alone with nature. “It’s about giving herself space, even if it makes other people mad, even if taking time is not something you’re ‘supposed to do’.”

But in addition to the catharsis of being able to share work publicly during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is still a profound sense of loss, of drifting, of trying to find each other again, and trying to find proper footing in a possibly post-pandemic landscape with no definite answers. The need for rest and repaired connection after such an exhausting year echoes through the queer and trans community, as does an increased urgency for Black and brown trans femmes to claim control over resources and their own narrative agency. “Black trans folx, brown trans folx, trans femmes, we are making brilliance. We are always affecting culture - mainstream culture is always looking to us for the next thing, right? So what does it look like for us to hold our own culture, in our context, under our control, tell our own stories? Allyship is important, but it is also important for us to have the resources and power within our own hands to give to each other,” Lafemmebear insists. “People need to see the work we do, and our brilliance, and support it. Yes, monetarily.”

Calendar Editors

What: **What Remains: Strong AF TWOC**

When: Tuesday, June 8 at 7pm

Where: youtube.com/lafemmebearmusic

Tickets: Free

Info/Res: www.peacockrebellion.org or whatremainsshow.eventbrite.com

What comes after the storm? Peacock Rebellion and Lafemmebear Music present a night of world-bending, future-shaping music, poetry, visual art, and more. Born out of resistance to pandemic bullshit and the constant erasure of trans people, *What Remains* reclaims trans women of color's agency over our own stories. Led and curated by composer, music producer, and Grammy award-winning sound engineer **LeahAnn "Lafemmebear" Mitchell**, co-sponsored by the Queer Cultural Center and supported by the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, California Arts Council, Ford Foundation, Borealis Philanthropy, Funding Queerly Giving Circle, the San Francisco Foundation, Zellerbach Family Foundation, and Horizons Foundation. *What Remains* is hosted by Lafemmebear and KaiAnne Pepper and features new films by and featuring **Davia Spain**, **KaiAnne Pepper**, and **Ms. Billie Cooper**.

Hi-res Digital Images Available for Download at: <https://peacockrebellion.org/about/press>

The Artists:

LeahAnn "Lafemmebear" Mitchell is an independent music producer, sound engineer, and interdisciplinary artist living in Northern California. She is honored to be a part of such a beautiful community of queer and trans creatives of color, and hopes the seeds she sows in her art will bear fruit to feed everyone.

Ms. Billie Cooper is one of our bravest community advocates. She brings unapologetic wholeness of her Black, transgender, HIV positive, disabled veteran, cancer surviving experience. Co-founder of TransLife and many other community-centered initiatives, she was recently voted onto the Castro Cultural District Advisory Board.

KaiAnne Pepper is a multidisciplinary artist whose art interacts with drag, music, the written word, and much more. Their artistic process includes a conversation facilitated through meditation which opens the lines of communication between their body, mind, and soul.

Davia Spain is a musician and filmmaker particularly interested in exploring future world building, dimension hopping, and Afrofuturists theories of time. Her creative work has given her

the opportunity to channel energies that are lacking in her surrounding environment. She hopes that by engaging in this process she will empower herself and those around her.