

UC BERKELEY'S DEPARTMENT OF  
THEATER, DANCE, AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES  
PRESENTS

A red marker is shown in the top right corner, drawing a thick, wavy red line that curves around the text. The background is a solid yellow color.

# CURLY FRIES

A WORKING TITLE

A SIX-PART WEBISODE SERIES  
PREMIERING DECEMBER 12, 2020



PRESENTS

# **CURLY FRIES**

## **A WORKING TITLE**

WRITTEN BY

**PATRICIA COTTER, GEETHA REDDY,  
& ALEJANDRA MARIA RIVAS**

DIRECTED BY

**DOMENIQUE LOZANO**

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

**KAITLIN WEINSTEIN**

PRODUCTION  
DESIGNER

**NINA BALL**

DIRECTOR OF  
PHOTOGRAPHY

**JACK CARPENTER**

SOUND DESIGNER  
& COMPOSER

**BEN EUPHRAT**

VIDEO EDITORS

**GLYNN BARTLETT**

**MIYUKI BIERLEIN**

**PEET COCKE**

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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“Okay, we’re going to need to pivot.” This is the line I remember most from a late spring production meeting, regarding the necessity to change our thinking around a full stage production of *Fuente Ovejuna* for the fall semester of 2020. It was becoming clear that we were not going to be able to do a regular in-person rehearsal period, much less expect in-person audiences for a production in the fall.



DOMENIQUE LOZANO

I was scrambling. I knew I didn’t want to do a regular Zoom version of the show—with the technical limits of that platform as I understood it then. (This was early into the pandemic, and I didn’t know a lot about any of the technical possibilities.) I wanted to have control over design elements and, more importantly, the crafting of a story. I didn’t want the Zoom lag, the Zoom sound challenge, the inconsistent wifi...

*Fuente Ovejuna* is a big play about a tiny village in Spain. After enduring years of harassment, violence, and sexual assault by their “commander” and patron, the villagers decide to rise up, take justice into their own hands, and reclaim their dignity and humanity. And while it was written hundreds of years ago, its message is prescient and completely applicable to our time today. I didn’t think we could do that play successfully online, but it was important to me that whatever we did had to capture the moment we were living in.

I watched a lot of Zoom presentations and scoured the internet to see what folks across the country and globe were doing—how people were meeting this moment online. I came across Ryan Rilette’s production of *Homebound* at the Round House Theatre and was spellbound. Round House was using the company of actors they had hired for the season, employing living writers for each episode, and filming the episodes. The

content was responding to the moment in time. Film allowed creative control over the production. This was my launching point to start thinking about *Curly Fries*.

We are blessed in the Bay Area to have amazing playwrights in our midst, so I wanted to hire local writers as our storytellers. The prompt was: What's it like to be a Cal student, right now, in the world, living with the pressure of an unprecedented pandemic and a reckoning for racial justice, all while trying to manage going to class, paying your bills, navigating romance and friendship? I'm deeply grateful to Alejandra, Geetha, and Patricia for their brilliant and beautiful scripts, and even more grateful for their patience with my idea for the structure of *Curly Fries*. In order to respond most accurately to the moment, I wanted the writer of Episode 1 to deliver their script one week before rehearsals began, and then the writer of Episode 2 would only have one week to respond to that script and deliver the next script, and the writer of Episode 3 the same, and so on. While this created challenges for the production team and writers, it did what was most important to me on the project: create writing that was responding to the moment. We were living what the world is living: not knowing what's going to come next.

The next step was figuring out how to capture the student's work on film comprehensively, and how to shoot, communicate, and observe the filming, without any of us being in the same room—a complicated and seemingly impossible task. Oh, and did I mention we only had four hours to shoot each episode? There were many apps that came to our rescue, a few that were nearly the end of us, and mostly, it all worked out. After the shooting process, the students uploaded their footage, and that's where the delight and agony of editing began.

I can't say enough about the company of student actors who participated in *Curly Fries*. Not only were they delightful collaborators in the rehearsal process and extraordinary in their nuanced, funny, fresh, and powerful performances, but they also served as technicians on the day of shooting—managing lighting, framing, audio settings, and multiple takes! The ease with which they shifted between these positions, and the consistency and beauty of their performances, is quite astonishing.

It's impossible to speak about the success of *Curly Fries* without acknowledging the collaboration, patience, and fabulous talent of our outstanding design team (Nina, Jack, and Ben); the exceptional efforts of our production management team (Kaitlin and Hannah); the indefatigable support of our student assistants (Hayden, Jack, and Kaitlin); the patience and skills of our staff and advisors (Josh, Eugene, Emily, Chris, Wendy, Jane, Miyuki, Annie and Laxmi), led by our newly minted production manager (Jamilah); and the patient, wonderful, talented editors I had the privilege to work with (Glynn and Peet), who guided me through new territory with such generosity. I am so grateful for all of your contributions, and beyond proud that we all pulled this off—a theater department pivoting to meet the challenge and imagination of creating something new.

I hope you enjoy *Curly Fries*. I hope your sense of grace, resilience, generosity, and love are expanded by watching this work. I hope it brings respite, joy, and laughter to you. I hope you feel more connected, more human, and more hopeful.

# WRITERS' NOTES

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When Dominique called to ask if I was interested in participating in the wonderful experiment that became *Curly Fries*, it didn't take me long to come up with an answer. Because if there is one thing that the hot mess of 2020 has taught me, it's that if lovely, creative, smart, and funny humans ask you to collaborate with them, the answer has to be YES.



**PATRICIA COTTER**

Geetha, Alejandra, and I divvied up the writing of the six episodes between us. It was a writing relay race of sorts — touching on the previous characters and storylines (lightly) while using our own particular casts of actors (and their own stories) as a launching off point. Bridgit, Sam, Stephanie, Jazara, Mikee, and Matthew: the stories and insights you shared about your lives, especially during your lives in quarantine, were so inspiring that I knew I had to steal... I mean... to include them.

What a truly satisfying way to spend some of this odd year — writing for these hopeful, honest, talented, and brave students. I know that I came away from this project with more hope than I deserved.

# WRITERS' NOTES

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Theater is dead.  
Again.

With *Curly Fries*, Dominique Lozano does her part to resurrect theater here, in 2020. Dominique began by charging Patricia, Alejandra and me with developing short pieces for Zoom specifically for her actors. Could we make theater if we were never, ever, in the room together? We wouldn't know until we tried.



GEETHA REDDY

Each of the actors I was writing for hungered to be cast against type, and to tell stories they hadn't had the opportunity to tell before. Arthur and Tai were a delightful odd couple, who inspired the "when strangers meet" play: "Contact Tracing." Tai's warmth inspired Sean's reserve, and Arthur's muscularity inspired Zeke's tenderness. Eugenia and Sophanit's immediate connection was the inspiration for "Mutual Aid," a play about two fabulous women living their best pandemic lives. Their characters believe that showing up for each other joyfully is the foundation of their resilience. Sam and Jillian's ability to make bold choices made their respective cameos a pleasure to write. While all this was happening in the rehearsal room, Kaitlin Weinstein coordinated all of us seamlessly.

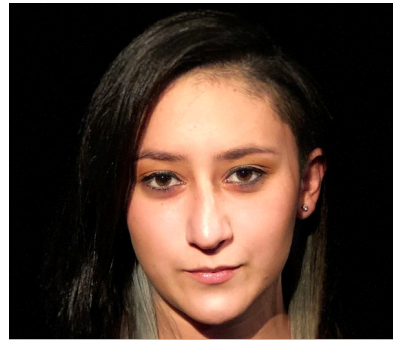
Theater people like these are the reason I love making plays, and have hope for its future.

Theater is dead. Long live theater.

# WRITERS' NOTES

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Working on *Curly Fries* was a delightful experience. Being able to write for these specific (amazing, talented, strong, and funny) students was incredibly heartwarming and allowed me to feel connected with others in a time where it is so difficult to feel so. Being with the students was great fun! Being able to hear their experiences in their own spaces, hearing their wants, their faults, their dreams, and inspirations gave me so much hope. I wanted to create some of that hope with my fellow writers.



**ALEJANDRA MARIA RIVAS**

Working with Jillian, Matt, and Michael brought me to very real moments in 2020 and it also brought me laughter. Working with Sofie, Stephanie, and Sophanit allowed me to bring in a queer story full of fun and vulnerability. I think there is hope in all of that. The students, the writers, Dominique, the production team; they all brought me hope. Artists adapt. Artists persist. We create and move forward, and all the folk above gave me that hope.

Thank you to students, for being the best teachers. Thank you to Geetha and Patricia for your words on the page and on supporting me. Thank you to Dominique for believing in me all the way through. Thank you to the production team who worked countless hours to make this working title a reality. Thank you to the audience for taking in this piece of work done by artists during this. You too, bring me hope. Onward.



# CAST (BY EPISODE)

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## EPISODE 1: GAME NIGHT

**JACKIE** Jillian Smith  
**MILES** Matthew Nelson  
**STEVEN** Mikee Loria

## EPISODE 2: CONTACT TRACING

**SEAN** Tai White  
**ZEKE** Arthur Vasconcellos Weiss  
**THIS GUY** Sam Patel

## EPISODE 3: CHARLIE

**EMILY** Brigit Comeau  
**NICK** Sam Patel  
**REBECCA** Stephanie Kazaryan

## EPISODE 4: IS CONNECTING EVEN POSSIBLE RIGHT NOW?

**ELISE** Sophanit Getahoun  
**REBECCA** Stephanie Kazaryan  
**ALEX** Sofie Herbeck

## EPISODE 5: MUTUAL AID

**ELISE** Sophanit Getahoun  
**RUBY** Eugenia Kusi-Boatemaa  
**JACKIE** Jillian Smith

## EPISODE 6: R&J

**STEVEN** Mikee Loria  
**ANA** Jazara Metcalf  
**MILES** Matthew Nelson

# COLLABORATORS

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**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

Jack Grable

**ASSISTANT PRODUCTION  
COORDINATOR**

Hannah Bailey

**ASSISTANT COSTUME DESIGNER**

Kaitlin Weinstein

**GAFFER**

Hayden Kirschbaum

**THEME MUSIC COMPOSER**

Ian D. Thomas

# TDPS STAFF & ADVISORS

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**PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Jamila Cobham

**ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Emily Fassler

**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

Joshua Frachiseur

**MASTER CARPENTER**

Christopher Weddle

**SCENIC ARTIST**

Glynn Bartlett

**PROPERTIES DIRECTOR**

Peet Cocke

**THEATER SUPERVISOR**

Eugene Palmer

**COSTUME DIRECTOR**

Wendy Sparks

**HEAD COSTUMER**

Jane Boggess

**ASSISTANT COSTUMER**

Miyuki Bierlein

**COSTUME DESIGN ADVISOR**

Annie Smart

**STAGE MANAGEMENT ADVISOR**

Laxmi Kumaran

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Robin Davidson, Myriam Cotton,  
Ben Dillon, Jean-Paul Gressieux,  
Megan Lowe, Michael Mansfield

**FACULTY PRODUCTION REP.**

Angela Marino

**DEPARTMENT CHAIR**

Joe Goode

# SPECIAL THANKS

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Christopher Herold

Ryan Rilette

Jon Tracy



## ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

UC Berkeley's Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies teaches performance as a mode of critical inquiry, creative expression, and public engagement. Through performance training and research, we create liberal arts graduates with expanded analytical, technical, and imaginative capacities. As a public institution, we make diversity and inclusion a key part of our teaching, art making, and public programming.

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