

Khristián Méndez Aguirre

Directing Portfolio

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Statement

These images represent my development as a self-produced and freelance Latinx director finding a voice at the intersection of environmental injustice, immigration, theatricality, and research. They illustrate my belief that what an audience might see as mundane –trendy coffee shops, kiddie tree costumes, hoarded piles of things, cartoons– can contain the profound –gentrification and displacement, environmental grief, fear of death, resilience–.

They also represent my commitment to caring for who and what I work with: upcycled soy bottle masks and compostable parchment paper glaciers; students who tracked the hours they spent on that production and then collectively reflected on that number; artists encouraged to advocated for their needs; theaters and people who welcomed me time and again with equal parts curiosity, excitement and healthy uncertainty.

These images also represent a relentless but positive, rigorous yet generous production process that foregrounded artist development for everyone involved, regardless of age and experience.

Beto, Beto el Abeto

BY KRISTIÁN MÉNDEZ AGUIRRE

- DEC 2023
- ZILKER BOTANICAL GARDEN AUDITORIUM

* DESCRIPTION

- * A Latinx sci-fi navidad play: A little tree who can't wait to grow and find out where all the other trees go when they're chopped gets his wish granted. Equal parts Hans Christian Andersen's *the Fir Tree*, Guatemalan Christmas Eve, and *Everything Everywhere All At Once*.

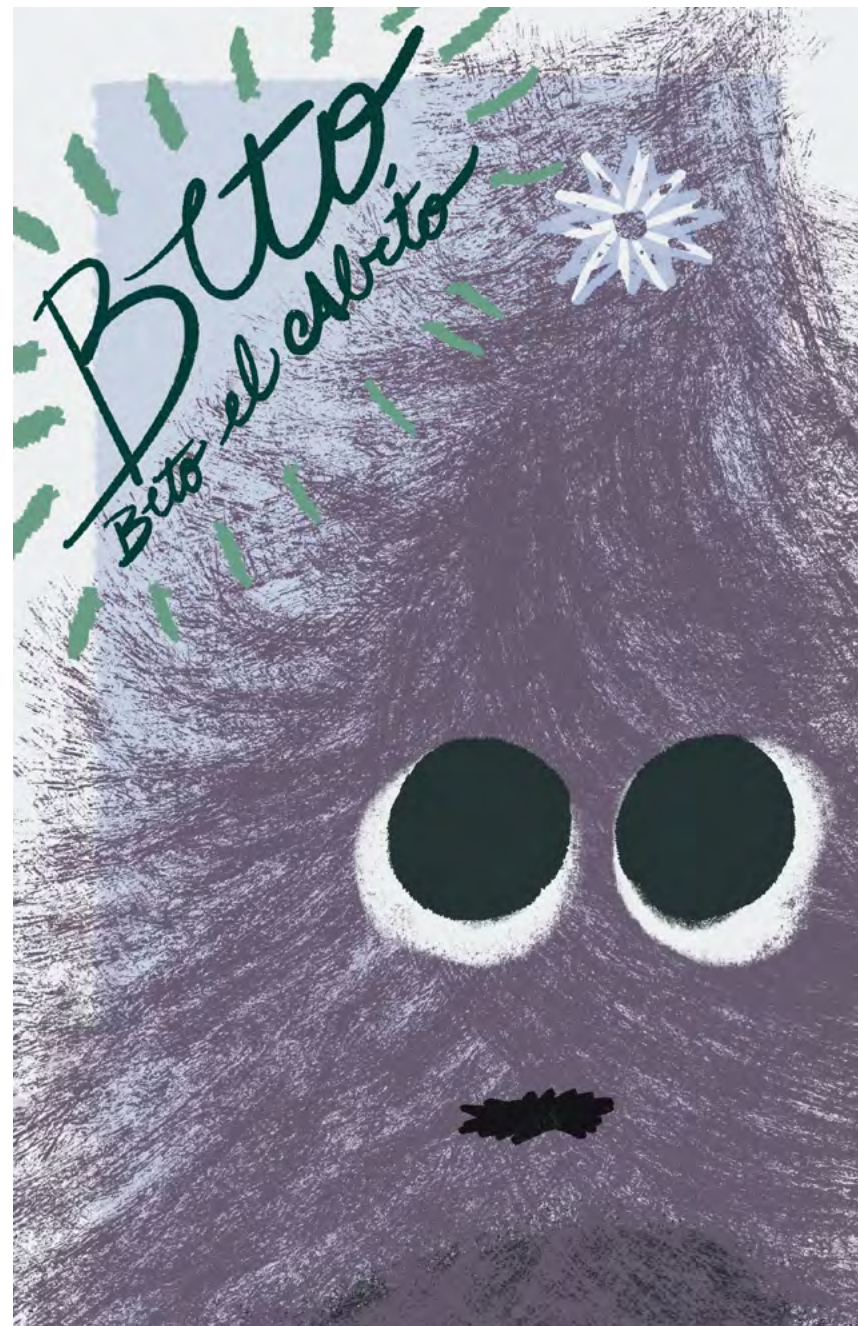
* ARTISTIC GOALS

- * How should our traditions adapt to a changing climate? and what role might theater play in changing those traditions?

* **BUDGET** ~\$31,000

* AUDIENCE REACH

- * Est. 480



Luchadora!

BY ÁLVARO SAAR RIOS

- * Date: April 2023
- * Venue: Mary Mooden Northen Theater (AEA)

* **DESCRIPTION**

- * An adaptation of the story of Hua Mulan set in the world of Mexican lucha libre. The discovery of a worn pink wrestling mask prompts Nana Lupita, a Wisconsin grandmother, to share her tale about growing up in 1960s Texas.

* **ARTISTIC GOALS**

- * How might we tell a Latinx/Mexican story that is both true to the experiences of our company without falling into the tropes that have now become ubiquitous and commercialized into "Mexican Drag"?

* **HIGHLIGHTS**

- * Audiences traveled from Houston, San Marcos and San Antonio to see this production; many of them came back to see it again from out of town with their families.
- * Shortlisted for city-wide awards. Nominations pending.



Estado Vegetal / Vegetative State

BY MANUELA INFANTE

- * Date: February 2023
- * Venue: Zilker Botanical Garden Auditorium

DESCRIPTION

- * A botanical crime in seven characters and one tree. Manuela Infante's "obra vegetal", a play that behaves like plants. It follows Manuel's a firefighter who ran his motorcycle into an overgrown tree.

ARTISTIC GOALS

- * Bilingual Production Process. What might we need to take into account for a process in which we have bilingual artists (Spanish + English) as well as artists who only speak one or the other language?
- * Environmental Stewardship Partnerships. How might theater align itself with goals from an institution dedicated to environmental conservation?

* **BUDGET** ~\$6,000

PARTNERSHIPS

- * Zilker Botanical Garden
- * Teatro Espacio
- * Interactive Nature

AUDIENCE REACH

- * 480 across 8 performances.

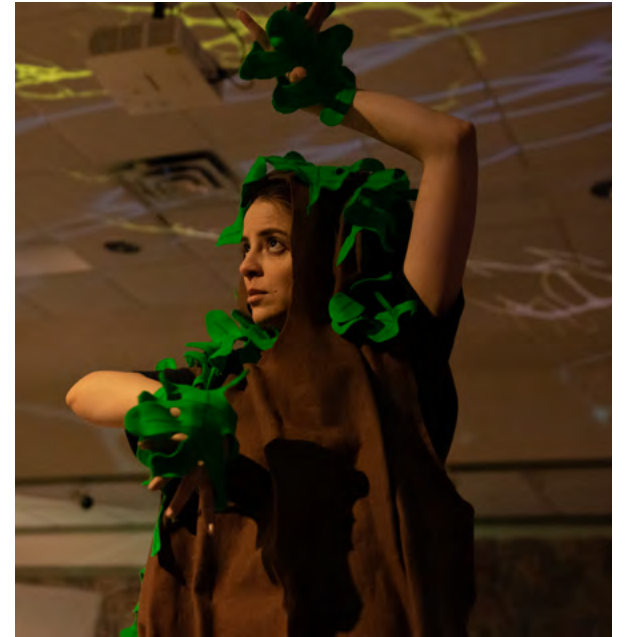
HIGHLIGHTS

- * Tickets "sold out" within 36 hours of release.
- * Developed Partnership with Zilker Botanical Garden for future Grant Applications.
- * Shortlisted for city-wide awards. Nominations pending.



Estado Vegetal / Vegetative State

BY MANUELA INFANTE



Everybody

BY BRANDEN JACOBS-JENKINS

- * Date: October & November 2019
- * Venue: WCP Black Box theater

* DESCRIPTION

- * The Austin Premiere (and 10th production) of *Everybody*. The project was designed as a production opportunity for students, directors and designers. The text calls for a lottery draw that changes the casting significantly every night.

* ARTISTIC GOALS

- * Project Management. How do we manage a rehearsal process for a play that, because of its variations driven by the lottery draw, cannot be fully rehearsed?
- * Labor and compensation. What does it mean to track our individual labor and quantify the time we put into a play production? What would the play cost if we compensated everyone fairly for all of their labor?

* BUDGET \$1,929

- * \$1,329 materials
- * \$600 royalties
- * plus a total of 2,285 hours of labor

* COMPANY SIZE 23

- * 10 actors
- * 5 designers + assistants
- * 4 directors + managers
- * 1 dramaturg
- * 3 crew

* GRANTS SECURED

- * Events and Entertainment Co-Sponsorship Board \$900



* AUDIENCE REACH

- * 375 audience members

* EXTERNAL OUTCOMES

- * Sold Out Run
- * 5 nominations for B. Iden Payne: Outstanding Scenic Design, Movement Direction, Large Cast, Direction of a Comedy, Featured Actress Performance

Everybody
BY BRANDEN JACOBS-JENKINS



Mr-Burns, A Post-electric Play

BY ANNE WASHBURN. SCORE BY MICHAEL FRIEDMAN
LYRICS BY ANNE WASHBURN

- * DEC 2018
- * OSCAR G. BROCKETT THEATER - UT AUSTIN

* DESCRIPTION

- * A production of Anne Washburn's *Mr Burns* that served as a research project for the artistic goals listed below. It was originally pitched to the Departmental season, but after it was declined, we pursued funding and partnerships to produce it anyways.

* ARTISTIC GOALS

- * Sustainability. What might it mean to construct a Zero Waste set? What might it mean to create a set from Upcycled Wardrobe?
- * Accountability. What processes can be implemented in production and rehearsal that empowers everybody to advocate for themselves?

* BUDGET **\$79,645

- * \$17,300 materials
- * \$41,115 labor
- * \$1,230 marketing
- * **Roughly \$20,000 of in-kind donations of space and time

* GRANTS SECURED

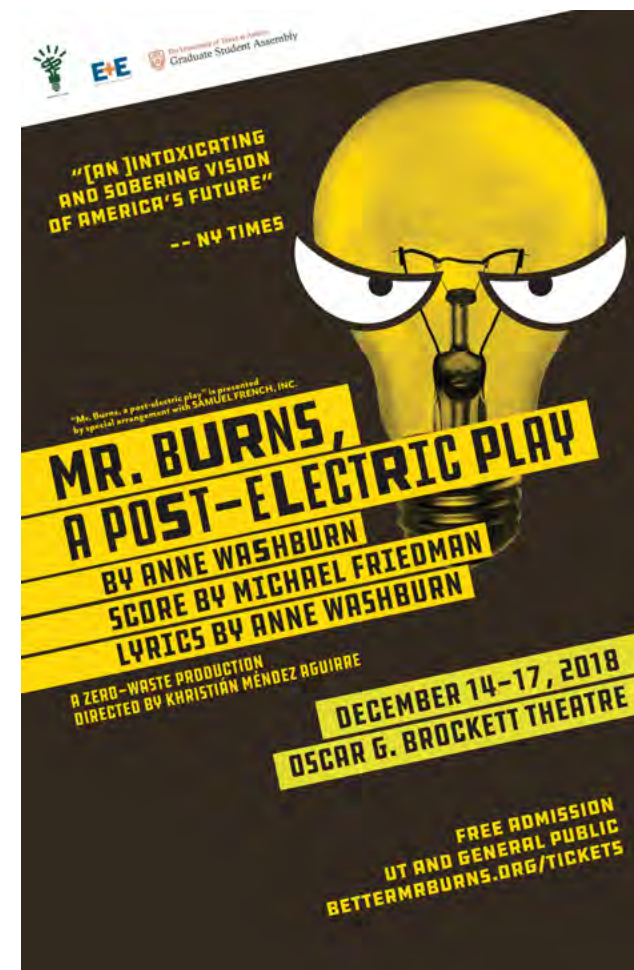
- * \$50,630 from Green Fund
- * \$2000 from Texas Parents Assoc.
- * \$1000 from Arts Diversity Council
- * \$6015 from other sources

* AUDIENCE REACH

- * 886 attendees over 6 performances

* HIGHLIGHTS

- * 3 nominations for B. Iden Payne: Outstanding Prop Design, Outstanding Mask and Headdress Design, Special Citation for Sustainable Design. 2 wins
- * Featured in full-spread Austin Chronicle
- * Sold Out Run
- * Featured as exemplar in Green New theater whitepaper



* PARTNERSHIPS

- * Green Fund
- * UT Resource Recovery
- * UT Department of Theatre & Dance
- * Texas Performing Arts

Mr-Burns, A Post-electric Play

BY ANNE WASHBURN. SCORE BY MICHAEL FRIEDMAN

LYRICS BY ANNE WASHBURN



The Tempest, *A Gentrification Story mostly by William Shakespeare*

- * OCT 2018
- * WCP BLACKBOX THEATER - UT AUSTIN

* **DESCRIPTION**

- * A production/adaptation of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, focusing on gentrification in East Austin, and foregrounding the role of hispanic women, Mexican-American and African American communities in resisting gentrification in East Austin and in the U.S. at large.

* **ARTISTIC GOALS**

- * Self-reflection. What role does theater play in gentrification itself?
- * Communicating the history of our city. How do we root our play in the specific circumstances of Austin while honoring the story?
- * How do we make a Shakespeare production that urgently answers the question: why this play now and here?

* **BUDGET** **\$2,098**

- * \$1,302 materials
- * \$525 labor
- * \$271 marketing

* **GRANTS SECURED**

- * \$1000 from Fine Arts Diversity Council

* **AUDIENCE REACH**

- * 360 attendees over 6 performances

* **HIGHLIGHTS**

- * "Sold Out" Run
- * Re-used sets
- * Archived on the national LatinX Shakespeares archive
- * Interviewed by LatinX Shakespeares scholar Carla Della Gatta for monograph



The Tempest,
A Gentrification Story mostly by William Shakespeare



Mammoth, A De-extinction Love Story

BY ADAM R. BURNETT

- * FEB 2018
- * WCP BLACKBOX THEATER - UT AUSTIN

* DESCRIPTION

- * This project was a Zero Waste production of Adam R. Burnett's *Mammoth: A De-extinction Love Story*. This was the play's third production. The story of the play has an environmental focus—it is inspired by the efforts to de-extinguish woolly mammoths through DNA cloning as a way to manage Siberian ecosystems.

* ARTISTIC GOALS

- * Sustainability. Can we make a compostable set?
- * Actor agency. How can we create a space where students are given tools to advocate for themselves in a post-#meToo world?

* BUDGET **\$1,923**

- * \$1,400 labor
- * \$260 construction materials
- * \$113.40 printed marketing
- * \$150 photography videography

* GRANTS SECURED

- * \$963 from Green Fund

* AUDIENCE REACH

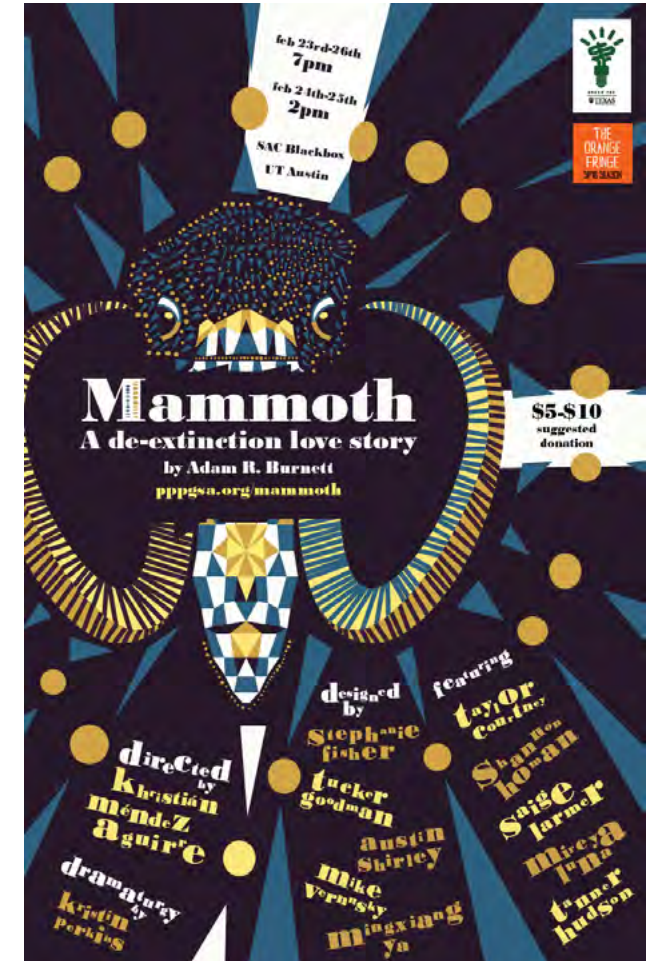
- * 97 attendees over 6 performances

* PARTNERSHIPS

- * Green Fund
- * UT Resource Recovery

* HIGHLIGHTS

- * Compostable Set diverted 240 lbs of waste from the landfill.
- * Raised the profile of eco-theater in our department and community.
- * Three city-wide B. Iden Payne Nominations: Outstanding Costume Design, Project Design and Movement Performances



Mammoth
A De-extinction Love Story
BY ADAM R. BURNETT



*Thank You
for Reading!*