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[Press Room](#)

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS  
THE INNOVATIVE THEATER COLLECTIVE RUDE MECHS  
IN THE BAY AREA PREMIERE OF *STOP HITTING YOURSELF*,  
NOVEMBER 19–22**

**Residency activities with the artists are planned on the UC Berkeley campus and in the community as part of the inaugural season of Berkeley RADICAL**

**The residency is part of a two-week partnership with Z Space that includes performances of Rude Mechs' *The Method Gun* on November 11-14**

**BERKELEY, October 8, 2015**—Austin, Texas-based theater group [Rude Mechs](#) makes its Cal Performances debut with four performances of the Bay Area premiere of the company's new acclaimed production *Stop Hitting Yourself*, Thursday–Saturday, November 19–21 at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, November 22 at 3:00 p.m. in Zellerbach Playhouse. Rude Mechs (formerly called the Rude Mechanicals) is among the country's most respected “devised” theater companies, with more than a 20-year history of creating all-original work in a collaborative model that circumvents the traditional playwright–director–actor hierarchy. *Stop Hitting Yourself*, a playful meditation on modern decadence and human nature, premiered to rave reviews at Lincoln Center Theater last season, earning a spot in *Time Out New York's* “Best of 2014” list. Part *Pygmalion*, part Busby Berkeley, part self-help lexicon, *Stop Hitting Yourself* combines 1930s Hollywood glamour and outrageous kitsch to dig into the contemporary conservative dilemma: how to honor steely individualism without disavowing the virtue of charity. As the storyline goes, once a year at the Charity Retreat, a single worthy cause is selected to benefit from the Queen's annual good deed. Families compete to find the citizens most deserving of assistance. This year, a socialite has discovered a wildman in the forest and sets out to improve him, teaching him how to behave in society so that his cause can be victorious. “This fiendishly clever satire feels incredibly fresh. An ingenious piece of devised theater...” (*Time Out New York*).

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Berkeley RADICAL residency activities are planned on the campus and in the community, including a symposium on contemporary performance practices on Monday, November 16 from 4:00–7:00 p.m. at the Magnes Collection for Jewish Art and Life with Rude Mechs artists, choreographer Trajal Harrell, and curators and critics of contemporary performance, in collaboration with UC Berkeley’s Arts Research Center. In collaboration with UC Berkeley’s Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies, Lana Lesley, Thomas Graves, and Shawn Sides of Rude Mechs participate in a public conversation: “What’s the Story? Oracles of Lost Realism” with visiting playwright Mac Wellman, whose *Murder of Crows* is being produced by the Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies (November 12–15). The talk is scheduled for Friday, November 20, from 4:00–5:30 p.m., in the Durham Studio Theater on the UC Berkeley campus. For more information on the talk, go to [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org). For more information on *Murder of Crows*, go to <http://tdps.berkeley.edu/>. Additionally, the Rude Mechs will lead a workshop on Devised Theater at the Shotgun Players rehearsal space, 1201 University Ave, Berkeley on November 21, 1-4 pm. The cost is \$50.00, and the workshop is designed for individuals with experience in devised theater. For more information, go to [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org).

Performances of *Stop Hitting Yourself* are part of a two week Bay Area residency. Rude Mechs begins its visit at Z Space in San Francisco, with four performances of *The Method Gun*, a classic play from the company’s repertoire about the eccentric acting guru Stella Burden that explores the ecstasy and excesses of performing, the dangers of public intimacy, and the incompatibility of truth on stage and sanity in real life (November 11–24).

Since 1995, [Rude Mechs](#) has created a mercurial slate of 23 theatrical productions that represent a genre-defying cocktail of big ideas, cheap laughs, and dizzying spectacle. What these works hold in common is the use of play to make performance, the use of theaters as meeting places for audiences and artists, and the use of humor as tool for intellectual investigation. Rude Mechs tours these performances nationally and abroad; maintains *The Off Center*, a performance venue in Austin for arts groups of every discipline; and runs a year-round arts mentoring program for teenage girls.

## **BERKELEY RADICAL**

In February 2015, Cal Performances unveiled Berkeley RADICAL (**R**esearch **A**nd **D**evelopment **I**nitiative in **C**reativity, **A**rts, and **L**earning), its new project to cultivate the artistic literacy of future audiences and to connect the world's most innovative artists with the intellectual capital of the UC Berkeley campus. Through carefully crafted public programs and creative artistic residencies, Berkeley RADICAL serves as a framework to expand the reach of Cal Performances by providing audiences with multiple access points to a single work of art or artist. With a program that challenges genre stereotypes and reimagines conventional performing arts practices, Rude Mechs residency is part of a series of performances and public programs titled [ReVisions](#), one of three thematic strands—[ZellerBACH](#), [The Natural World](#), and ReVisions—that merge traditional and contemporary genres, weaving intriguing ideas throughout the rich fabric of the season. For more information as public programs are announced, visit [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org).

## **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets for **Rude Mechs' *Stop Hitting Yourself*** on Thursday–Saturday, November 19–21 at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, November 22 at 3:00 p.m. in Zellerbach Playhouse are \$76.00 and are subject to change. Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org), and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to <http://calperformances.org/buy/discounts.php>.

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Cal Performances' 2015–2016 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Monday, November 16 4:00–7:00 p.m.**

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Symposium: Revisions in Time: Curating Performance Across the Arts  
Magnes Collection, 2121 Allston Way

*Installing Performance: On Stage, in Galleries, and Elsewhere*

In collaboration with UC Berkeley's Arts Research Center, Cal Performances hosts a symposium on contemporary performance practices. A discussion with artists who incorporate curation in their artwork will be led by UC Berkeley Associate Vice Chancellor of Arts & Design Shannon Jackson with Lana Lesley, Shawn Sides, and Thomas Graves from the theater group Rude Mechs, choreographer Trajal Harrell, choreographer and UC Berkeley Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies faculty Joe Goode, and artist and chair of the Department of Art Practice Allan deSouza.

*Revisioning: The Role of Curation in Experimental Performance*

Cal Performances Associate Director Rob Bailis leads a discussion from the perspective of curators and critics in contemporary performance with critic and artist Claudia La Rocco, Artistic Director of Z Space Lisa Steindler, pianist Sarah Cahill, and composer and Director of CNMAT Ed Campion.

**Tickets:** Free and open to the public.

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**Friday, November 20 at 4:00–5:30 p.m.**

Artist Conversation, Durham Studio Theater, UC Berkeley Campus

*What's the Story: Oracles of Lost Realism*

UC Berkeley's Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies and Cal Performances host a conversation between members of the Rude Mechs and visiting playwright Mac Wellman, presented in conjunction with Wellman's play *Murder of Crows*.

**Tickets:** Free and open to the public.

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**Saturday, November 21 at 1:00–4:00 p.m.**

Devised Theater Workshop, Shotgun Players Studio, 1201 University Avenue.

**Tickets:** Priced at \$50.00 and subject to change. Go to [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org) for more information.

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**Thursday–Saturday, November 19–21 at 8:00 p.m.**

**Sunday, November 22 at 3:00 p.m.**

Performance, Zellerbach Playhouse, UC Berkeley Campus

*Theater*

*Stop Hitting Yourself*

**Rude Mechs**

**Program:** The Austin-based theater troupe Rude Mechs makes its Cal Performances debut with the Bay Area premiere of *Stop Hitting Yourself*, a playful meditation on modern decadence and human nature. The genre-defying work premiered last season to rave reviews and made *Time Out New York*'s Best of 2014 list.

**Tickets:** Priced at \$76.00 and subject to change. They are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org), and at the door.

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– Cal Performances –