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ARTS
CENTER

24/
25



native comedy jam

Saturday, February 22, 2025, 7 and 9 PM

Cube

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native comedy jam

jim ruel
marc yaffee
ernest tsosie

*The performance will last approximately
one hour with no intermission.*

Programmed by guest curator Andre Bouchard

about the performance

Native comedy is having a moment. This has been in the making for some time. Five years ago, I read the book *We Had a Little Real Estate Problem* by Kliph Nesteroff, a book that, among other things, highlighted the hard work of Native comics on stages across the U.S. Since that time things have shifted for the better, and Native comics are finding a more receptive audience for their craft, largely in part because of the emergence of the sitcoms *Reservation Dogs* and *Rutherford Falls*.

Comedy was brought up in conversation after conversation in the many meetings I did around Virginia Tech and in the community. In this show we find three comics that have been working to break barriers for decades and through their hard work have trailblazed for the current wave of Native comics.

— Andre Bouchard, guest curator

biographies

jim ruel



Jim Ruel is a comedian, writer, director, producer, and actor. A member of the Bay Mills Band of Ojibwe, Ruel grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he spent the first 10 years of his career performing in comedy clubs around the Midwest. He was a finalist in NBC's *Diversity Talent Search*, which led to his first television appearance on *The World Stands Up*, taped in London. He was also featured on *Goin' Native: The American Indian Comedy Slam* on Showtime and *First Nations Comedy Experience* on FX. He currently tours with Another Indian Uprising.

Ruel also works in film and media under Frybread Productions, a Native-owned video production company. He is a co-host of the *Hollywood NDNz* podcast, highlighting careers of Native American professionals in entertainment. Ruel currently lives in Los Angeles with his girlfriend and their daughter.

marc yaffee



Marc Yaffee is a co-star of the Showtime special *Goin' Native*. Yaffee can also be seen on Amazon Prime and his own Dry Bar comedy special, *Mid-Lough Crisis*. He was a Best of the Fest selection at the 2022 Burbank Comedy Festival and was named one of the 25 Indigenous Comedians to watch by *IllumiNatives Magazine*. *Minneapolis Star-Tribune's* Tom Horgen said Yaffee's comedy "tore the house down."

ernest tsosie



Ernest Tsosie, comedian and actor, is a member of the Screen Actors Guild. Tsosie's professional acting credits include the Netflix movie *Rez Ball*, as well as multiple appearances on the popular AMC TV shows *Longmire*, *Better Call Saul*, and *Dark Winds* and NBC's *Rutherford Falls*.

As a comedian, Tsosie has entertained coast to coast, from the world-famous Laugh Factory in Hollywood, to the world-famous House of Comedy in Phoenix and even the prestigious Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Tsosie is always looking for a good time, and he's serious about being funny.

This is the first performance at the Moss Arts Center for Ruel, Yaffee, and Tsosie.

tell us what you think!



We'd love your feedback on this performance. If you complete the short survey, you can enter for a chance to win two tickets to A.I.M by Kyle Abraham on Saturday, March 22, 2025.

bit.ly/native-comedy-feedback

Please note, survey responses are anonymous. If you would like a response to your feedback, please email mossartscenter@vt.edu.

engagement events

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21

UNIVERSITY CLASS VISIT: INTRO TO POP CULTURE

Students explored the role of comedy as social and political critique in a Q&A with Native Comedy Jam comedians.

RECEPTION AND COMMUNITY CONVERSATION LUNCH

Comedians Jim Ruel, Ernest Tsosie, and Marc Yafee joined students, faculty, and staff from the Ati: Wa:oki Indigenous Community Center and Virginia Tech Indigenous Caucus for food and fun.

RECOVERY JOURNEYS WITH HOKIE WELLNESS

A Native Comedy Jam member met with members of The Roost, a Virginia Tech living-learning community for individuals in recovery from a substance use disorder, to share their own recovery journey and the role comedy and humor continues to play throughout.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22

MEET AND GREET WITH STUDENT COMEDIANS

The student-led organization Comedy Conglomerate at Virginia Tech hosted Ruel, Tsosie, and Yaffee for a morning of comedy-making and Q&A.

Special thanks to the Ati: Wa:oki Indigenous Community Center, Comedy Conglomerate at Virginia Tech, the Roost Living-Learning Community, Kaitlin Carter, Melissa Faircloth, Sean Sidky, and Amy Terry

go deeper

Comedy has the unique ability to bridge divides. A joke might reflect one's own lived experiences, while for others, the same joke could offer a window into another's lived experience. What moments resonated with you in tonight's performance, and what new perspectives did you gain through the comedians' sets?

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artscenter.vt.edu



Your gift to the Moss Arts Center helps to support access to the arts, student engagement, and cultural diversity.

Through gifts like yours, we have been able to expand opportunities for PK-12 students in our region, deepen relationships with academic partners, continue to offer \$10 tickets to performances for Virginia Tech students, and provide experiential learning opportunities for students.

Help us continue this work!



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Virginia Tech acknowledges that we live and work on the Tutelo/Monacan People's homeland, and we recognize their continued relationships with their lands and waterways. We further acknowledge that the Morrill Land-Grant College Act (1862) enabled the commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands in California and other areas in the West.

LABOR RECOGNITION

Virginia Tech acknowledges that its Blacksburg campus sits partly on land that was previously the site of the Smithfield and Solitude Plantations, owned by members of the Preston family. Between the 1770s and the 1860s, the Prestons and other local White families that owned parcels of what became Virginia Tech also owned hundreds of enslaved people. Enslaved Black people generated resources that financed Virginia Tech's predecessor institution, the Preston and Olin Institute, and they also worked on the construction of its building.





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PK-12 PROGRAMS AT THE MOSS ARTS CENTER

Each year, wildly enthusiastic students — from PK through 12th grade — fill our theatre for free matinee performances by artists from all over the world. They explore our visual arts galleries during school tours and create and learn during hands-on workshops with artists. For many students, visiting the Moss Arts Center is the first time they've ever been to a performing arts facility or gallery. Why do young people need access to the arts? Engaging in artistic activities offers a wide range of skills that they will use throughout their lives.

Learn more at bit.ly/moss-k12.

MOSS ARTS CENTER

Through Sun.,
March 30, 2025



Shaunté Gates *This Is Not a Test*

Ruth C. Horton Gallery

Washington, D.C.-based artist Shaunté Gates' solo exhibition features a survey of mixed-media paintings and densely layered works that combine photography, painting, collage, and found materials, resulting in surreal, dreamlike compositions that merge portraiture, landscape, and architecture.

Charisse Pearlina Weston *I saw the room but darkly dreamed it ...*

*Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery and
Sherwood Payne Quillen '71 Reception Gallery*

New York-based artist Charisse Pearlina Weston's solo exhibition engages with themes of surveillance and tactics of Black refusal by transforming materials associated with observation and control through repetition and reuse.

Free Related Event ***Beyond the Frame Gallery Tours***

Thurs., March 13, 12 PM

Moss Arts Center Grand Lobby

Charisse Pearlina Weston; pyrolytic envelop I (into the bright and distributed subject side), 2024; text etched on slumped and folded Mirropane surveillance glass and concrete; 51 1/2 x 22 x 14 1/2 inches; © Charisse Pearlina Weston; courtesy of the artist and Dr. Charles Boyd

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Carter and Janet Younger
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Helen H. Zhang
Ms. Mary J. Zody

**deceased*

ENDOWMENTS

The Moss Arts Center extends its appreciation to those donors who have established endowments in support of the arts.

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MOSS
ARTS
CENTER

george
emilio
sanchez

thurs., april 24,
and fri., april 25,
7:30 PM

 VIRGINIA
TECH.

Programmed by guest curator Andre Bouchard

Part history, part autobiography, this multidisciplinary theatre work confronts the ways courts have historically diminished the tribal sovereignty of Native nations.



SPECIAL EVENTS

CONTRA DANCE AT THE Y

Contra Dance is a traditional American dance in which couples dance in two long facing lines or in groups of four. No partner required!

Y COMMUNITY GALLERY

We are proud to announce that the YMCA at Virginia Tech is opening a brand-new community art gallery in The Y Center at 1000 N. Main St., Blacksburg. We are extremely grateful to eARTh (by Diane Relf) for sponsorship of this new space and for the generous support of Shelter Alternatives and Bell Electric.

Y BOOK FAIR

Among the many volumes of books that will be available in our annual Book Fair there will be a collection of books of local origin, authors and interest. We'll have literally thousands of books, comics, graphic novels, vinyl and vintage collectibles for you to peruse at the very best prices around so get ready!!



YOUR GUIDE TO RECYCLING AT THE Y

WHAT

Textiles (gently used household items to include books, clothing, housewares, blankets, toys, etc.)

*Thrift Shop (Blacksburg)
Please deliver to Thrift Shop dock during business hours.*

Electronics (working & non-working TV's (from Mont. County residents only)

*Thrift Shop (Blacksburg)
Please deliver to Thrift Shop dock during business hours.*

Batteries (Rechargeable batteries only)

*Thrift Shop (Blacksburg)
Bring inside to Recycling Station.
Each item will need to be individually bagged. Bags and tape will be provided.*

CFL's, Ink Jet cartridges, rechargeable batteries

*Thrift Shop (Blacksburg)
Bring inside to Recycling Table. Each item will need to be individually bagged. Bags and tape will be provided.*

We love to hear from you! Feel free to send us an email at ymca@vtymca.org and we will be in contact with you soon.

Y CENTER

Thrift Shop, Pottery Studio,
Event Room, and Conference Room
1000 North Main Street
Blacksburg, VA 24060
540-552-2633

MAIN OFFICE

Lancaster House
403 Washington Street SW
Blacksburg, VA 24060
540-961-9622
ymca@vtymca.org