

# PEDRA PEPA

VIVA LA  
PEPA

MCKNIGHT  
**ARTIST**  
FELLOWSHIPS

## Contact

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## Bio

Pedra Pepa (they/them) is a Venezuelan-raised, Minneapolis-based queer dancer / performance maker, and founder/director of Viva la Pepa, whose works are fueled by the overlapping values of Latinx and Queer cultures: melodrama, passion, decadence, and sensuality. An inaugural Jerome Hill Artist Fellow, Pedra is engaged in a transnational collaboration with Argentinian choreographer Celia Argüello, spending time in rural landscapes together to research the nature of physical encounter. Pedra weaves latinx immigrant identities, queer (gender/sexuality/activism) histories across the Americas: across time/colonizations, and nature. Their most recent solo performance and experiential gallery exhibition *TRANSUBSTAN*, was developed during a residency in sovereign indigenous territory, Guna Yala, in May '22. Their ensemble pre-pandemic work, *Holy Doña*, re-imagines the crucifixion as a queer performance ritual. It was performed in San Juan, Puerto Rico prior to its premiere in Minneapolis in 2019. Pedra co-directs the children and family theatrical production *Drag Story Hour*, which premiering their musical *Adventurama* in October 2023, with original music and puppets/scenery. *Drag Story Hour* was protested by right wing extremists and protected valiantly by hundreds of community members and our host, the St. Paul Public Libraries. Pedra also thoroughly entertains adults at night as their fabulous draglesque persona.

## What are you working on in the next two years?

Ongoing investigation with collaborators and deepening practice of queering religious iconography and healing gender violence by researching and dancing in natural landscapes and queer communities.

## Repertoire Available for Touring

### *Dónde vamos a encontrarnos* *Where will we find/meet each other?*

Co-created and performed by Celia Arguello Rena and Pedra Pepa

Premiere in Buenos Aires 2023 (earlier work-in-progress showings held in Cordoba, ARG '20, San Francisco MX '21, Fiske ARG '22)

This performance is the result of 3 artistic nature-based residencies shared with Pedra and Celia. We parted from scenes as landscape in which dramaturgy is built from a journey that weaves artificial and natural textures reinforcing the multiplicity of the senses. Working from materials collected in nature, intersected by drag, burlesque and pop, we create this land as a diverse one, in which differences

can coexist and hatch. An anti-time and anti-space territory whose inhabitants move through the shadow of a land that existed, transiting a processual ritual in which natural cycles are represented with diverse ways of existence. Through their dances they (de)compose the territory in a continuous flux of roles and learned humanities, exposing archaic imagery, erupting words and sounds over the wind, building a chorus of grief for water, broken stone, perpetual complaint.

*Touring Party:* Two performers + two production staff

*Tech:* Theatrical lighting, sound system, projections

## TRANSUBSTAN

Premiered in Minneapolis November 2022. Gallery installation with hour-long performance.

This solo work pours from a lens rooted in my Venezuelan and Caribbean nature experiences, along with my relationships to nature across my time as an expat.

This production shares constant transformation, witnessing viewership/control; sovereignty/freedom. Tracking the dematerialization of the body towards liberation. Generating experiential shared space and time, intense and immersive audio and visual journeys, at the intersection of body/sound/object/energy/video, of archive and present moment findings. A ritual performance.

*Touring Party:* One performer + one production manager

*Tech:* theatrical lighting, sound system, projections, installation space

## Holy Doña

Premiered in Minneapolis June 2019.

A reimagination of the crucifixion as a queer performance ritual. Pedra draws on their experience in Catholic school and seminary, while mining the theatricality of drag, burlesque, and Catholic mass. We must be crucified for our piggy sins to be pardoned in this high-contrast spectacle. The powerful ensemble of performers exorcize repression in a search of full individual expression.

*Touring Party:* 6 performers + 1 production manager

*Tech:* Theatrical lighting, side wings, sound system

## Drag Story Hour

Ongoing.

The Drag Story Hour's mission is to celebrate diverse, creative and healthy gender expression for children and their caring adults using the arts. Inspired by existing programs, teaching artists Pedra Pepa, Sid Sity and E Zimmer developed theatrical productions that highlight the teaching artists' performing arts based skills. Drag Story Hour has presented several seasons of more than 20 performances and a dozen guest artists, releasing books written by Pedra and E Zimmer. All shows have been free and open to the public.

