

**2023 WAGNER  
NEW PLAY FESTIVAL**

UC San Diego

ARTS AND HUMANITIES  
Theatre and Dance



# I FOUND A ZIPPER

by Milo Cramer

directed by Kim Rubenstein

Theodore & Adele Shank Theater

May 8th, 9th, 13th & June 10th @ 7:30pm

June 10th @ 2:00pm

# I Found A Zipper

by Milo Cramer

directed by Kim Rubenstein

## CAST

Janet	Gabriela D'Amico
Alien, Manager, Dr. Rudolph	Layth Haddad
Kid	Garrett Lee
Human Costume, Witch	Ellen Nikbakht
Mom	Holly Robertson
Alien, Dr. Eyelashes	Lisette Velandia
Customer Patient	Nikki Yar

## CREATIVE TEAM

Set Designer	Tzu Yu Su
Costume Designer	Ting Xiong
Lighting Designer	Taylor Olson
Sound Designer & Composer	Padra Crisafulli
Production Stage Manager	Lily Fitzsimmons
Dramaturg	Mia Van Deloo
Assistant Director	Molly Lasher
Assitant Director & Understudy	Jeffrey Speirs
Assistant Costume Designer	Natalia Darwish
Assistant Lighting Designer	Ayuna Graham
Assistant Stage Manager	Madison Novitski
Assistant Stage Manager	Angela Park
Script Production Assistant	Annais Scott
Scenic Crew	Noe Castrejón, Shaylee Prelewicz, Jose Gonzalez, Anthony Noh
Costume Crew	Jordan Davidson, Lisa Ford, Ege Catakli, Kiki Drew, Shuang Feng
Lights Crew	Sydney Primeaux
Sound Crew	Joaquin Enriquez

## CONTENT & SENSORY WARNINGS

Minor strobing effects, sexual harassment, references to medical malpractice and child abuse, slapstick violence.

## ADDITIONAL NOTE

The running time of *I Found a Zipper* is 70 minutes.

## SUMMARY

A silly little alien comes to earth on a desperate mission to capture love in a ziplock bag - only to discover the Costa-Mesa Walk-In Clinic and the U.S. healthcare system. This is a goofy-woofy adventure about having a body and longing for connection, in a sinister world where both things are dangerous.

## A NOTE FROM THE DRAMATURG

Just as the development of a new play is always changing, the world of *I Found a Zipper* is also constantly morphing and asking new questions. Beginning with the first staged reading in December, the rehearsal process for this play has been all about discovery. *I Found a Zipper* is a combination of joy and grief that deeply speaks to our dour feelings of loneliness and how to overcome them by finding genuine connection and understanding with others. At its core, this play is about searching for love in a world where so many have given up on trying to find it.

What has been useful in thinking about this play from a dramaturgical standpoint has not been just traditional research, but also true stories about common human emotions like love and grief, or phobias of mundane activities like going to the doctor. In curating my dramaturgy packet for the actors and the production team, I gathered a wide range of personal testimonials that were sparked by the longing for human connection, including poems and internet chat threads. While these methods of expression differ greatly, there lies a commonality in their intention - to conquer the feeling of loneliness by finding love.

Whether at Alien High Command or later at the Costa Mesa Walk-in Clinic, in *I Found a Zipper*, love takes on many forms and meanings. What does love mean and can it be defined? What is the true power of love, and how powerful is it? Love could have the ability to power every spaceship in the galaxy and we don't even know it. The play is confusing at times, and rightly so, as the journey of coming to terms with emotions is often a convoluted and non-linear struggle. But the struggle ends with love. Throughout *I Found A Zipper*, we are reminded that the human capacity for love is infinite so long as we cherish it, foster it, and not take it for granted.

## THE PLAYWRIGHT

**Milo Cramer (Playwright)** (they/he) is a second-year MFA candidate. Milo's solo musical *School Pictures* premiered at The Wilma in Philadelphia ("Charming from start to finish...beautifully heartbreaking" -Talkin' Broadway), and is upcoming at Playwrights Horizons. Other works include *Cute Activist* at The Bushwick Starr ("a brilliant match of material and theater...a fable for our times" -NYT), and *Minor Charcter: 6 Translations of Uncle Vanya at the Same Time* ("delightful...a spring green forum on youth's discontents" - Helen Shaw, The Village Voice), created with New Saloon and seen at The Public Theater's Under The Radar Festival. Milo is under commission from Clubbed Thumb.

## THE DIRECTOR

**Kim Rubinstein** Before coming to UC San Diego (where she is now retired) to teach acting and directing, Kim Rubinstein was the Long Wharf Theatre's Associate Artistic Director. Her productions have received numerous awards, most recently at Los Angeles' Odyssey Theatre for her productions of *Anna Christie* and *A Taste of Honey*.

Recent UCSD at La Jolla Playhouse productions include *A Raisin in the Sun*, *How to Defend Yourself* and *Streamers*. Professor Rubinstein's other teaching credits include ten years on the acting/directing faculty at Northwestern University, as well as adjunct at University of Chicago, Brown/Trinity Consortium, Wesleyan University, NTI at The O'Neill Center and an ongoing teaching gig with the School at Steppenwolf.

Professor Rubinstein has developed a systematic, embodied training synthesizing neuroscience with theatre techniques that stimulates and expands optimal creative thinking for people in all fields of endeavor. She has created and taught classes at UC San Diego called "Cultivating the Creative Mind", and has devised and taught a series of workshops on communicating research for faculty, post-docs and graduate students through the the Biology and Physical Science departments and the Graduate Division. She is also part of the Center for Empathy and Compassion's Sanford Fellowship, which trains doctors to communicate effectively with their patients.

## THE CAST

**Gabriela D'Amico (Janet)** (she/her) Gabriela is a third year theatre major having recently transferred from San Diego City College. Gabi would like to recognize her mom for all the work she's done patiently maneuvering through the healthcare system. UC San Diego credits: *The Winter's Tale* (AD), *Dance Nation* (Vanessa), *Heathers: The Musical* (Dramaturg). Other Credits Include: *Not Like You* (Director), *Twelfth Night* (Viola).

**Layth Haddad (Alien, Manager, Dr. Rudolph)** (he/him) is an undergraduate student.

**Garrett Lee (Kid)** (he/him) Garrett is a first year undergrad who is performing in his first theatre department show at UCSD. He most recently appeared onstage as Cinderella's Prince/The Wolf in Muir Musical's *Into the Woods*. He was cast in several school/community musical productions throughout his time in high school – favorite credits include: La Costa Canyon High School's *Chicago* (Billy Flynn), Ovation's *Curtains* (Frank Cioffi), and Moonlight Youth Theatre's *The Wizard of Oz* (Scarecrow).

**Ellen Nikbakht (Human Costume, Witch)** (they/she) is a second-year MFA student. Select credits: *Fun Home* (Kansas City Rep), *Indecent* (Chautauqua Theatre Company), *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Urinetown*, *Candide*, *Mr. Burns: A Post Electric Play*, *The Threepenny Opera* (Clarence Brown Theatre), *Walls: A Play for Palestine* (FringeNYC). UC San Diego Credits: *Machinal*, *A Flea in Her Rear*, *Fifty Boxes of Earth, Everybody*.

## THE CAST *cont.*

**Holly Robertson (Mom)** (she/her) is a fourth year undergraduate theatre and dance double major from New Jersey! Her UC San Diego credits include: *Bunny Bunny* (Lou and Assistant Choreographer), *50 Boxes of Earth* (Nature Ensemble), and Muir Musical's *A Chorus Line* (Cassie). As this is her last performance, Holly would like to thank everyone at UCSD for making her time here a memorable one, as she takes her next steps performing in Moonlight Amphitheater's *42nd Street!* [Hollyrobertson.com](http://Hollyrobertson.com)

**Lisette Velandia (Alien, Dr. Eyelashes)** (she/they) is a third-year theatre and psychology major from Sacramento. Additionally, she has studied at the British American Drama Academy's Midsummer Conservatory Program and at Sacramento Theatre Company's YPC. UC San Diego credits: *blu*, *limp wrist on the lever*, *Sotoba Komachi*, *As You Like It*, *Everybody*. Other select credits: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Tempest*, *A Christmas Carol* (Sacramento Theatre Company), *Doll* (Company 157).

**Nikki Yar (Alien, Customer Patient)** (she/her) is a first year theatre major from Orange County, California. She is overjoyed to be joining this stellar company for her first UC San Diego Theatre Department production, and is honored to be amongst such wonderful people. Her UCSD credits include: *Into the Woods* (Baker's Wife, Muir Musical) and *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Magenta, Muir Musical).

## THE CREATIVE TEAM

**Padra Crisafulli (Sound Designer and Composer)**(they/them), is a first-year MFA candidate in sound design, a director, and a New Jersey-Pennsylvanian. They hold a BFA in Directing from Carnegie Mellon University, and work in various capacities in plays, operas, podcasts, art installations, and games. They are a Hæth Grant Recipient through Possum Creek Games. UC San Diego credits: *blu* (SD), *Fallworks '22* (AS+VD). Other credits: *Late: A Cowboy Play* (SD + Composer), and *Mortal Digits: A Caged Bird Stands on the Grave of Dreams* (Directing, Sound, and Creative Contributor) at the Qualcomm Institute. [www.padracrisa.com](http://www.padracrisa.com).

**Natalia Darwish (Assistant Costume Designer)** is an undergraduate student.

**Mia Van Deloo (Dramaturg)** is a third-year theatre and history double major from the Bay Area. UC San Diego credits: *A Flea in Her Rear* (Assistant Director/Dramaturg), *Dance Nation* (Choreographer/Assistant Director), *BAAL* (Dramaturg), *Everybody* (Assistant Director/Understudy), *Backwaters* (Assistant Dramaturg). Other Credits: *A Chorus Line* (Choreographer), *Into the Woods* (Dramaturg), *Big Fish* (Assistant Choreographer). Mia is currently the Marketing/Communications Intern at La Jolla Playhouse.

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## THE CREATIVE TEAM *cont.*

**Lily Fitzsimmons (Production Stage Manager)** (she/her) Lily is a first year MFA student from St. Louis. She earned her BA from Grinnell College in Sociology and Theatre & Dance. After graduating, she spent the past two years working as a freelance Stage Manager, Event Manager, and COVID Safety Manager between St. Louis and Chicago. Selected credits include: *Seagull* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *King James* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *King Lear* (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival). UC San Diego Credits include *Machinal* (ASM), *blu* (ASM).

**Ayuna Graham (Assistant Lighting Designer)** is an undergraduate student.

**Molly Lasher (Assistant Director)** is a fourth-year theatre and communication double major with a history minor from Long Beach, California. She is currently in her second year serving as Artistic Director of Muir Musical. Selected credits include: *Into the Woods* (Director, Muir Musical), *A Chorus Line* (Director, Muir Musical), *The Seer* (Director, Company 157), *Taming of the Shrew* (Director, Queen Mary University of London).

**Madison Novitski (Assistant Stage Manager)** (she/they) is a first-year theatre major and film studies minor student from San Francisco, California. Selected credits: *Colors Eve* (Assistant Stage Manager, Company 157).

**Taylor Olson (Lighting Designer)** is a first-year MFA student from San Diego, California. She received her B.A. in Theatre Arts for Design and Production from California State University, Fullerton. She is the Production Manager and Resident Lighting Designer for Disco Riot, an organization all about building a movement through movement to make art culture in San Diego more relevant, impactful, and collaborative. Taylor has worked with Fresh Congress, San Diego Dance Theatre, Malashock Dance, La Jolla Playhouse, and California Ballet, collaborating with choreographers and artists throughout Southern California. UCSD Credits: *Bunny Bunny* (ALD), *Machinal* (ALD) Select credits: *Bhangin' It* (ALD, La Jolla Playhouse).

**Angela Park (Assistant Stage Manager)** (she/her) is a third-year theatre major and psychology minor student. UC San Diego credits: *Fifty Boxes of Earth* (ASM), *Machinal* (PA), *Everybody* (PA), *End Days* (Script PA). Other credits: *Hope* (PSM), *Heathers: The Musical* (ASM), *Come Fall in Love: The DDLJ Musical* (The Old Globe, SM Intern), Production Manager (Company 157, 2022-2023), Publicity Manager (Company 157, 2021-2022), *The Tempest* (Fairplay Company, Educational Development), *D.A.N.C.E* (Violinist for Musician's Club).

**Annais Scott (Script Production Assistant)** is an undergraduate student.

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## THE CREATIVE TEAM *cont.*

**Jeffrey Speirs (Assistant Director & Understudy)** is an undergraduate student.

**Tzu Yu Su (Set Designer)** is a first-year MFA student from Taiwan. She received her B.A. in Theatrical Design & Technology from Taipei National University of the Arts. UC San Diego credits: *A Flea in Her Rear* (Potiker Theatre). Other credits: 57th Golden Bell Awards (Dr. Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall Auditorium); *Afterlife Passport* (Firm of Yeh); *Uncle Vanya Is --* (Taoyuan Arts Center); *Million Creators* (Grand Mayfull Hotel); *God of Taigun* (Corner House); *Niang Party No. 2* (Riverside Live House); *Tears of Bodhisattva*, *The Legend of Geng-Yao Nian* (Taiwan Traditional Theatre Center); *Old Saybrook* (TNUA Experimental Theatre).

**Ting Xiong (Costume Designer)** is a first-year MFA student. Born in Wuhan, Hubei province, China, she was a teacher specialized in musical education before she decided to pursue an undergraduate education afterwards. She holds a BFA in Costume Design from Academy of Art University, San Francisco. She has extensive experience working on opera, theatre, and feature films. Her most recent projects include the upcoming feature film, *Fairyland* (American Zoetrope). Additional work experience includes Napa Valley Opera Festival, *The Magic Lamp* (Presidio Theatre), and *The Pirates of Penzance* (UC Santa Cruz). Her design credits include *Sonder* (film, directed by Isa Grassi), and *Blood and Ink* (play, directed by Valerie O’Riordan). She has extensive collaborative design credits including *In The Heights* (AAU 620 Sutter Theater), and *Head over Heels* (Berkeley Playhouse).



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