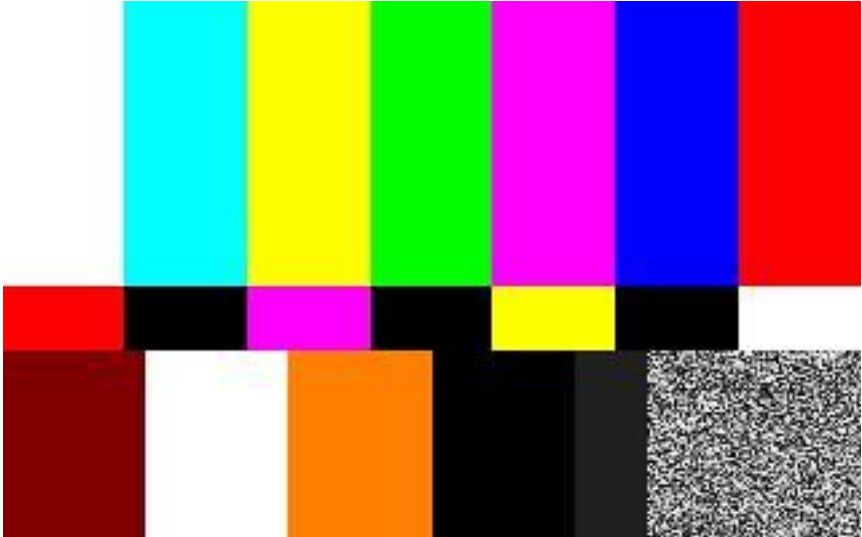


ARISTOTLE
ZHANG

&

TORONTO
FRINGE
FESTIVAL

present



SHOWSTOPPER

written, directed, produced & performed by ANJUN JIA

Presented by Aristotle Zhang

Featuring Anjun Jia
with Alex Lozupone

Stage Managers

Sound & Projection Design
Light Design

Set & Costume Design
Dramaturg
Clown Consultant
Publicity & Branding

Alex Lozupone
Praveen Wack
Alex Lozupone
Praveen Wack

Anjun Jia
Paul Malikkal
Amelia Annen
Anjun Jia

Playwright's Note

SHOWSTOPPER began in the midst of a horrible falling out with a toxic ex stage manager who mocked, berated, and made inappropriate sexual comments towards me every chance she got. The director she brought on was racist and transmisogynistic towards me to the point where I had completely lost control of my original play, every one of my ideas and insights either rejected or stolen without credit. As my mental health rapidly declined, they weaponized their proximity to whiteness and elitist ideas of 'professionalism' against me, a 23 year old neurodivergent new grad from an immigrant family with far less financial privilege or access to Broadway. Then I broke up with my ex who cheated on me three times while gaslighting me. I will miss New York, however, not those people.

Thankfully I held onto my position as main admin contact and executive producer of Something for the 2026 Toronto Fringe Festival. As Showstopper is all about, when I'm in pain I will work through it, so I wrote and bitched and rebuilt with better people until I healed myself. And what a gift it's been to work with Alex, Praveen, & Paul who can create quality work, collaborate, and add value instead of destroying me.

I am so grateful to reconnect with a country where I do have unlimited work authorization and health insurance. Anyway that was far from my first time getting traumatized by NYU Tisch. Happily still a Canadian citizen, from what I remember of my hometown, you are infinitely better than those self-absorbed fascists running on empty promises and lies.

So Free Palestine, Fuck Broadway, Long live non-Americans!
I hope you enjoy SHOWSTOPPER, I put my whole heart into it.



Anjun

Company Bios

ABOUT ARISTOTLE ZHANG

Aristotle Zhang is an independent screen and theatre production studio dedicated to delivering original storytelling by and for queer & transgender immigrants of colour and/or disability, with a focus on scripted, character-driven comedic and dramatic narrative projects. Founded in NYC in 2025 by emerging writer-creator Anjun Jia, the collective specializes in surreal genre media and intimate dramas that aim to foster connection between our universal human experiences. Aristotle Zhang has successfully produced two episodic proof-of-concept shorts and is currently developing an animated feature. SHOWSTOPPER is Aristotle Zhang's live performance debut.

ANJUN JIA (PLAYWRIGHT, DIRECTOR, ACTOR, CREATOR/EP)

ANJUN JIA was born and raised in Toronto, Canada, where he always knew his future was in the arts and humanities. Literature, fine arts, and entertainment media were his special interests since age 7. He nurtured these pursuits throughout his education in the gifted program at Silver Stream Public School, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Bayview Secondary School with his extended essay (EE) on the topic of independent intersectional feminist filmmaking, a summer screenwriting seminar at the Savannah College of Art & Design, a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Rita & Burton Goldberg Department of Dramatic Writing at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts with semesters abroad in London and Los Angeles, and the Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre's New York campus training him in improv, stand-up, and character sketch. Presently, his career goal is to staff a comedy writers' room without any rape apologists or white people in it for a television show well-suited to his narrative voice.

ALEX LOZUPONE (MUSICIAN, ENGINEER, CINEMATOGRAPHER, SOUND DESIGNER)

ALEX LOZUPONE was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, where they had no idea where their future lay. After decades of passing as a gifted STEM person, going to Stuyvesant High School and Carnegie-Mellon University, and working at places such as Intel, Bloomberg, and Google, they took an abrupt turn to focus on things they could make a more meaningful impact on the world with. This resulted in the following highlights: With friend Melvin Van Peebles, creating a

lowkey viral protest video with Van Peebles' blessing for the Occupy Wall Street movement based on Van Peebles' songs (which showed along with another short film of theirs at the 2014 Experimental Film Festival in NYC) , as well as releasing a vinyl and music video. With friend Samuel R. Delany, (who also mentioned them in their essay "Ash Wednesday") performing some archival and illustration work for some book releases. Leading an experimental focused-improvisation music project which has featured over 100 different players, and which they often used to support Brooklyn beat poet Steve Dalachinsky, with whom they recently released "tonguesnatcher" on ZoAr records. Helping organize the Fuck Fascism Fest with friend and Tiananmen survivor Rose Tang (who they also perform with from time to time). Rose says they should also mention having produced a show of Tiananmen fundraiser concerts for WKCR. They have also been involved with WikiPortraits, and with outreach to increase diversity on Wikipedia. For now, they are interested in continuing to try to do the things that they think need to be done, and for which they are well suited.

PRAVEEN WAKC (ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER)

PRAVEEN WAKC (b. 1997) is a Sri Lankan musician, artist and organizer based in Toronto. He is the artistic director and founding member of Goddess (2022-ongoing) and Perfume (2026-ongoing), a punk/electronic rock band. He holds a Master's in Physics (2021) from the University of Calgary, sings, produces and plays guitar. Wakc's work is motivated by anti-imperial sentiments of deviance, madness and radical freedom.

PAUL MALIKKAL (DRAMATURG)

PAUL MALIKKAL is a New York City based writer-director. His most recent work is the comedy short Do It To Me.