



Last West: Roadsongs for Dorothea Lange

By Tess Taylor

CAST MEMBERS

Valerie Façhman..... Lange
 linda maria girón..... Poet
 Pauli N. Amornkul.....Woman
 Kenny ScottMan
 Chloë Alexandra Parmelee.....Child

CREATIVE TEAM

Tess Taylor Playwright
 Ciera Eis Director
 Producer
 Ryan Yu Projection Designer
 Carlos-Antonio Aceves.....Additional Video Content
 Sara Witsch Sound Designer/Co-Composer
 Sean Emmett AshkensonComposer
 Randy Wong-Westbrooke Scenic Designer
 Ken Light and Sophia Bella Cutino Photo Archivist
 Rylee Grace Cagle Stage Manager/Props Design

CAST



linda maria girón (POET) (they/them) is a queer Guatemalan-american actor, playwright, musician and visual artist creating live art to inspire queer joy, empathy and collective liberation. They have worked, written, and performed for theaters across the Bay Area including Shotgun Players, Crowded Fire Theater, Golden Thread Productions, CalShakes, Berkeley Rep, Marin Theater, Alternative Theater Ensemble, SFBATCO, La Lengua, and more. Follow their work at: www.lindamgiron.com / IG: @lindamariagiron



Kenny Scott (MAN) (he/him) recent credits include productions with Crowded Fire Theater (*Limp Wrist*, *Inked Baby*, *SUBVERiTas*) TheatreWorks of Silicon Valley (*King James*, *A Distinct Society*), Aurora Theatre Company (*Paradise Blue*), Cal Shakes (*Lear*), Marin Theatre Company (*Two Trains Running*), The New Conservatory Theatre Center (*Mystery of Love and Sex*), The Forum (*Sarafael*), Idiot String (*Port Stories*), and Quantum Dragon Theatre (*Ageless*). A company member with Shotgun Players (*The Claim*, *The Light*), as well as the Oakland Theatre Project (*Hamlet*, *Mother Courage*). He attended Morgan State University, and was a member of Laney College Fusion Theatre Project.



Valerie Façhman (LANGE) (she/they) enjoys playing gods (Set, Fall '24 in W 'People of the Shifting Sands' by Nirmala Nataraj), monsters (Caliban in *The Tempest* for Berkeley Shakes, this fall), Shakespearean characters (Antipholus of Ephesus, Queen Margaret, Gertrude and Ophelia, Titania, Friar Lawrence, Mercutio, Belarius) --and certainly, historical figures. Their first was Susan B. Anthony, and they've portrayed at least 2 other actual suffragettes. Val is grateful to be free, housed and fed, acting, residing in this beautiful area with an extremely supportive partner, and close to artist Ella Miranda, the grown child she's proud of every day.



Chloë Parmelee (CHILD) (she/they) is a lesbian Filipina actor and stage manager in the Bay Area. Passionate about fostering inclusivity, Chloë works to expand representation of queerness/gender non-conformity, neurodivergence, and mental health in theatre and beyond; bringing joy, curiosity, and authenticity to every performance and collaboration. She is a recent graduate of Saint Mary's College of California with a BA in Theatre and Performing Arts. Chloë's recent performances include: *Bridging Turtle Island* (Ensemble + ASM), *John Proctors a Villain* (ASM), and *Excavating Mary Anning* (Henry De La Beche). Upcoming: *When They Ask If We Were Real* (SM) March 2026.



Pauli N. Amornkul (WOMAN)



Rylee Grace Cagle (Stage Manager & Props Designer) (she/her) stage managed several shows at Saint Mary's College of California, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, while pursuing her BA in Design & Technical Theatre, her BA in Art History, and her MA in Communication. After working as a Production Assistant within A.C.T.'s Production Department and Assistant Stage Managing their YC production of *Hadestown*, Rylee is proud to be a part of the *Last West: Roadsongs* for Dorothea Lange team. When she's not managing creative spaces,

THE CREATIVE TEAM



Tess Taylor (Playwright) (she/her) is a poet, playwright and cultural critic. Her work deals with memory and cultural reckoning. Her five poetry collections, include *Rift Zone* (Boston Globe's best books of 2020), and *Work & Days* (NY Times's best poetry books of 2016). She served as Distinguished US Fulbright Scholar to the Seamus Heaney Centre in Belfast, Northern Ireland and as on-air poetry reviewer for NPR's "All Things Considered". In 2024-25 she researched, wrote and hosted the podcast "Intimate Addresses," about six artists' letters and the history of twentieth century art, with the Getty Museum and Anna Deveare Smith. As the 2024-2025 Poet Laureate of El Cerrito, she was supported by an Academy of American Poets Fellowship to create poetry programming for West Contra Costa's diverse public schools. Taylor grew up and lives again in El Cerrito, where Dorothea Lange once photographed both the arrival of shipyard workers out of dustbowl towns and the first notices of Japanese internment. She attended Berkeley High, whose building was itself a WPA project. Her next book of poems, "Come Bite", is out from Milkweed Press in 2027. <https://www.tess-taylor.com/>



Ciera Eis (she/they) is a director, dramaturg, and producer with 10 years of experience in new play and musical development. She creates visceral theatre that uses heightened theatricality and adventurous storytelling to explore the messy, otherworldly, weird, wild, and hilarious. Her work often experiments with immersive space, intersectional queer narratives, and new media. Ciera has directed work at NYPL at Lincoln Center Theater, American Conservatory Theater, Magic Theatre, The Tank, Playground, Sonoma Valley Museum of Art Z-Space, Shotgun Players, and more. For four years, Ciera was on staff at

Berkeley Repertory's New Works Summer Program The Ground Floor. She is a founding member of The Bay Area Director's Collective, was the Resident Assistant Director for the American Conservatory Theater MFA Program, the Artistic Director of Custom Made Theatre Co, and Co-Artistic Director of FaultLine Theater SF. They have been awarded residencies through Fresh Ground Pepper, Carnegie Mellon University, The Ground Floor, Magic Theatre, Directors Lab West, and Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation.



Ryan Yu (Projection Design) (any/all) is a media designer and theater-maker based at Carnegie Mellon University. With a background in classics and innovative design, their work spans from dance to installations, with a curiosity in large-scale world-building and reimagining classical pieces for a world in constant flux. ryanyumediadesign.com



Sara Witsch (Sound Designer/Co-Composer) (she/they) is a genderqueer noisemaker, sound artist, production specialist, and lifelong learner who graduated with a BA in Theater Arts from San Francisco State University. Sara designs sound for theater, radio plays, immersive art, video games and so much more. They specialize in soundscapes and ambience. She is drawn to work that shares her commitment to thoughtful storytelling, art as a movement of revolution and resistance, and giving every voice an opportunity to be heard. They are Co-Artistic Director and Production Manager at SoundPlay Media, a sound collective exploring the world of sound specific performance art and theater-focused media. Check out Sound-Play's podcast series at barewiretheater.com.



Randy Wong-Westbrooke (Scenic Designer) (they/them) is a Berkeley-born scenic & production designer based in NYC, LA, and SF. Driven by their mixed-Asian, trans, and non-binary identities, they seek opportunities to work with diverse creative teams to tell radical, provocative, and intersectional stories that question and celebrate our collective histories. Recent credits include: *Dragon Lady* (Geffen Playhouse/Marin Theatre/Center Rep), *Paranormal Inside* (East West Players), *Thirty-Six* (Shotgun Players), *Crumbs From the Table of Joy* (Aurora Theatre Company). They have also designed sets for IAMA Theater Company, B Street Theater, and for many other new and independent projects. B.F.A. Ithaca College. M.F.A. UCLA. wongwestdesigns.com



Ken Light (Photo Archivist) (he/him) has worked as a freelance documentary photographer for fifty-five years focusing on social issues facing America. His work has been published in thirteen books. He is also the author of the text "Witness in Our Time: Working Lives of Working Documentary Photographers". His work has

been in numerous photo essays in magazines and a variety of media (electronic & motion pictures), and presented in over 250 exhibitions worldwide including one person shows at the International Center for Photography (NYC), Visual Studies Workshop (Rochester, NY), S.E. Museum of Photography, Oakland Museum and the San Jose Museum of Art. He is the Reva and David Logan Professor of Photojournalism at the Graduate School of Journalism at U.C. Berkeley His web site is www.kenlight.com



Dorothea Lange (1895 –1965) was an American documentary photographer, best known for her work for a New Deal project called the Farm Security administration work that humanized the consequences of the Great Depression. She was born in Hoboken, New Jersey, contracted polio at age 7, and attended school on Manhattan's Lower East Side. She disliked school, and wandered New York's streets, eventually apprenticing herself to prominent photographers, before traveling to San Francisco. There she opened a photography studio, married painter Maynard Dixon, and had two children. Her studio work involved shooting portrait photographs of the social elite in San Francisco. At the onset of the Great Depression, she began photographing the unfolding dilemmas she saw in the street. Her photographic studies of the unemployed and homeless—starting with *White Angel Breadline* (1933), eventually led to her employment with the Farm Security Administration (FSA). In 1935, she married economist Paul Schuster Taylor, professor of economics at the University of California, Berkeley. For the next five years they traveled through the California coast and the midwest, documenting rural poverty, in particular the exploitation of sharecroppers and migrant laborers. She lived and worked from Berkeley for the rest of her life.

In 1941, Lange became the first woman to be awarded a prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship in Photography. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, she gave up the fellowship in order to go on assignment for the War Relocation Authority (WRA) to document the forced evacuation of Japanese Americans from the west coast of the US. She covered the internment of Japanese Americans and their subsequent incarceration. Lange visited several temporary assembly centers as they opened, eventually fixing on Manzanar, the first of the permanent internment camps (located in eastern California, some 300 miles from the coast). Her photography of Japanese internment is a haunting reminder of the travesty of incarcerating people who are not charged with committing a crime.

Lange's health declined in the last decade of her life. Among other conditions she suffered from was what later was identified as post-polio syndrome. She died of esophageal cancer on October 11, 1965, in San Francisco, at age seventy. Three months after her death, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City mounted a retrospective of her work that Lange had helped to curate. It was MoMA's first retrospective solo exhibition of the works of a female photographer.

Gratitude to the Library of Congress for keeping these images in the public domain and for those structures that support American arts and American artists.

Some of Lange's images are of Imogen Cunningham and Ronal Partridge Archive. Gratitude to the keepers of those archives. Thank you also to Meg Partridge, the Ronal Partridge Archive and the Imogen Cunningham Trust for generous use of select photos.

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Last West Inc, is a non-profit sponsored by the El Cerrito Community Foundation. In theater, ticket prices cover a fraction of the costs. To support our work with a as we plan a tour of California in 2026-2027, please contact Elizabeth Dell: elizabeth@twocamelsfilms.com, or scan the QR code below:

