

*California Story* is a mythic tale about power, destruction, survival, and ultimately, rebirth.

The narrative centers around individuals fighting to survive in a broken society. As they strive for upward mobility, they must make a significant personal sacrifice, relinquishing something fundamental to their identity or values. The core of the story lies in their eventual confrontation with the profound consequences of these choices.

It is my hope that this tale prompts a deep reflection in audiences, encouraging them to consider their own life journey. What sacrifices, both conscious and unconscious, have they made to navigate and integrate into the world around them? What aspects of their true selves might have been compromised, lost, or silenced in their pursuit of progress and belonging? *Ultimately, what price are we, as individuals and as a society, truly willing to pay for advancement?*

Through an epically queer fantastical lens, the piece critically examines and reflects upon our present moment. It's remarkable, and perhaps sobering, that over the ten years Roger and I have been envisioning and developing this work, its immediacy, relevance, and necessity have only grown more apparent. It seems that hardly a day passes without headlines that eerily mirror the core themes we explore within *California Story*. This confluence of art and life positions the piece as a powerful call for global healing and a renewed focus on our collective well-being, rather than solely on individual gain.

A pivotal line from Act Two, spoken by the Pio Pico, encapsulates the driving force behind our creative endeavor: "*My survival is my resistance.*" This line not only underscores our drive for bringing this work to life at this particular moment but also highlights the critical and ongoing need for art that actively elevates the voices and perspectives of queer, trans, and BIPOC artists. For us, as creators from these communities, this creative work is not simply a choice; it is a fundamental necessity, a powerful declaration that we will not be silenced, marginalized, or forgotten in the narratives that shape our world.