



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Presents *X Rated Planet*,
a World Premiere Performance by Award-Winning
San Francisco–Based Hip-Hop Dance Theater Company Embodiment Project**

Documentary-style hip-hop dance performance blends street dance traditions, visceral poetic and theatrical elements, and live music to address the root cause of sexual violence and healing in the MeToo era



Photo by David Wilson

Thursday–Saturday, April 16–18, 2020 | 7:30PM

Post-Show Q&A, April 17, 2020

YBCA Forum, 701 Mission Street, San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO (February 12, 2020)—[Yerba Buena Center for the Arts \(YBCA\)](#) presents the world premiere of [X Rated Planet](#), an original street dance performance that engages a critical conversation around the root causes of sexual violence and the myriad journeys to healing. Performed by award-winning hip-hop dance theater company **Embodiment Project**, *X Rated Planet* seeks to confront the silencing of stigmatized experiences, which keeps sexual trauma a hidden pandemic. Illustrated through the language of hip-hop, breaking, popping, waacking, voguing, house dance, and documentary theater, the performance draws on restorative justice practices as a healing methodology to encourage resilience and radical joy in the context of community. [X Rated Planet](#) runs **Thursday through Saturday, April 16-18, 2020 in the YBCA Forum.**

Embodiment Project's multidisciplinary works frequently explore complex issues such as racism, gender, histories of trauma, and state violence to highlight narratives often silenced by social inequities. In *X Rated Planet*, artistic director and founder **Nicole Klaymoon's** signature approach to choreo-poetry emphasizes the sacred practice of voicing stories of trauma as a means to reclaim power.

“This question of how we become conscious of our body’s hidden story is the core inquiry of this work. In my study of movement, spoken word, and the human condition, I’ve learned that dance can speak, language can move, and bodies are walking vessels of history,” remarks **Klaymoon.**

In collaboration with the **Ahimsa Collective**, a restorative justice initiative founded by educator and Restorative Justice Facilitator, **Sonya Shah**, *X Rated Planet* presents real stories sourced from within the **Embodiment Project** company and interviews with formidable activists and movement leaders such as **Dr. Joy Degruy**, author of *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, and **Amikaeyla Gaston**, founder of the International Cultural Arts & Healing Sciences Institute.

Featuring twelve performers, *X Rated Planet* highlights original live music created and performed by award-winning singers and activists **Amikaeyla Gaston** and **adélàjà simon** and

interactive video art by **Meena Murugesan**. The creative team includes **Nicole Klaymoon** (founder and artistic director) in collaboration with **Sonya Shah (The Ahimsa Collective)**, **Meena Murugesan** (video artist), **George “WuKong” Cheng** (coauthor), **Shakti Butler** (collaborator), **Xoa** and **Valentino Pelizzar** (sound designers), **Aleah Clark** (costume designer), **Rachel Znerold** (costume and set designer), **Cindy Shearer** (dramaturg), and **Ben Levine** (lighting designer). Performing artists and collaborators include **adélàjà simon**, **Amber Julian**, **Amikaeyla Gaston**, **Dre “Poko Soul” Devis**, **George “WuKong” Cheng**, **Johnny Huy Nguyen AKA Johnny Rawkit**, **Keisha Turner**, **Nicole Klaymoon**, **Rama Manesh Hall**, **SAMMAY**, and **Terrence Paschal**.

TICKET INFORMATION

Regular admission: \$25

YBCA members: \$20

Senior: \$20

Student/child: \$15

ABOUT EMBODIMENT PROJECT

Founded in 2008 by Nicole Klaymoon, **Embodiment Project** is an award-winning, San Francisco–based, multidisciplinary performance company that weaves together various street dance styles, theater, spoken word, and live music to illuminate narratives silenced by inequities and inspire critical conversations and healing. Embodiment Project explores complex trauma, police brutality, and structural and everyday acts of racism in order to validate women (trans and cis), LGBTQA, youth, and people of color. It seeks to illuminate contemporary liberation movements such as Black Lives Matter, Restorative Justice, and MeToo. Their work celebrates concert dance as a platform to truthfully amplify the voices of movement leaders and their perspectives. Embodiment Project wrapped up 2016 with the sold-out *Seed Language*, inspired by Black Lives Matter, which featured both words and in-person appearances by movement cofounder Alicia Garza and former Black Panther leader Ericka Huggins. The *San Francisco Chronicle* called it “an intense performance, a bit like taking a defibrillator jolt to the soul.” Embodiment Project has collaborated with the legendary singer-songwriters gina Breedlove and Valerie Troutt (and her vocal ensemble MoonCandy) for eight years. The organization has

performed nationwide at numerous festivals and theaters, including Yerba Buena Center for the Arts' Transform Festival, Marc Bamuthi Joseph's Left Coast Leaning Festival, Yerba Buena Gardens Festival, the National Center for Choreography, San Francisco Film Festival's Co-Lab, City of Eugene Cultural Services Party on the Plaza, ODC's Walking the Distance Festival, and eight consecutive years in the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Green Show. The company recently appeared at the Joyce Theater in New York's Moving Forward: The 2020 American Dance Platform. embodimentproject.org

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Nicole Klaymoon founded Embodiment Project in 2008 and has directed and choreographed twelve original evening-length productions since its inception, including *Music of the Actualized Child* and the Isadora Duncan Dance Award–winning *Chalk Outlines* (for Valerie Truitt's original live music). Klaymoon was selected as a KQED Woman to Watch, Dance/USA Honoree Award nominee, Gerbode Hewlett Foundation's Commissioning Choreographer's Award, and Bay Area Creative Rebel honoree at Z Space. Klaymoon has been a resident choreographer at the ODC Theater, Headlands Center for the Arts, Djerassi Resident Artists Program, and the National Center for Choreography Akron. In 2014 she and Amber Julian cofounded *SEEDS*, the first hip-hop youth dance company at the ODC dance school. Klaymoon has served on faculty in the Performing Arts and Social Justice department at the University of San Francisco since 2014 and has been a guest artist at Arizona State University, Mills College, UC Riverside, UC Berkeley, and Bates College Summer Dance Festival. Her dance film *The Wind Telephone*, sponsored by the San Francisco Dance Film Festival's Co-Lab, was selected by several film festivals, including MARFA Film Festival, Bucharest INTL Dance Film Festival, and Barcelona's Choreoscope Dance Film Festival. In 2018, the National Center for Choreography Akron in partnership with San Francisco Dance Film Festival produced her recent screen dance, *Chrysalis*, which was presented at Art on 8th: Dance on Film Series at Dance Place in DC, ScreenDance Miami Light Festival, and Screen Dance International. As a solo artist Klaymoon has created and toured the dance theater production *Sixth Vowel*, choreographed by Rennie Harris and directed by Kamilah Forbes of the NYC Hip-Hop Theatre Festival. The *Miami New Times* wrote: "*Sixth Vowel* was THE BEST small theatrical production I have seen in this city in a decade." Klaymoon holds a BA in dance from UCLA and an MFA from the California Institute of Integral Studies.

Amikaeyla Gaston is an award-winning singer, activist, and executive director and founder of the International Cultural Arts & Healing Sciences Institute, which partners with governments, NGOs, educational institutions, corporations, and individuals to provide innovative programs that unlock expression through music and the arts. Gaston is the winner of eight Washington Area Music Association Awards for Best Jazz, World, and Urban Contemporary Vocalist. She has led corporations, universities, and government and nonprofit organizations through cultural competency and racial equity training. She has done expansive work in the health arena over the past twenty years and travels the world extensively as a cultural arts ambassador for the US State Department, bringing together artists and healers of all forms and from all specialties to promote healing and wellness through the arts and activism.

COLLABORATORS

Founded in 2016 by Sonya Shah, Ahimsa Collective is a restorative justice initiative and works in deep community with people who have committed acts of violence, survivors of violence, families impacted by violent crime, and law enforcement. Ahimsa Collective intersects with various movements: the restorative justice movement, the anti-oppression and racial justice movement, the anti-sexual-violence movement, and the criminal justice reform movement.

ahimsacollective.net

CREDITS

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ABOUT YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) is one of the nation's most innovative contemporary arts centers. Founded in 1993, YBCA's mission is to generate culture that moves people. Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, YBCA is committed to creating an inclusive culture that awakens personal and societal transformation. YBCA presents a wide variety of programming year-round, including performing arts, visual arts, and civic engagement. For tickets and information, call 415.978.ARTS (2787). For more information, visit ybca.org.

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