

**PERFORMANCE. IDEAS. ACTION.**

SEP 14-23

#TRANSFORMFEST

LARRY  
ARRINGTON

GIACOMO  
CASTAGNOLA

EMBODIMENT  
PROJECT

FAUXNIQUE

FOGBEAST

JESSE HEWIT

SANDRA  
LAWSON NDU

RAWDANCE

AMY  
SEIWERT'S  
IMAGERY

MINOOSH  
ZOMORODINIA

**TRANSFORM FEST FALL 2017**

**YERBA BUENA  
CENTER FOR  
THE ARTS**

# WELCOME TO YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Here at YBCA we are thinking a lot about the role of institutions in our increasingly anxious democracy. Amidst volatility and division, we believe arts institutions in particular have a vital and unique role to play in delivering on the democratic promise by restoring the importance of the public sphere in society. These are, after all, the institutions that were founded to cultivate creativity and to fuel individual and collective inquiry and imagination. These are institutions that have the capacity to lead culture.

Through the visual and performing arts, film, and arts-driven civic engagement, YBCA embraces its mission to be a cultural catalyst and a citizen institution. In addition to the making and sharing of leading edge contemporary art, YBCA is committed to being a place of convening and coalition and an incubator for game changing creative ideas. We invite you to participate as audience members, as fellow instigators, and as co-provocateurs.

Through powerful art experiences, deep and challenging content, and genuine opportunities to engage in public life, we are committed to kindling inclusive culture that cultivates empathy, awakens personal and societal transformation, and reaches for a world fueled not by hate and fear but by inspiration. This is the urgent now and YBCA is prepared.

We are so glad that you are here, we are grateful for your cultural participation, and we hope you will come back and enjoy all that YBCA has to offer.

Warmly,

**DEBORAH CULLINAN**  
CEO of YERBA BUENA  
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

## A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

**MARC BAMUTHI JOSEPH**  
CHIEF OF PROGRAM AND PEDAGOGY




YBCA isn't at liberty to disconnect art from impact. Aesthetic excellence is our legacy, but cultural movement is our mission, and as such our programs should suggest both the speed of the urban fray and the time stopping courage of inspired creativity. *Transform* is a deliberate response to these impulses. More than a festival length showcase of local artists, it is a surge forward among YBCA's curators in our attempt to locate art as a strategic asset within our civic design.

We are keenly aware that the San Francisco Bay Area is a hyper-current petri dish for market-centered innovations. In this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Summer of Love," the Bay Area is also this country's longstanding ground zero for socially progressive radical performance. *Transform* adopts the city's soulful history and adapts its big thinking present within a two week, dance and design festival that challenges us all to consider a singular thematic question: Why Citizenship?

Over the course of two weekends, YBCA invites 7 choreographers and their respective dance companies each to create world premiere works in response to the question "Why Citizenship?" Additionally, each choreographic team will also be contending with the challenge of locating these new works within a site specific built environment as imagined by renowned MIT-trained designer Giacomo Castagnola. Beyond the scope of these diverse movement based meditations, a select group of YBCA Fellows will populate our lobby with pre and post performance programming based on their own critical responses to our festival's foundational point of inquiry. The result is a platform that exercises some of YBCA's primary strategies for cultural shift: innovative art, serious inquiry, new models of audience centered convening, and the display of long incubated projects by a curated group of Fellows. *Transform* is not a festival for passive observation. The curation of the festival is intended to reveal our artists as accountable agents in service of civic impact. The question at the center of this work appears to be rhetorical, but the stakes of our social landscape don't afford us the luxury of witness without personal implication. YBCA is in the midst of a programming evolution, one where the curatorial lens of the performing arts is newly foregrounded as a true leader at the intersection of Bay Area arts and activism. *Transform* is the opening salvo of an extended, aggressive attack on prior conventions. It re-orientes familiar tropes within a future facing context, demanding participants and content makers to wrestle with the urgent question of citizenship, aspiring to beauty, and embracing the complex journey it takes to get there.





# TRANSFORM

**EMBODIMENT PROJECT & JESSE HEWIT**

THU, SEP 14 & FRI, SEP 22

**RAWDANCE & FAUXNIQUE**

FRI, SEP 15 & SAT, SEP 23

**AMY SEIWERT'S IMAGERY, LARRY ARRINGTON/  
SANDRA LAWSON NDU/MINOOSH  
ZOMORODINIA, & FOGBEAST**

SAT, SEP 16 & THU, SEP 21





## EMBODIMENT PROJECT

### ANCIENT CHILDREN

#### Artistic Director and Choreographer:

Nicole Klaymoon in collaboration with performers

**Collaborating Director:** d. Sabela grimes

**Collaborators:** Shakti Butler, Rick Butler

**Video Art:** Meena Murugesan

**Costume Design:** Kyo Yohena, Mira Blackman

**Poetry written by:** Nicole Klaymoon

**Sound Edits:** XOA and Valentino Pelizzar

**Live Sound Design:** XOA

**Music Credit:** *Pacifika* by DJ Cecil Feat. Tama Waipara

**Mask Art:** Tigre Bailando

#### Sound Healing Ritual:

Medicine Woman gina Breedlove

*Ancient Children* explores how we treat children and what childhood trauma illuminates about our collective culture. Many children—regardless of background—experience multiple early adverse experiences at home. These traumas have real implications on health, longevity, brain structure, and, according to Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, “even the way our DNA is read and transcribed.” For children of

color, adverse experiences at home are then compounded by the cumulative effects of systemic racism.

“The truth about our childhood is stored up in our body, and although we can repress it, we can never alter it. Our intellect can be deceived, our feelings manipulated, and conceptions confused, and our body tricked with medication. But someday our body will present its bill, for it is as incorruptible as a child, who, still whole in spirit, will accept no compromises or excuses, and it will not stop tormenting us until we stop evading the truth.”  
– Alice Miller

*Ancient Children* investigates the school-to-prison pipeline in which children of color are funneled from schools into juvenile incarceration, jails, and prisons. This pipeline and the state collude to strip these individuals of their citizenry; rather than living as free, participating members of their communities, they become citizens of the prison industrial complex, which is inherently dehumanizing.

This work draws on Shakti Butler’s new film *Healing Justice*, which explores restorative justice as a solution to the school-to-prison pipeline. *Ancient Children* asks how documentary film can be transposed onto the stage and intersected with movement to methodize “documentary dance theater” as a new art form.

Nicole Klaymoon is the founder and artistic

director of the Embodiment Project. The *San Francisco Chronicle* has called her work “a bit like taking a defibrillator jolt to the soul.” Klaymoon is currently a resident artist at ODC Theater, and a recipient of the Headlands Center for the Arts residency and the Gerbode and Hewlett Foundation’s Commissioning Choreographers Award. Klaymoon currently teaches a company class at Dance Mission and is a dance professor at the University of San Francisco. [embodimentproject.org](http://embodimentproject.org)

Thank you YBCA, MAP Fund, California Arts Council, Zellerbach Foundation, CASH Grant, San Francisco Arts Commission, ODC, Intersection for the Arts, Destiny Arts Center, Dance Mission Theater, Shakti Butler, Ericka Huggins, Rick Butler, Brenda Way, James Bell, Julie Potter, Svea Soll, Doug Hill, Cindy Shearer, Stella Adelman, Jennifer Norris, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, Nayo Bradbury, and Aaron Thornton for your incredible contributions to the development of this work.

### ARTIST BIOS

**SABELA GRIMES**, a 2014 United States Artists Rockefeller Fellow, is a transmedia storyteller, sonic ARKivist, and movement composer. On faculty at USC’s Gloria Kaufman School of Dance, he continues to cultivate Funkamental MediKinetics, a movement system he created that focuses on the methodical dance training and community-building elements evident in hip-hop, black vernacular, and street dance forms.

**MEENA MURUGESAN** is a choreographer, dancer, video artist, and arts educator based in Los Angeles. She creates experimental, nonlinear narratives with moving images at the intersection of live performance, video art, and activism. She is currently designing multichannel video installations for live performance with choreographers Marjani Forte-Saunders, Sita Frederick, d. Sabela grimes, and D’Lo.

Medicine Woman **GINA BREEDLOVE** is a singer, songwriter, and sound healer from Brooklyn. She tours the world with her music that she calls folkSoul, and holds sound healing circles in every city she visits. She will be releasing her third CD, *The Star*, this year, with a release party at Yoshi’s in December 2017. [ginaBreedlove.com](http://ginaBreedlove.com), [VibrationofGrace.com](http://VibrationofGrace.com)

**KEISHA TURNER** has Chicago and Brooklyn roots, and is based in Oakland. She is a former touring member of the critically acclaimed dance company Urban Bush Women. She has also performed with House/Full of Blackwomen, Afro-Urban Society, ABD Productions, Notoriety Variety, and many others. [iamearthchild.com](http://iamearthchild.com)

**TIGRE BAILANDO** is a multidisciplinary artist born and raised in Philadelphia, now based out of Oakland. Bailando performs interactive mask theater on city streets across the world and teaches mask making and performance techniques to students from preschool to adulthood. Bailando is a core member of the butoh-inspired performance company Bad Unkl Sista.

**TERRENCE PASCHAL** is a Stockton native who discovered his love of dance as a turf dancer eight years ago. He believes in the medicine inherent in dance and hopes to share it in an honest way with others.

**AMBER JULIAN** is a native of the San Francisco Bay Area. She was blessed to have discovered her passions at a very young age. She believes that art is all about exchanging deep-rooted energy in order to make change. Ashé.

**XOA** is best known for her deep, earthy cosmic rhythms and experimental twists on classic and contemporary styles. In the Spring of 2015, she recorded and produced two EPs, *Fire* and *Water*, a follow up project from her debut album, *Amble* (2013). Shortly after, she began focusing on collaborative projects that use performance art and music to heal, inspire and empower others.

**DRE “POKO SOUL” DEVIS** is a born-and-raised SF Pinay, emerging from matriarchal roots. Poko moves with the foundation of competitive gymnastics, martial arts, aerial dance, and hard-hitting animalistic synergy.

**GEORGE “WUKONG”** began his dance career in Taipei, Taiwan. In addition to his work at UC Berkeley, where he received a BA focused on art and social change, he has judged battles, taught, performed, and battled internationally.

**JOHNNY HUY NGUYEN AKA “JOHNNY RAWKIT”** is originally from Canada and now based in San Francisco. In addition to Embodiment Project, he is a member of Bay Area vogue crew House of Prolific and Lenora Lee Dance Company. As well, he is involved with the Global Street Dance Masquerade.

**SAMMAY** is a choreographer, producer, and interdisciplinary performing artist of Kapampangan, Ilokano, and Bikol. She is the founding artistic director of URBAN x INDIGENOUS and recently returned from an inter-island tour through Hawaii with an intercultural contemporary artist collective, and a solo immersion tour through her ancestral land, the Philippines. [sammaydizon.com](http://sammaydizon.com)



## JESSE HEWIT



Photo: Robbie Sweeny

### TIDES TIDES TIDES

**Concept, Scenic Design, Text, and Choreography:** Jesse Hewit

**Video:** Donald Hanson

**Sound:** Robbie Beahrs

With adapted text from *Mud*  
by Maria Irene Fornes

This is a series of proposals about what citizenship could feel like. It centralizes practices of psychosocial exchange that might almost seem apolitical, but they're really not at all. This is a futurist stab at tectonic cultural shift. The citizens here tonight are an inspiring

toy, two ghosts from a simple moment, a video, all of you/the room/poetry, and a dancing thing.

Bless the blessed fight and its fighters.

Always thanks to Isabel/Claire/Bamuthi/Jodi/Martin, Clarice Lispector, Maria Irene Fornes, Donna Haraway, Sara Shelton Mann, Amara Tabor-Smith, Ed Mock, and Ross Lefebvre.

### ARTIST BIOS

**JESSE HEWIT** (concept, scenic design, text, choreography) is a dance and visual artist currently living in San Francisco, originally from Orlando and New York. He makes artwork,

curates, writes, teaches, and currently serves various communities as curator of Aggregate Space Gallery's Friction/Function series (Oakland), and as program manager for ODC Theater (San Francisco). Hewit's performance work and writing have made the rounds, and he is grateful to have a practice, a friend or two, and a serious itch to scratch around the importance of equity, absurdity, and political abstraction.

**DONALD HANSON** (video) is a technologist working between art, design, and creative coding. His work explores interactive aesthetics, live projection, internet technology, glitch art, and parameterizing chaos. Recent experiments involve reverse engineering file formats, building self-altering websites, and creating computer-controlled video synthesizer patches. He is the creator of gifSlap, a visual performance tool used by artists and VJs around the world. In 2010 he cofounded the record label Gridwalk Media, which is nearing thirty releases of instrumental electronic music by California artists. He is currently collaborating on the design for a worldwide alternate-reality puzzle game called Ubiquitous City.

**ROBBIE BEAHRS** (sound) is an ethnomusicologist, sound artist, and acoustic ecologist. His fieldwork in Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, and the United States links archival research with collaborative ethnography, voice-driven performance practice, filmmaking, and soundscape art. His current research projects explore genealogies of throat singing in the Altai Mountains of Inner Asia, interspecies listening and voicing in western Mongolia, and vibrational sensing with Russian cosmonauts and American astronauts during long-duration space flight. Beahrs has collaborated with performance makers at FlyTrap Studios (Oakland); Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, CounterPulse, and Z Space (San Francisco); Los Angeles Live Arts; and Dock 11 (Berlin). [robeahrs.com](http://robeahrs.com)



Photo: Robbie Sweeny





Photo: Margo Moritz

## BRILLIANT ALARM

**Choreography:** Wendy Rein and Ryan T. Smith, with the performers

**Performance:** Carly Johnson, Aaron Perlstein, Wendy Rein, Ryan T. Smith, Nick Wagner, Katerina Wong

**Music Composition:** Surabhi Saraf

**Production Assistance:** Alda Tchotchiev

Recurring cycles of a reverence for intellectual prowess followed by a blinding fear of intellectual thought comprise far too much of our global history. From the Spanish Civil War to the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, the Night of the Long Batons in Argentina to China's Cultural Revolution, that fear has led to horrendous acts of mass violence against academics, journalists, and artists as well as to more subtle manipulations of cultures to create divides across nations or peoples.

In 2017, it sometimes feels like we are living on the precipice of the demise of rational thought. Science and facts have lost their meaning; intellectuals are branded as elitist; and the act of questioning, or critically engaging, with

our culture and our government is an activist choice. When we're trapped in the cycle, what does it mean to be an informed and engaged citizen?

RAWdance is an award-winning contemporary dance company known for transforming theaters and public spaces with intellectually and emotionally layered performance. Through the unique partnership of artistic directors Ryan T. Smith and Wendy Rein, the company has earned a reputation for its visually striking, kinetically charged works that consistently push into exciting territory. *SF Weekly* dubbed the company's work "edgy, sexy inventive fare designed to speak to audiences." *Critical Dance* has described it as "experimental work done brilliantly." And the *San Francisco Chronicle* heralded the artistic directors' "genuine partnership, one of the more thrilling in Bay Area dance."

A resident company of ODC Theater, RAWdance has been supported through residencies at Ucross, Marble House Project, Djerassi, and CounterPulse. The company has performed through commissions and festivals in Asia and across the United States, as well as throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. RAWdance's 2013 short dance film *since you went* has screened

at festivals on four continents. In addition to theatrical performances, Smith and Rein are committed to bringing dance directly into the public sphere, increasing access to the art. The company has performed in public spaces throughout the city, including UN Plaza, Union Square, Yerba Buena Gardens, City Hall, the Westfield Mall, and art galleries. Furthering efforts to engage the community, RAWdance launched the biannual CONCEPT series, an informal and intimate salon of contemporary dance. Named "The Best Way to Sample SF's Contemporary Dance Scene" by *SF Weekly*, the CONCEPT series has presented the work of 86 artists to date.

The creation of *Brilliant Alarm* was made possible thanks to support from Grants for the Arts, the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, ODC Theater's Resident Company program, and generous individuals, in addition to the multifaceted support of YBCA.

## ARTIST BIOS

**CARLY JOHNSON** (performer), a California native, received early training at the age of two. She continued her studies at SOTA and Alonzo King LINES Ballet, and completed her BFA at SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Dance. Johnson has had the opportunity to travel to China to perform at the International Children's Arts Festival and has performed works by Ja'Malik of Ballet Boy Productions, Carmen Rozestraten, Nelly Van Bommel of NØA Dance, Sidra Bell, Andrea Miller of Gallim Dance, Robert Moses' KIN, and Tanya Bello's Project.B.

**AARON PERLSTEIN's** (performer) formal training began with Alonzo King LINES Ballet and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. He spent four years as a company member of ODC/Dance, and three years touring the works of Alwin Nikolais in Europe with the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company. Perlstein is a fitness instructor for the Dailey Method in San Francisco and began dancing with RAWdance in 2012.

**WENDY REIN** (co-artistic director, performer), a native New Yorker, has been dancing and breaking furniture since age three. After receiving a BA from Brown University, she worked with Misnomer Dance Theater before moving west and cofounding RAWdance. In San Francisco, Rein has had the privilege of dancing with artists such as Amy Seiwert, Deborah Slater, Alma Esperanza Cunningham, and Nancy Karp, and has worked on dozens of dance film projects with RJ Muna.

**SURABHI SARAF** (composer) is a media artist, composer, and performer based in San Francisco. She is the recipient of a 2015 Fleishhacker Foundation Eureka Fellowship Award and the Djerassi Resident Artist award, and was nominated for the SFMOMA SECA Art Award in 2012. Saraf has performed at Soundwave Biennial ((5)) and ((7)); Thessaloniki Contemporary Art Biennial, Greece; Currents International New Media Festival, Santa Fe; San Francisco Electronic Music Festival; and Max Mueller Bhavan Goethe Institut, Mumbai and New Delhi, among others. She has had solo exhibitions at Galerie Mirchandani + Steirnuecke, Mumbai, and Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco. Her work has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Time Out Sydney* and *Mumbai*, the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, *Blouin Art Info*, *Art Practical*, and *KQED Arts*.

**RYAN SMITH** (co-artistic director, performer) received his BA in theater arts from Brown University. Since moving to San Francisco, he has worked with artists such as Alma Esperanza Cunningham and Stephen Pelton, and was a member of the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company for 12 years, performing in several national tours as well as internationally in India, Japan, China, and Israel.

**NICK WAGNER** (performer) is a Seattle native and a graduate of Chapman University, with a BFA in dance performance and a minor in kinesiology. Throughout his studies, he developed a particular interest in the intersection of the human body and contemporary movement. Since moving to San Francisco, he has pursued his passions as a contemporary dancer and a massage therapist.

**KATERINA (KATIE) WONG** (performer) has performed and presented work in New Jersey, New York, Beijing, and San Francisco. Since graduating from Princeton University, she has danced with RAWdance, Printz Dance Project, PUSH Dance Company, LEVYdance, Concept o4, and others. She choreographed two evening-length works with dance theater company Brickabrack, was the resident choreographer of PUSH Dance Company from 2014 to 2016, and was FACT/SF's 2016 JuMP Commissioned Choreographer. Wong's work has been presented at Z Space, ODC Theater, CounterPulse, Dance Mission Theater, Joe Goode Annex, Fort Mason, PianoFight, the Cutting Ball Theater, and more. She is also the digital strategist at Alonzo King LINES Ballet. [katerinawong.com](http://katerinawong.com)

# FAUXNIQUE



Photo: RJ Muna

## OhMyEarthGoddess

**Choreography/Creation:** Monique Jenkinson in collaboration with the performers

**Performers:**

Giamaica Zeidler

Miss Rahni NothingMore (Sep 15)

Qween (Travis Santell Rowland) (Sep 23)

Fauxnique (Monique Jenkinson)

**Costume:** Mr. David

**Video:** Phillip Andrew Lewis

**Music Arrangement:** Katy Stephan. Includes Amos, Bush, Faithfull, Mitchell, Parton

*OhMyEarthGoddess* falls into the feminist arc of my current body of work, and also considers the tensions between authenticity and artifice. What makes someone a real woman, a real American, a real drag queen? Inspired by clichéd ideas that essentialize (capital-W) Woman, and also by my very recent residency at Headlands Center for the Arts, I imagine landscape as an allegory for feminist and queer resistance and use my performance practice to reenact the audacity of that resistance. By placing my practice of artifice among the trees, grass, and hills of a national park, I draw attention to my fakery, I highlight my position as an invasive species,

as someone/something that does not belong. But I remember that the artificial is still of the earth. Plastic sequins and polyester gowns come from chemical reactions and petroleum from prehistoric fossils. As a woman who performs as a drag queen I am also an outsider, an invasive species. But I am that from which drag is made. I am feminine performance. As Fauxnique, I proclaim my use of artifice and reclaim drag from female impersonation to embody a larger idea of the feminine. I ritually perform an idealized experience of our collective femininity. As a feminist witch and also an American descendant of colonizers, I want to ritually offer myself to the earth to be swallowed up, but I know that in my finery I will be blatantly rejected. Drag resists.

This work was made possible in part with the support of Headlands Center for the Arts.

Many thanks to YBCA, Headlands Center for the Arts, and all of my collaborators.

Special thanks to Sonya Smith.

## ARTIST BIOS

**FAUXNIQUE** is the drag queen alter ego of the artist Monique Jenkinson. Informed both by a tradition of radical queer performance and theory and by classical ballet training, her work always comes from a physical place and uses drag to consider the performance of femininity

as a forceful, vulnerable, and subversive act. She performs locally, nationally, and internationally in various contexts, from theaters to museums to nightclubs. She made her story as the first cis-woman to win a major drag pageant, was a fellow at San Francisco's de Young Museum, a Goldie and Bestie winner, *SF Weekly's* "Best Performance Artist," and one of *7x7* magazine's Hot 20.

A dancer for twenty-nine years, **GIAMAICA ZEIDLER** began combining her technique and bendiness with her sense of camp in the San Francisco drag scene four years ago. Recent roles include Seymour Krelbourne in *Drunk Drag Broadway: Little Shop of Whores* and Velma Kelly in *Chicago: The Drag Experience*. She is currently playing Eliza Schuyler in *Hamilton: The Drag Experience*.

**MISS RAHNI NOTHINGMORE** has been a staple in the Bay area drag scene for 7 years and holds the titles Miss Gay Northern California, Miss Trannyshack Star Search 2009 and Champion of Stoli's Dancing with the Drag Stars. She performs for crowds from the Castro and Mission to SOMA and Tenderloin, and continues her one-woman show, *My Book Vol. 2*.

**TRAVIS SANTELL ROWLAND (QWEEN)** is an interdisciplinary performing artist, choreographer, and arts educator. He holds BA degrees in drama and dance from San Francisco State University. B'y invitation Rowland has performed with the San Francisco Opera, California Shakespeare Theater, Magic Theatre, and Curran Theatre, and has choreographed for ACT's Young Conservatory.

**MR. DAVID** is a legend as a world-class couturier and drag superstar Glamamore. His creations regularly decorate and elevate the San Francisco drag community and recently filled the de Young museum with *24 Years of More!* and store windows across the city during Pride.

**PHILLIP ANDREW LEWIS** is an artist working in a variety of media, including photography, video, objects, and sound. His creative research often responds to historical events, psychology, and phenomenology. This work consistently examines duration, perceptual limits, and attentive observation. Lewis is actively involved in collaboration with artists and various groups.



Photo: Phillip Andrew Lewis





Photo: David DeSilva

AMY SEIWERT

## THE DEGREE TO WHICH YOU'RE FREE

**Choreography:** Amy Seiwert

**Dancers:** Sarah Cecilia, Alysia Chang, Kelsey McFalls, James Gilmer, Scott Marlow, Laura O'Malley, Brett Conway

**Music:** *Direct Action* by Utah Phillips with Ani DiFranco; *El Derecho de Vivir en Paz* by Victor Jara; *Pie in the Sky* by Joe Hill; *Masters of War* by Bob Dylan; *Literally the End of the World* by Holcombe Waller; *De Colores* recorded by Joan Baez; *Ain't Gonna Study War No More*, *We Shall Not Be Moved*

**Trumpet:** Darren Johnston

I tend to view things very literally, so my immediate reaction to the question of "Why citizenship?" was informed by my relationships with my Canadian husband, my Trinidadian sister, and my Colombian cousin, who are all now US citizens. When my husband first started going to school in the United States he was only sixteen. He didn't become a citizen until his thirties, and consequently never voted in a major election until that time. He wasn't able to truly participate. Darren had only a green card as the US invasion of Iraq was ramping up, and felt limited in terms of how boldly he could make his call for peace and social justice heard, for fear of arrest and deportation. Now he steps into acts of protest and civil disobedience without such fears, and can even risk arrest if that seems truly necessary. Citizenship, in a country such

as ours where these rights are said to be guaranteed, can be viewed as the right to have a voice in the conversation.

*The Degree to Which You're Free* is inspired by protest songs that remain from past struggles and continue to inspire. The title is taken from a quote by the great orator Utah Phillips, who claimed that the degree to which you resist against those who would oppress is the degree to which you are free. The seed of the idea for this piece came when Darren played Victor Jara's *El Derecho de Vivir en Paz* (*The Right to Live in Peace*) on his trumpet at the Women's March. The entire street became silent, heard his song, and erupted in cheers when he was done. It gave me chills. In these difficult times, sometimes being an artist doesn't feel like enough, but in that moment, art nourished the struggle on a rainy night. —Amy Seiwert

### ARTIST BIOS

**AMY SEIWERT's** collaborations with artists of other disciplines and commitment to experimental work from a classical base make her a unique voice in the Bay Area dance community. She was named one of "25 to Watch" by Dance Magazine and has received a Goldie from the San Francisco Bay Guardian. Currently the artistic director of Imagery and choreographer in residence at Smuin Ballet, she was recently named artistic director designate of Sacramento Ballet.

**DARREN JOHNSTON**, Canada-born trumpeter/improviser/composer/songwriter, has collaborated and recorded in an extremely diverse cross-section of musical contexts. He has written for small jazz groups, big bands, and string quartets, and for a multigenerational choir with songs derived from a collection of immigrant letters. He has written for dance companies such as Imagery, Deborah Slater, AXIS, Robert Moses' Kin, and Liss Fain as well as for dance films.

**SARAH CECILIA** is a classically trained, creatively inclined dancer and movement artist. Born in Colombia and raised in the United States and Argentina, Cecilia has danced all her life. She has performed with Oregon Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Opera, Oakland Ballet, and Dance Theatre of Harlem, among others. She joined Imagery in 2010 and was nominated for Isadora Duncan Awards in 2012 and 2016 for her work with Imagery.

**ALYSIA CHANG**, born in Berkeley, is a freelance dancer based in San Francisco. She holds a BFA in dance and a minor in arts management from SUNY Purchase. She has danced with

the Sacramento Ballet, Sacramento Music Circus, the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, and the Radio City Christmas Spectacular in New York. Locally, she dances for the San Francisco Opera Ballet, Oakland Ballet, Ziru Dance, and Imagery.

**BRETT CONWAY** is a former dancer of Alonzo King's LINES Ballet (2002–10, 2015–16) and Nederlands Dans Theater (2010–15). He has worked with renowned choreographers Alonzo King, Jiri Kylian, Paul Lightfoot and Sol Leon, Mats Ek, Crystal Pite, and Ohad Naharin, among others. He is currently a San Francisco-based freelance artist and on faculty with the LINES Ballet educational programs.

**JAMES GILMER** of Pittsburgh was trained at Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School and the Pittsburgh School for the Creative and Performing Arts. After graduating in 2011, he joined the Cincinnati Ballet and worked with Amy Seiwert as a soloist in *I Think of You Often*. Gilmer danced with the Cincinnati Ballet for six seasons and has been an artist with Imagery since 2013. This fall he will be joining ODC/Dance.

**SCOTT MARLOWE** is a dancer and actor. From 2005 to 2015 he created and performed with LEVYdance as a company artist and the company's associate director. He is currently collaborating with Imagery, Risa Jaroslow and Dancers, and [detour dance]. Marlowe has received Izzie nominations for Outstanding Achievement in Visual Design for his 2014 evening-length work *Soar*, and for Outstanding Achievement in Individual Performance for his entire 2015–16 season.

**KELSEY MCFALLS** is from Syracuse, New York. She worked with DTSF, Milissa Payne Project, Company C, San Francisco Symphony, Peninsula Ballet Theater, American Contemporary Ballet in Los Angeles, and American Repertory Ballet in Princeton, New Jersey. During her summer studies she attended ABT, LINES, and Nutmeg Conservatory. McFalls is the COO of an educational technology company, developing technologies to maximize human potential through machine learning and theoretical neuroscience.

**LAURA O'MALLEY** was born in Phoenix and attended the Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington, DC, on a full scholarship. She has danced with Boston Ballet, the Stuttgart Ballet, the Dutch National Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Post:Ballet, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, and SFDanceworks. O'Malley is currently a freelance performer, and teaches and choreographs for LINES Ballet's education programs.





**LARRY ARRINGTON**

Photo: Margo Moritz



**SANDRA LAWSON-NDU**



**MINOOSH ZOMORODINIA**

## -OPIA-

opia  
noun combining form  
1: condition of having (such) vision  
2: condition of having (such) a visual defect  
Origin- from Greek ōps, ōp- “eye, face”  
pi-a ma-ter  
/pēə ˈmädər, pīə ˈmädər/  
Noun ANATOMY  
noun: pia; noun: pia mater  
the delicate innermost membrane enveloping  
the brain and spinal cord  
Origin: late nineteenth century: from medieval  
Latin, “tender mother,” translating Arabic al-  
’umm ar-raḳīḳa

We approach this question of citizenship through a kaleidoscopic lens to challenge the myopic gaze that often holds the question in a grip. What stories are we calling on, and how do they shape our sweetest desires for

belonging as well as our sharpest strikes of separation? In their retelling, what magic sparks and what fear flourishes?

Work supported through generous sponsorship from Joe Goode Dance Annex and the Dancers’ Group Ca\$h Grant Program.

## ARTIST BIOS

**MINOOSH ZOMORODINIA** (co-creator) is an Iranian-born interdisciplinary artist who employs video, photography, installation, and performance to make visible for audiences the emotional and psychological reflections of her mind’s eye, inspired by nature. Her work exposes and experiments with humanity’s relationship to the natural world. She earned her MFA in new genres from San Francisco Art Institute, and holds a master’s degree in graphic design and a BA in photography from Azad University in Tehran. She has been the

recipient of several awards and residences, such as an MFA fellowship from the San Francisco Art Institute; she was a finalist for the Tosa Award; and she participated in the Affiliate Program at Headlands Center for the Arts. Her work has been exhibited locally and internationally in Iran, the United States, Finland, Romania, South Korea, Canada, England, and Mexico.

**SANDRA LAWSON-NDU** (co-creator) is an Oakland-based musician. As a vocalist and songwriter, she has contributed to and collaborated on a number of live and recorded projects, including works with DJ Center (Everything in Time LP) and Nomadic Wax (Diaspora Mix Tape Volume 2). She helped found and organize the Trinity International Hip Hop Festival. She has been invited to participate in both the Zoo Labs artist residency and Revolutions Per Minute Artist Lab. Currently she is co-leading the band Bells

Atlas, who in addition to working on their own music have recently started writing original music for the WNYC Snap Judgment tour.

**GENEVA HARRISON** (performer) is a percussionist/drummer, session musician, and private teacher based in Oakland. Most recently Harrison wrapped up the 2016–17 national touring season of WNYC’s Snap Judgment with her band, Bells Atlas, which acts as the touring band for the program, live-scoring all original music. Notable national performance credits include Requiem for Katrina with Terence Blanchard, Sonya Tayeh’s You’ll Still Call Me by Name, the Bengsons’ Hundred Days, Undercover Presents: A Tribute to Björk’s “Homogenic” (musical director), and more. Harrison has written for and been featured in Tom Tom magazine and holds a BM degree from the University of Miami.

**LARRY ARRINGTON** (co-creator) is a dance artist working in hybrids of idea and practice. Her work in dance (time/space/body/whole) pivots around a desire to orient toward the capacities in us all that can glimpse unseen and unutterable horizons. Her body is her life and her life is her work.

Originally from Puerto Rico, **RAUL TORRES** (performer) began his dance training at age seven in ballet, jazz, hip-hop, and social styles like salsa and bachata. Growing up in a culture in which dance is a valuable form of social interaction allowed Torres to recognize the importance of connecting with other members of the community through movement. He moved to San Francisco in 2015, and became a member of Aguas Dance Company that same year. He has also collaborated with Presidio Dance Company, Sarah Bush Project, and Catherine Turocy in the opera-ballet Le Temple de la Gloire. Recently he was accepted into the Rhythm and Motion training program.

**SAMMAY** (performer) is a choreographer/producer and interdisciplinary performance artist of Kapampangan, Ilokano, and Bikol descent who envisions a future in which our indigenous traditions coexist with(in) our urban landscapes. She invokes performance ritual as a chosen intersection of space and time in which the body is activated as a vessel for intercession and believes her role as kinetic storyteller and healer is ancient medicine passed down from her maternal lineage. SAMMAY is the founding artistic director of URBAN x INDIGENOUS and is presently a resident artist with API Cultural Center. sammaydizon.com





Photo: Jessica Swanson

## HE'S ONE OF US

**Performers:** Melecio Estrella, Ben Juodvalkis, Patricia West

**Direction:** Andrew Ward, Melecio Estrella

**Made by:** Andrew Ward and performers

**Staging Direction:** Damara Ganley

**Musical Direction:** Ben Juodvalkis

We came on a slave ship, we came on a military vessel, we crocheted bedspreads, we died in war, we learned to play the piano, we got free, we bought a house, we bought a seat at the conference, we networked, we had kids, we danced, we made a show.

Led by Melecio Estrella and Andrew Ward, Fog Beast uses body-based practice and performance to illuminate the modern trappings of the human animal. With roots in dance theater, site-specific performance, live music, and athletics, Fog Beast approaches physical and aural curiosities with a wide range of tactics.

Fog Beast is a fiscally sponsored project of Dancers' Group.

Fog Beast especially thanks Marc Bamuthi Joseph and the staff at YBCA, Shawl-Anderson Dance Center, Mo Miner, Kara Starkweather, Ann Woodhead, Bandaloop, Joe Goode, Jessica Swanson, Krystal Harfert, Carrie LeRosenblanc, Fog Beast Donors, our ancestors, and our children.

## ARTIST BIOS

**MELECIO ESTRELLA** has been a Bay Area performing artist, director, and teacher for the past eighteen years. He is co-artistic director of Fog Beast, associate artistic director of site-reactive dance company BANDALOOP, and a longtime member of the Joe Goode Performance Group. His recent engagements include making dances on the cliffs of the Tianmen Mountain in China's Hunan province, Yosemite, Art and About Sydney Australia, Gabon Africa, Kirkenes Norway, the Kennedy Center, and creeks, living rooms, and backyards around the Bay Area. As a performer Estrella has appeared with the San Francisco Opera, Faye Driscoll, Rachael Lincoln, Scott Wells, and Damara Ganley, among others.

**ANDREW WARD** is co-artistic director of Fog Beast. He was first introduced to dance and performance through the vibrant and supportive modern dance program at Berkeley High School. Upon graduating, he attended UC Berkeley, where he continued studying and performing modern dance while earning a degree in peace and conflict studies. After graduating in 2007 Ward went on to perform

and teach in the Bay Area and internationally as a company member with the Joe Goode Performance Group, BANDALOOP, and Scott Wells and Dancers. Ward cofounded Fog Beast with Melecio Estrella in 2010.

**PATRICIA WEST** is a dancer, choreographer, and educator. She obtained her BA at UC Berkeley and her master's degree from San Jose State University. West has worked and performed with the dance companies Robert Moses KIN, Alayo Dance Company, and Zaccho Dance Theater. Currently she performs with and serves as an education coordinator for Joe Goode Performance Group. During the school year, West is the K-8 dance teacher at Bentley School in Oakland.

**BEN JUODVALKIS** composes original music for a variety of industries. He has created more than fifty scores for dance companies across the United States, in addition to composing for film, museum installations, and theater. Juodvalkis works from his studio in San Francisco as well as on location with his mobile custom-built electronic instruments.



Photo: Jessica Swanson



**AESTHETIC EXCELLENCE IS OUR LEGACY, BUT CULTURAL MOVEMENT IS OUR MISSION, AND AS SUCH OUR PROGRAMS SHOULD SUGGEST BOTH THE SPEED OF THE URBAN FRAY AND THE TIME STOPPING COURAGE OF INSPIRED CREATIVITY. TRANSFORM IS A DELIBERATE RESPONSE TO THESE IMPULSES.**

**MARC BAMUTHI JOSEPH**  
CHIEF OF PROGRAM AND PEDAGOGY





# GIACOMO CASTAGNOLA

SET DESIGNER

## STAGE FOR SOCIAL CHOREOGRAPHY



For this commissioned stage design, which invited 7 choreographers to respond to the question of “Why Citizenship?” I based my design approach on the concept of social choreography, which helped me merge my interests of dance and

citizenship. In the book *Move. Choreographing You – Art and Dance since the 1960s*, Stephanie Rosenthal described social choreography as “choreography focused on degenerated, artificial, or manipulated patterns of behavior. The choreography became the image of our own world, with its external powers controlling the physical, psychological, and spatial aspects of our actions. It thus became a mirror of socio-political structures and mechanisms of manipulation.”<sup>1</sup>

I am interested, not solely in the design of the dance area, but also in an immersive participatory experience. How to express those power structures that control our spatial patterns of behavior and actions as citizens? How to create awareness of the politics that exist in our own bodies as an audience, as individuals, as groups, and as a community at large? I created diverse seating formations to expose the political connotations that impact the body using congregations of different types of chair and seating formations that create spatial configurations and group’s shapes that generate different dance spaces.

In addition, due to the diverse approaches of each group, I developed a family of mobile devices such as ladders on wheels, stage platforms, and mobile tables and structures that give the choreographers diverse stage and spatial possibilities that can be deployed, arranged, and activated as the choreographers wish.

## ARTIST BIO:

**GIACOMO CASTAGNOLA** works in architecture, design, furniture, and public interventions. In San Diego/Tijuana he established a studio of architecture and design, Germen Estudio, with a focus on exploring and learning from the “informal” city and its urban growth without design, resulting in organizational structures through processes of urban sedimentation in time. Castagnola, originally from Lima-Peru, currently works between Mexico City and San Francisco in architecture for exhibitions that investigate new ways to present material culture and art archives, applying different construction systems and modular devices that hack the body of the visitor and put them in a different bodily relation to space, breaking the formal status of how one needs to behave in an exhibition, without any signage or labels, just choreographing the body in a more casual manner. The aim is to disturb the tacit policies that exist in contemporary museum spaces that give one the feeling of being in a bank or in a church: do not touch anything; stand behind that line; we know that you would not understand; if you understand something, good for you; please keep walking; do not stay. In his projects, the body is invited to stay.

Castagnola has produced numerous architectural exhibition projects, including *Reverberaciones / Reverberations – Arte y sonido en las colecciones del MUAC* in the Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC); *Modernidad Pirateada / Pirate Modernity* at the Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico City; *Anarchist Design project* for La Casa del Hijo del Ahuizote: Archive/ Museum/ Print shop, Mexico City; a flexible platform for presentation of archival material for *inSite: Wandering Position*, University Museum Of Contemporary Art (MUAC), Mexico City; As well as art projects such as *Common Trades: Urban Metabolism of Knowledge L.A Version* at the Armory Art Center in Pasadena, CA; Tunnel Project: Instant Herlev Institute, Denmark; and *Slow Trans Anyang: Bicycle Station and Mobile Devices for Anyang Public Art Project* (APAP), Korea.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephanie Rosenthal, *Move. Choreographing You, Art and Dance Since the 1960*, The MIT Press, London, 2011, p. 17.

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# TRANSFORM

## SPRING 2018

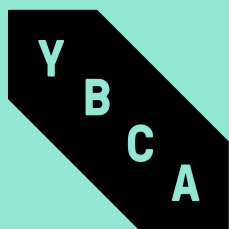
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