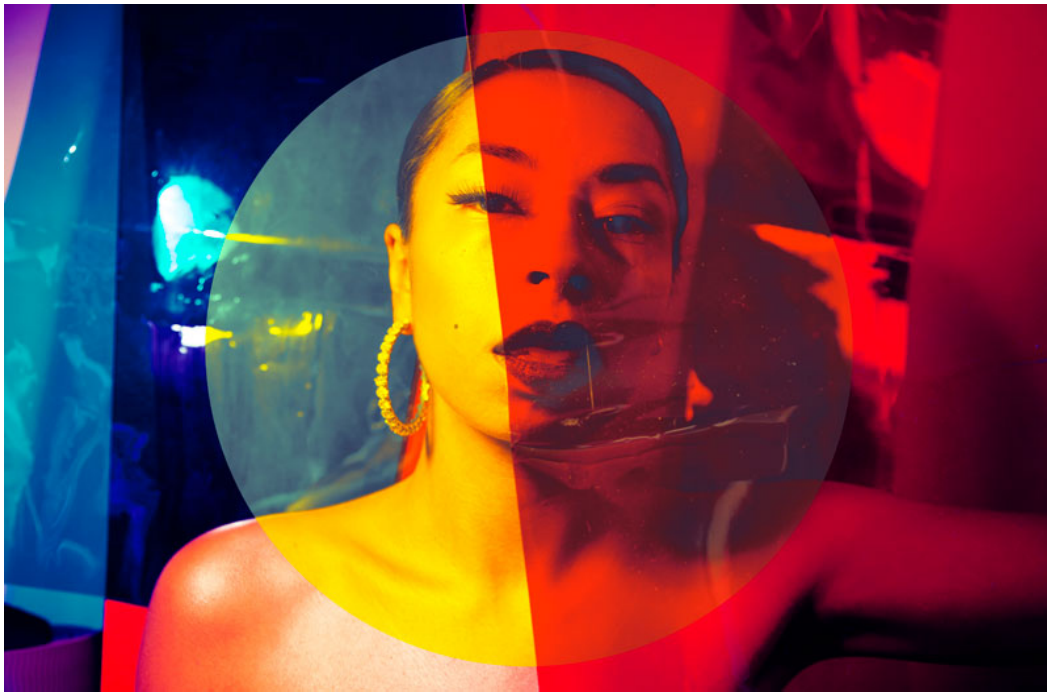


→PERFORMA●19
NOVEMBER 1→24, 2019
NEW YORK CITY



PERFORMA AND PERFORMANCE SPACE NEW YORK PRESENT
THE WORLD PREMIERE OF KIA LABEIJIA'S *UNTITLED, THE BLACK ACT*



LaBeija's First Large-Scale Performance
Reinterprets the Final Act of Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet*

Performance Space New York
150 1st Avenue 4th floor, New York
Thursday, November 7—Saturday, November 9, 7:00pm → 8:00pm

Performa and Performance Space New York present Kia LaBeija's first large scale performance, *Untitled, The Black Act*, as part of the Performa 19 Biennial and as part of Performance Space New York's Stages Series—inviting artists to propose new platforms and conditions that transgress the black box and its institutional walls (November 7-9 at 7pm). With *Untitled, The Black Act*, LaBeija proposes a contemporary interpretation of the third act of Oskar Schlemmer's early Bauhaus ballet piece *Triadic Ballet (Das triadische Ballett)*, 1922. The final act of Schlemmer's work is often noted as the "black act," and relates to fantasy, mysticism, and the infinite void of the black stage. As an artist working with numerous disciplines—including dance, portraiture, film, and performance—LaBeija inserts herself into this work to investigate space, process, transformation and collective histories.

Working as a movement director for the first time, LaBeija here extends the autobiographical use of her own body to five movement artists, who each offer alternate representations of LaBeija herself. They create an overarching structure for the work—exploring a spectrum of movement from classic forms of voguing to contemporary ballet and freestyle movement that defies labels. All performed in real time, *Untitled, The Black Act* will be presented on a stage that recalls the grid plan of New York City's streets, bringing the city's structure into dialogue with Schlemmer's penchant for rigid geometry.

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The concept of community was one of the founding principles of the Bauhaus, which envisioned a social utopia through a multi-disciplinary school of applied arts. Schlemmers's *Triadic Ballet* became one of the most widely performed avant-garde artistic dances, famously known for its structural costumes, fluid movement and prompting new forms of expression. Bodies became walking architectural structures unable to move with autonomous ease. LaBeija responds with architectural costumes created by stylist Kyle Luu (known for her work with Solange and Travis Scott). Embellished with Swarovski crystals, the garments enable and provoke movement, alluding to expressive self-fashioning as a tool of emotional transformation within the house-ballroom community.

In a further nod to the autobiographic lens that connects her work across a variety of forms, LaBeija here collaborates with her brother, producer Kenn Michael—who composed the score and uses a software synthesizer he built that plays in frequencies related to modalities of healing—and her father, drummer Warren Benbow. As LaBeija says, “I’ve experienced my father play over the entirety of my life, but this is the first time I’ve truly understood him as an artist, not just ‘dad on the drums’. It’s one of the many ways in which this practice has shown me the power of transformation” At its 1922 premiere, the *Triadic Ballet* was set to a mélange of classical music by composers including Haydn, Mozart, and Debussy. Now, Michael’s harmonic resonance and Benbow’s punctuating beat patterns are collaged with a selection of hip hop, pop, R & B, 90’s house sounds.

LaBeija adds, of the work as a whole, “I am creating a dance without a choreography. By leaving parts of the performance to chance I can produce something that does not mirror reality – it is reality. We create a total work of art in real time, that is the task. There is a level of vulnerability and trust to the process that each performer and I have committed to. We are all on separate, but parallel journeys moving simultaneously, through possibility.” LaBeija expands Schlemmer’s stage, searching for belonging, freedom, and wholeness.

The assistant movement director for *Untitled, The Black Act* is Taina Larot, featuring movement artists Daniella Agosto, Selena Etienne, Khristina Cayetano, Terry Lovette, and Taina Larot.

Performances of *Untitled, The Black Act* will take place at Performance Space New York (150 1st Avenue 4th floor, New York) on November 7, 8 & 9 at 7pm. Tickets are available at performancespacenewyork.org or by calling 212-352-3101.

The Stages Series, organized by Performance Space New York Deputy Director Pati Hertling, begins with work from rafa esparza (September 23), and will feature an installation from Sarah Zapata (September 28 - January 19) and an exhibition from Renata Lucas (September 28 - November 3). Following LaBeija’s November 7-9 performances, it will feature Martine Gutierrez (November 20, 22 – 23), Julie Tolentino (December 7, 9-13), ray ferreira (December 19-21), and Mariana Valencia (January 9-11, 16-18); a collaboration by Julie Tolentino and Oscar Nñ (November 16); a GUSH party (October 25); a series led by S.J Norman and Joseph M. Pierce (January 11-12); and a Marathon Reading of Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, co-organized by Sarah Schulman with Shellyne Rodriguez, Charles Rice-González, and Norma Cantú (October 20).

Kia LaBeija and Taina Larot will host a “Movement Workshop” on Wednesday, November 20th from 6:00pm → 7:30pm at the Performa Hub: 47 Wooster Street, New York. Free and open to the public.

The Estate of Oskar Schlemmer has not approved or licensed “(Untitled) The Black Act”.

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BIOGRAPHIES:

Kia LaBeija (b. 1990, New York) holds a degree in visual arts from The New School. She studied dance at The Juilliard School and The Ailey School. Her work has been exhibited widely in New York City including presentations at MoMA PS1, Brooklyn Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, Studio Museum of Harlem, and Bronx Museum of Art. Alongside her partner, the filmmaker Taina Larot, LaBeija is a 2019 Creative Capital Awardee. A dialogue with the artist is the subject of a new Visual Aids publication, *DUETS: Kia LaBeija & Julie Tolentino In Conversation* (2019).



Kenn Michael (b. 1977, New York) is an American electronic music producer and composer who specializes in musical scores created from research into healing tones. As an actor, Michael (credited early in his career as Kenny Blank) is celebrated for his role as Michael Peterson in the television sitcom *The Parent 'Hood* (1995-1997) and his appearance on Eddie Murphy's 1992 film, *Boomerang*. Michael is LaBeija's brother.

Warren Benbow (b. 1954, New York) is a drummer, songwriter, music producer and educator based in New York City. He has worked and performed internationally with Whitney Houston, Nina Simone, LL Cool J, Betty Carter, Phyllis Hyman, Mary J. Blige, Gwen Guthrie, Nancy Wilson, Mavis Staples, and many others, and is an original member of James "Blood" Ulmer's "Odyssey" band. Benbow is LaBeija's father.

Kyle Luu is a stylist, fashion consultant, and designer. Luu has worked with celebrities such as Solange, Lizzo, Tinashe, Travis Scott, publications such as *W* magazine, *Harpers Bazaar* Thailand, *L'Officiel Homme* magazine, *Allure*, *Paper* magazine, and many others. Her work has also been featured in media outlets such as NBC's *The Voice*, Jay Leno, Jimmy Fallon, MTV, VH1, and E!

ABOUT PERFORMA:

Performa is a non-profit interdisciplinary arts organization established by the curator and art historian RoseLee Goldberg in 2004. Our mission is four-fold: to award and produce Performa Commissions that result in new live performances by exceptional American and international contemporary artists; to present the three-week international Performa Biennial of live performance featuring new commissions at venues across New York City every other year; to offer public education programs, exhibitions and produce print publications through the Performa Institute that illuminate the critical role of live performance in the history of twentieth-century culture; and to disseminate performance related content, context and commentary through our archives and digital content channels that reach global audiences.

ABOUT PERFORMA 19:

The eighth edition of the Performa Biennial once again celebrates the extraordinary vitality, inventiveness and significance of New York as a leading global performance capital of the world in three weeks of exciting programming, from November 1–24, 2019, at locations throughout New York City. In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Bauhaus, the influence of the school and the radical concept of its curriculum, which holds performance at its core, appears in several Commissions. The Bauhaus is also the focus of the Performa Institute programming, daily events, and talks at the Performa 19 Hubs – two temporary spaces in Manhattan's Soho neighborhood that become the epicenter of the three-week program.

ABOUT PERFORMANCE SPACE NEW YORK:

Founded as Performance Space 122, in 1980, from an explosion of radical self-expression amidst the intensifying American culture wars, Performance Space New York is the birthplace of contemporary performance as it is known today. The early acts that defined the organization's unique role in New York cultural history asserted themselves as living, fleeting, and crucially affordable alternatives to mainstream art and culture of the 1980s and early 90s. Emboldened by the inclusive haven of a tight knit group of artists, performers like Penny Arcade, Ron Athey, Ethyl Eichelberger, Karen Finley, Spalding Gray, Ishmael Houston-Jones, Holly Hughes, John Kelly, John Leguizamo, Tim Miller, and Carmelita Tropicana, among many others, engaged in radical experimentation and created hybrid works that existed somewhere between dance, theater, poetry, ritual, film, technology and music.

Under the leadership of Executive Artistic Director Jenny Schlenzka (appointed to the role in 2017, amidst the completion of the renovation and reimagining of the organization's original abandoned East Village public-school building) the organization makes a case for the cultural vitality and relevance of performance for the 21st century. Schlenzka brings the idea of themed series to Performance Space New York. As part of a larger multidimensional whole, individual works are juxtaposed to evoke further meaning and push audiences to engage with our contemporary world in illuminating ways.

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During this time marked by divisive and oppressive politics, Performance Space New York builds on its own traditions of integration, political involvement and vehement interdisciplinarity, embodied by artists like niv Acosta, BRUJAS, Annie Dorsen, Tim Etchells, Maria Hassabi, Mette Ingvartsen, Emily Johnson, Young Jean Lee, Taylor Mac, Richard Maxwell, Bjarne Melgaard, Sarah Michelson, Rabih Mroué, Okwui Okpokwasili, Reggie Watts, and Adrienne Truscott.

Performance Space New York's lasting presence from the pre-gentrification East Village neighborhood fervently aims to create an open environment for artists and audiences, and thus foster community through performance and discourse—to be a countering force to the often-exclusionary nature of urban development.

In September 2018, Jenny Schlenzka appointed five Associate Artists—Sarah Schulman, Angela Dimayuga, Emily Johnson, Sarah Ortmeyer, and Gillian Walsh—who will actively contribute to programming and administrative decision making in the years to come, returning Performance Space New York to the spirit of its very beginnings as an institution run by artists. The Associate Artists bring an intergenerational range of perspectives, with vastly varied practices (and, for most, deep ties to Performance Space New York), to the organization.

Performance Space New York pays respect to the Lenape ancestors past, present, and future. The organization acknowledges that the work of Performance Space is situated on the Lenape island of Manhahtaan (Mannahatta) and more broadly in Lenapehoking, the Lenape homeland.

CREDITS:

(Untitled) The Black Act is co-commissioned with Performance Space New York and co-produced with The Josie Club - Mickalene Thomas, Racquel Chevremont, Jet Toomer and Nina Chanel Abney. Additional support provided by the Performa Commissioning Fund, Abigail Pucker, and Victoria Rogers. This project is supported in part by a grant from the Jerome Foundation. With special thanks to Swarovski.

Curated by Kathy Noble, Senior Curator, and Job Piston, Special Projects, and presented as part of Performance Space New York's *Stages Series*, organized by Pati Hertling. Featuring Daniella Agosto, Selena Ettienne, Khristina Cayetano, Terry Lovette, and Taína Larot.

IMAGE:

Kia LaBeija, *Untitled, Bauhaus*, 2019. Courtesy of the Artist.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Performance Space New York: Rachael Shearer, rachael@blakezidell.com

Performa: Kim Donica, kim@pelhamcommunications.com