

## Bronx Gothic

## Okwui Ojkpokwasili

Thursday 08 October – Monday 12 October 2015

90 minutes, no interval

Arts House, North Melbourne Town Hall**Contents**

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# Creative Team

**Written and Performed by:** Okwui Okpokwasili **Director/Scenic & Lighting Designer:** Peter Born **Original Songs:** OkwuiOkpokwasili **Music:** Peter Born, Okwul Okpokwasili

**The North American 2015-16 tour of Bronx Gothic is produced by MAPP International Productions**

**Producer:** PS122GLOBAL AlexandraRosenberg **Production Manager:** PS122 GLOBAL.James Fry

***Bronx Gothic*** *plays out in the rough terrain of memory.*
*It is not an autobiography.
But it is my story.*
*It is an homage and a cry*

- OkwuiOkpokwasili

*And when we speak we are afraid*
*Our words will not be heard*
*Nor welcomed*
*But when we are silent we are still afraid*
*So it is better to speak*
*Remembering*
*We were never meant to survive*

- Audre Lorde,'Litany for Survival'

# New York/Melbourne eXchange

**Bronx Gothic** is part of the New York/Melbourne eXchange - an ongoing program of experimental works from two vital contemporary arts venue in two of the world's great cultural cities : Arts House in Melbourne and Performance Space 122 (PS122) in New York

New York Narratives at the Melbourne Festival, co-curated by Arts House, PS122 and Melbourne Festival, is the inaugural series of the New York/ Melbourne eXchange that includes: Bronx Gothic, YOUARENOWHERE, Acting Stranger, the Stage on Screen film screenings, Eric Bogosian’s interactive video installation of his monologues, exhibitions: ECHO and Future Past and conversations: Mapping a Vibrant Independent Ecology and Text, Body and Technology.

As well as Bronx Gothic, Okwui Okpokwasili is also part of other works in the New York Narratives series, including the Stage on Screen screening: How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?

In 2016, the roles are reversed: New York will sample Melbourne's exceptional arts scene through a program of works co-curated by Arts House and PS122.

PS122 dedicates these performances to a tireless Melbourne champion in New York­ Derek Lloyd.

#

# Biographies

## Okwul Okpokwasill

## Writer and Performer

## Okwui Okpokwasili is a New York based writer, performer and choreographer .In partnership with collaborator Peter Born, she creates multidisciplinary projects. Their first New York production, Pent-Up: A Revenge Dance, premiered at PS122 and received a 2010 Bessie Award for Outstanding Production in Dance and Performance; an immersive installation version was featured in the 2008 Prelude Festival. Their second collaboration, Bronx Gothic won a 2014 Bessie award for Outstanding Production in Dance and Performance and continues to tour nationally and internationally. In June 2014 they presented an installation entitled Bronx Gothic: The Oval as part of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's River to River Festival. Their current project in development is Poor People's TV Room, an early iteration of which was presented by Lincoln Center in the David Rubinstein Atrium in 2014.

## As a performer, Okwui Okpokwasili frequently collaborates with award-winning director Ralph Lemon,with credits including How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?; Come Home Charley Patton (for which she also won a Bessie Award);a duet performed at MoMA as part of On Line: Drawing through the Twentieth Century; and most recently Scaffold Room. Other performance credits include Nora Chipaumire's Miriam; Julie Taymor's A Midsummer Night's Dream; Kristin Marting's Sounding; Young Jean Lee's LEAR; Richard Foreman's Maria del Bosco; Richard Maxwell's Cowboys and Indians; andJoan Dark (The Goodman Theater/Linz European Capital of Culture).Film credits include Malorie's Final Score, Knut Asdam's Abyss,The Interpreter, The Hoax and I Am Legend.

## Okwui Okpokwasili's residencies and awards include The French American Cultural Exchange (2006-07),Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography Choreographic Fellowship (2012),Baryshnikov Arts Center Artist-in­ Residence (2013),New York Live Arts Studio Series (2013),Under Construction at the Park Avenue Armory (2013),New York Foundation for the Arts' Fellowship in Choreography (2013), Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Extended Life Program (2014-15),The Foundation for Contemporary Arts' artist grant in dance (2014), BRICiab (2015),Columbia University (2015) and the Rauschenberg Residency (2015).She recently named the 2015-17 New York Live Arts in Dance and Performance. Resident Commissioned Artist (RCA), through which she will create the new ensemble work, Poor People's TV Room, produced by MAPP International Productions.

## Peter Born

## Director/Scenic &Lighting Designer

## Peter Born is a director, designer and filmmaker. In addition to his work with Okwui Okpokwasili, he is collaborating with David Thomson throughout 2015 and 2016 on a cycle of installation performances revolving around a post-sexual incarnation of Venus. He designed and created the set for Nora Chipaumire's rite/ riot, and has created performance videos with Chipaumire, Thomson and Daria Fain, among others. He works as an art director and prop stylist for video and photo projects with clients including Vogue, Estee Lauder, Barneys co-op Bloomingdales, Old Navy,25 magazine, Northrup Grumman and The Wall Street Journal, with collaborators including Kanye West, Barnaby Roper, Santiago and Mauricio Sierra, Quentin Jones and NoStringsUS Puppet Productions. He is also a former New York public high school teacher, an itinerant floral designer, corporate actor-facilitator and furniture designer. His collaborations with Okwui Okpokwasili have garnered two Bessie Awards for Dance and Performance.

# MAPP International Produtions

MAPP International Productions i s a non-profit producer of major performing arts projects that raise critical consciousness and spark social change. Supporting all phases of an artist's creative process, from concept and production to premiere and touring, MAPP also engages audiences in the issues behind the art.

 Through this heightened focus, MAPP supports an evolving and elite cadre of creators whose work ignites communities worldwide.

mapplntemational.org.

# Thank you

The artists would like to thank Umechi Born, Ralph Lemon, David Thomson, Onome Ekeh, John Born, Cecilia Clarke, Andy Harman, Vinnie Dilio, Laura Brock, Dr Bertram Okpokwasili, Eunice Okpokwasili, Silas and Mary Born, lje Okpokwasili, Georgianna Pickett, Sam Miller, Anna Glass-Coquillot,Katherine Profeta,Karen Montrose,Jamie Boyle, John Wyszniewski, Marya Wethers,Nora Chipaumire, Devynn Emory, Bailie Younkman, Einy Am Sparks, Liz Sargent, Rani,Kristen Schafenacker,CO Chun, Claudia lbaven,Ben and Laurie Tollefson, Dominic Guertin,Judy Hussei -Taylor, Vallejo Ganter, Jaamil Kosoko,Carla Peterson, Abby Harris Holmes, Rebecca Robertson, Utsuki Otsuka, Jerod Schomer, Cassidy Jones, Clyde Wagner, Eleanor Wallace, Danielle King, Will Penrose, Melissa Levin, ladies of the dream, LMCC Park Avenue Armory, Danspace Project PS122,HA, Sohui Kim, Ben Schneider, Kay Takeda, Pratchi Patankar, Sarah-Lee Joseph, Barbara Bryan,Jennifer Monson, New York Live Arts, Baryshnikov Arts Centre, MANXX, Jennifer Calienes, Ansje Burdick, Richard Howell, Dr Joseph Hellweg, Chris Cameron, Afua Hall, Mark Morris Dance Group, Centre for Performance Research, HCYS always, Kate Moran, Thomas Lax , Andrew Wallace, Adam Berkwitt, Joe Diebes, Sarah Fritche, La MaMa, Nicky Paraiso, DRC sleepers, Kristen Bemier, Michelle Coe, Alex Rosenberg, Arts House, the whole unit at MAPP International, John Andrews, Lisa Louititt, and many more who have provided support during our process.

Bronx Gothic was co-commissioned by Performance Space 122, Danspace Project, LMCC and a 50th Anniversary Grant from the Jerome Foundation. Residency support was provided by Under Construction at the Park Avenue Armory, New York Live Arts, Baryshnikov Arts Centre and LMCC’s Extended Life Dance Development program. Additional commissioning support was provided by Le Mailon in Strasbourg; Theatre de Gennevilliers (Paris); Theatre Garonne (Toulouse); and Zagrebacko Kazaliste Mladih, the Zagreb Youth Theatre in Zagreb, Croatia.

An early iteration was shown in Platform Series: Parallels 2012 curated by Ishmael Houston- Jones at Danspace Project. The full version of Bronx Gothic premiered at PS122’s 2014 COIL Festival, where it enjoyed a sold out two-week run. The piece by ShowBox in Los Angeles; it also toured to Zagreb, Croatia and throughout France. Another iteration, Bronx Gothic: The Oval was a featured installation and performance at the 2014 River to River Festival in New York.

The 2015-16 tour of Bronx Gothic is produced by MAPP International Productions. Bronx Gothic is a recipient of the New England Foundation for the Arts’ National Dance Project Touring Award, WITH LEADING FUNDING FROM THE Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W Mellon Foundation and additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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# Performance Space 122

For over 35 years Performance Space (PS122) has been at the forefront of live performance in the USA, commissioning and presenting a remarkable array of new and innovative theatre, dance, new music, new media and performance. New York City and US audiences see PS122 as a bellwether for contemporary culture- a place where many artists carve out their style, and practise and develop their distinctive voice.PS122's New York City home is now undergoing a long­ planned renovation, scheduled for completion in 2016.PS122's reach has expanded across the city, throughout the USA, and now globally through PS122GLOBAL.a program exposing international audiences to new work from New York City artists.

**ps122.org**

# Melbourne Festival

Melbourne Festival is quintessentially Melbourne's festival: physically, by reaching out into the topography and geography of the city itself; artistically, by presenting Melbourne's finest artists in new works and international collaborations; and demographically, by engaging with as many of the people of Melbourne as possible, giving them ownership of their annual international festival.

Josephine Ridge is Artistic Director for 2013 to 2015,and her final year marks the celebration of the 30th Melbourne Festival.

8-25 October 2015

www.festival.melboume

# About Arts House

Arts House is a program of the City of Melbourne and our home is North Melbourne Town Hall. We support new and diverse ways to make and experience art providing a nexus for cultural expression and social connection in a city environment.

Arts House develops work that is contemporary, experimental and participatory.

For more information, please contact us on the details below.

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