

Presented by Arts House and Melbourne Festival
in association with Performance Space 122, as part of PS122 GLOBAL

Okwui Okpokwasili (US)

BRONX GOTHIC



Josh

Thu 8 – Mon 12 October 2015

1hr 30min, no interval

Creative Team

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

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

Producer, PS122 GLOBAL **Alexandra Rosenberg**
Production Manager, PS122 GLOBAL **James Fry**

Image **Ian Douglas**

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.

– Okwui Okpokwasili

*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 venues 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

Okwui Okpokwasili Writer/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 Rubenstein 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*; and *Joan 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), BRIClab (2016), Columbia University (2016) and the Rauschenberg Residency (2015). She was recently named the 2015–17 New York Live Arts 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*, Estée 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 Productions

MAPP International Productions is 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.

mappinternational.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, Ije Okpokwasili, Georgianna Pickett, Sam Miller, Anna Glass-Coquillot, Katherine Profeta, Karen Montrose, Jamie Boyle, John Wyszniowski, Marya Wethers, Nora Chipaumire, Devynn Emory, Baille Younkman, Einy Am Sparks, Liz Sargent, Rani, Kristen Schafenacker, CC Chun, Claudia Ibaven, Ben and Laurie Tollefson, Dominic Guertin, Judy Hussie-Taylor, Vallejo Ganter, Jaamil Kosoko, Carla Peterson, Abby Harris Holmes, Rebecca Robertson, Utsuki Otsuka, Jerad 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 Center, MANCC, Jennifer Calienes, Ansjie Burdick, Rachel Howell, Dr Joseph Hellweg, Chris Cameron, Afua Hall, Mark Morris Dance Group, Center for Performance Research, HCYS always, Kate Moran, Thomas

Lax, Andrew Wallace, Adam Berkwitz, Joe Diebes, Sarah Fritchey, La MaMa, Nicky Paraiso, DRC sleepers, Kristen Bernier, Michelle Coe, Alex Rosenberg, Arts House, the whole team at MAPP International, John Andress, Lisa Loutitt, 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 Center and LMCC's Extended Life Dance Development program. Additional commissioning support was provided by Le Maillon in Strasbourg; Théâtre de Gennevilliers (Paris); Théâtre Garonne (Toulouse); and Zagrebačko Kazalište Mladih, the Zagreb Youth Theatre in Zagreb, Croatia.

An early iteration was shown in the *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 was later presented 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 lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

ARTS HOUSE

Performance Space 122

For over 35 years, Performance Space 122 (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 PS122 GLOBAL, 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.melbourne

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Arts House

Arts House presents contemporary arts in programs encompassing performance, festivals, live art, residencies and other activities that nurture, support and stimulate cultural engagement. We value work in which artists at different stages of their careers, as well as our diverse audiences and communities, are actively involved in creating an imaginative, just and environmentally sustainable global society.

Arts House's programs include two curated public seasons of multidisciplinary work each year. Approximately half of this work is selected through an Expression of Interest process. We seek artists who are responding to the urgent issues of our time in imaginative and surprising ways, taking artistic risks and offering multiple ways for audiences to engage with or co-author their work.

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

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