

Artist/Writer Convening

This convening is supported by
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

June 5 & 6, 2016

achugar

Luciana



Luciana achugar is a Brooklyn-based choreographer from Uruguay who grew as an artist in close dialogue with the NY and Uruguayan contemporary dance communities. She began making work collaboratively with Levi Gonzalez in 1999, and she has been making dance in NYC and Uruguay independently since 2002. Her work is concerned with the post-colonial world, searching for an undoing of current power structures from the inside out. She is a two-time “Bessie” Award recipient, a Guggenheim Fellow, Creative Capital Grantee and a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grantee, amongst other accolades. She was one of Dance Magazine’s “25 to Watch” in 2012 and her “Bessie” Award-winning work *PURO DESEO* was named one of 2010 TimeOUT NY’s “Best of Dance.” Her ongoing project *The Pleasure Project* (2014), a public space intervention, has been seen in NYC as guerrilla performance and through LMCC’s Paths to Pier 42 Program, at *Le Mouvement-Performing the City* in Biel/Bienne, Switzerland, and at the

American Realness Festival in NYC. She received the 2015 Austin Critic’s Award for Best Touring work for *OTRO TEATRO*, which had been presented there at the Fusebox Festival and had premiered in 2014 at the Walker Art Center and NYLA. Her latest work, *An Epilogue for OTRO TEATRO: True Love*, premiered at Gibney Dance in December 2015 and was remounted with an all Uruguayan cast at the Festival Internacional de Danza en Uruguay this month; it will be presented outside as a performance/block party/urban ritual at the River to River Festival in Lower Manhattan this June. She was a MANCC Choreographic Fellow as part of The Hatchery Project (2013-2015), funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Atkins

Jen



Jen Atkins earned her M.A. in American Dance Studies from FSU in 2003 and also completed a Ph.D. in History, with an emphasis on how dance intersects with American women’s history. Jen’s dissertation, “Setting the Stage: Dance and Gender in Old-Line New Orleans Carnival Balls, 1870-1920,” addresses the relationship between American gender ideals of the late nineteenth century and the distinct culture of New Orleans’ elite Mardi Gras rituals. This interaction of tradition and courtship is revealed through a study of the dancing, socially choreographed body. Jen teaches courses in dance history, research, theory, and tap technique. Her work has been presented at CORD and Popular Culture/American Culture Association conferences and, in addition to her interest in New Orleans dance, Jen also researches Progressive Era dance halls and hippies.

de la Flor

Neil



Neil de la Flor is a writer, photographer, educator and Executive Director of Reading Queer, a Knight funded community-based organization that promotes queer literary culture in South Florida. His books include *An Elephant’s Memory of Blizzards*, *Sinead O’Connor and Her Coat of a Thousand Bluebirds*, *Almost Dorothy* and *Two Thieves and a Liar*. He writes for KnightBlog and covers art and culture in South Florida. He earned an MFA at the University of Miami and was a Michener Fellow.

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Gaines

Alisha



Alisha Gaines is an Assistant Professor with a PhD in English and African American Studies from Duke University. From 2009-2011, she held a Carter G. Woodson postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Virginia. Since joining the faculty, Dr. Gaines was named a 2014-2015 McKnight Junior Faculty Development Fellow. In 2014, FSU's Spiritual Life Project honored her with a Transformation Through Teaching Award. Dr. Gaines is currently finishing her first manuscript, *Black for a Day: Fantasies of Race and Empathy*, under contract with The University of North Carolina Press. The project rethinks the political consequences of empathy by examining mid-to-late twentieth and twenty-first century narratives of racial impersonation enabled by the spurious alibi of racial reconciliation. *Black for a Day* constructs a genealogy of white liberals who temporarily "became" black under the alibi of racial empathy. Her interdisciplinary teaching interests include African

American literature and culture, black queer theory, media and performance studies, narratives of passing, and New Southern studies. Dr. Gaines is also a life-long fan of Michael Jackson. She taught a course on the artist in 2012. Her most recent article, "'A Secondhand Kind of Terror': Grace Halsell, Kathryn Stockett, and the Ironies of Empathy," can be found in the edited collection, *From Uncle Tom's Cabin to The Help: Critical Perspectives on White-Authored Narratives of Black Life*, published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2014.

Goldman

Danielle



Danielle Goldman Danielle Goldman is Assistant Professor of Critical Dance Studies at The New School. Her dance research is grounded in the broader fields of performance studies and critical theory, as well as the expanding body of interdisciplinary scholarship on improvisation. Author of *I Want to be Ready: Improvised Dance as a Practice of Freedom* (University of Michigan Press, 2010), she has published articles in *Dance Research*, *Dance Research Journal*, *Etcetera*, *Movement Research Performance Journal*, *TDR*, and *Women & Performance*. She is a member of the Movement Research Artist Advisory Council (2009-ongoing) as well as the Board of Directors for the Congress on Research in Dance (2011-ongoing). She was a member of the editorial collective for *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* (2007-2013), and she will begin service as the Editorial Board Chair for *Dance Research Journal* in August 2016. In addition to her writing and teaching,

dance practice constitutes an important part of Goldman's research. She has performed in the work of Sarah Michelson, DD Dorvillier, Anna Sperber, and Beth Gill.

Krasinski

Jennifer



Jennifer Krasinski is a writer and critic who primarily focuses on the subjects of film, video and performance. Although she was initially trained as an art historian, she began her work not as a writer but as a performer, working in New York's vibrant downtown theater with artists such as Richard Foreman and Richard Maxwell. Her work has appeared in numerous publications such as *Artforum.com*, *Art In America*, *Spike Art Quarterly*, *Bidoun*, *N+1 Film Review*, *DIS Magazine*, *The Paris Review Blog* and *The Village Voice*. She is the author of *Prop Tragedies* (Wrath of Dynasty Press, 2010), a short collection of experimental fiction. She is a recipient of a 2012 Creative Capital/Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant. She participated in a pilot embedded writer residency with MANCC Choreographic Fellow luciana achugar in spring 2015.

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Okpokwasili

Okwui



Okwui Okpokwasili is a New York-based writer, performer and choreographer. She is currently the New York Live Arts Resident Commissioned Artist. As a performer, Okpokwasili frequently collaborates with award-winning director Ralph Lemon, appearing in *Come Home*, Charley Patton (for which she won a Bessie Award) *HYCS* and *Scaffold Room*. She has appeared as an actor in many productions, including Nora Chipaumire's *Miriam*; Julie Taymor's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Young Jean Lee's *Lear*; Richard Foreman's *Maria Del Bosco*; Richard Maxwell's *Cowboys and Indians*; and Joan Dark (*The Goodman Theater*). Residencies and awards include The French American Cultural Exchange (2006–07); MANCC Choreographic Fellowship (2012); Baryshnikov Arts Center Artist-in-Residence (2013), NYLA Studio Series (2013); Under Construction at the Park Avenue Armory (2013); NYFA Fellowship in Choreography (2013); LMCC's Extended Life Program (2014); and The Foundation for Contemporary Arts' Artist Grants in Dance (2014). She currently is a MANCC Choreographic Fellow (2016-2018), funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Oliver

Cynthia



Cynthia Oliver creates performance collages that move from dance to word to sound and back again toward an eclectic and provocative dance theatre. A Bronx born, Virgin Island reared performer, she incorporates the textures of Caribbean performance with African and American aesthetic sensibilities. She has been awarded and/or commissioned by The Franklin Furnace, The Puffin Foundation, The Jerome Foundation, Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund for Minority Artists, NYSCA, 92Y Harkness Dance Center, Performance Space 122, Dance Theater Workshop/New York Live Arts, The National Performance Network, Creative Capital, The Rockefeller MAP Fund, New England Foundation for the Arts (NDP), The Pew Charitable Trust, The University of Illinois Research Board and the Illinois Arts Council. In 1995/96, Cynthia won a New York Dance and Performance Award (a.k.a. "Bessie") for her evening length work *Death's Door*. In 2009, Cynthia was honored with a Cal Arts Alpert Award nomination. In 2011,

Cynthia received a University Scholar nomination-only award from the University of Illinois and has recently received her second Illinois Arts Council Choreography Fellowship. She is currently a 2016 Center for Advanced Studies Associate fellow at the University of Illinois. Her dance theatre work has been performed across the country in a variety of festivals and spaces, like the The Public Theater and Aaron Davis Hall in New York City, and NOCCA, in New Orleans, amongst many others. In 2004, Cynthia's work made the leap across the pond when she collaborated with German Filmmaker Marcus Behrens of European arts channel Canal Arte to adapt her evening length work *AfroSocialiteLifeDiva* for film which aired on Canal Arte in 2005 and Germany, Austria and Switzerland's 3Sat Arts Channel in 2006. She has danced with Theatre Dance Inc. and the Caribbean Dance Company of St. Croix, Virgin Islands. In New York, she has danced with independent choreographers and with many companies, including the David Gordon Pick Up Co., the Prowess DanceArts Collective, Ronald Kevin Brown/Evidence, Bebe Miller Company and Tere O'Connor Dance. In addition to Cynthia's performance work, she holds a Ph.D. in Performance Studies from New York University. Her scholarly work has focused on performance in the Anglophone Caribbean. She has taught at New York University's Department of Drama, Tisch School of the Arts, The Newcomb Summer Dance Intensive at Tulane University, Florida State University and the University of Utah. She is Professor of Dance at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She is currently a MANCC Choreographic Fellow (2016-2018), funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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Willis

Tara



Tara Aisha Willis is a dance artist and PhD candidate in Performance Studies at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, where she studies black feminisms and experimental dance aesthetics. She is Co-Managing Editor of *TDR/The Drama Review*, an editorial collective member of *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, co-editor of a special issue of *The Black Scholar* with Thomas F. DeFrantz ("Black Moves: New Research in Black Dance Studies"), and a summer Thesis Writing Mentor for Hollins University Dance MFAs. She graduated from Barnard College as a Centennial Scholar in 2009, earning a B.A. in Dance and English/Creative Writing. That same year, she was a Dance Theater Workshop Van Lier Fellow. In 2015-2016, she has danced for Megan Byrne and Sarah A.O. Rosner, and currently dances for Kim Brandt and Anna Sperber. Her choreographic work has been

shown at Movement Research at the Judson Church, REHEARSAL, BAX, Roulette, THROW, Dixon Place, The Painting Center, and AUNTS, among other places. She is a co-curator of the Movement Research Festival Spring 2016: Hand Written Note(s) and currently works as Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives for Movement Research, a support organization for experimental dance artists.

Barbara Kaplan

Monday Only

Barbara J. Kaplan has been the Research & Scholarly Communications Librarian at Florida State University's College of Law Reserach Center since October 2014. Trained as a litigator, she became a law librarian after practicing intellectual property law for 20 years, first in private practice and then as in-house IP counsel for a Fortune 500 company, focusing on copyright, trademark, and patents rights, where she was responsible for enforcing its IP rights worldwide.