
Danspace Project

Winter 2020

Saturday Afternoon Conversation #1: *Platform as Practice – Collaborative Organizing*

February 22, 2020

Part of PLATFORM 2020:
Utterances From The Chorus
co-curated by Okwui Okpokwasili
& Judy Hussie-Taylor

With: Lydia Bell, Maura Donohue, Judy Hussie-Taylor, Kristin Juarez, Seta Morton,
Okwui Okpokwasili, Cecilia Vicuña, Asiya Wadud, Eva Yaa Asantewaa,
and Spiral Theory Test Kitchen: Bobbi Salvör Menezes, Quori Theodor & Precious Okoyomon.

Please enter the space quietly.

11:30am: Parish Hall Opens

12pm: Opening Ritual, Eva Yaa Asantewaa
Writer-curator Eva Yaa Asantewaa invites participants to form a circle of light and voices, building from quiet to a fabric of sound formed by the interweaving of names of ancestors and ourselves.

We start our day in a circle of light and voices. Enter quietly. Receive your votive light. Find your inner melody and sing the sonic energy of your name and ancestors' names into the space we are creating to contain all that we will share with one another today. –Eva Yaa Asantewaa

12:15pm: Trembling Archive, Kristin Juarez

12:20pm: Land Acknowledgment and Welcome, Okwui Okpokwasili

1pm: 10th Anniversary of The Platforms & Collaborative Inquiry: Lydia Bell, Maura Donohue, Judy Hussie-Taylor, Kristin Juarez, Seta Morton, and Okwui Okpokwasili

2-2:15pm: Programmatic Pause

2:15pm: Cecilia Vicuña

2:45pm: Asiya Wadud

3:15pm: Spiral Theory Test Kitchen

3:30-5pm: Publication Launch/Album Release Reception

All times are approximate.

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This opening day will end with a toast to three public releases:
day pulls down the sky, The debut vinyl album from Okwui Okpokwasili
day pulls down the sky / a filament in gold leaf, a book collaboration between Belladonna and Danspace Project with writing by Asiya Wadud and Okwui Okpokwasili
PLATFORM 2020: *Utterances From The Chorus*, Volume I catalogue

Food and edible art installation by Spiral Theory Test Kitchen: Light snacks will be offered throughout the day and an edible art installation by Spiral Theory Test Kitchen will be on display. If you have food sensitivities or allergies please proceed with caution.

About PLATFORM 2020

The Platforms were launched by Danspace Project in 2010 as “exhibitions that unfold over time” shaped by guest artist-curators. Marking 10 years since Judy Hussie-Taylor conceived of the series, this Platform is the centerpiece of Danspace’s 45th anniversary year.

PLATFORM 2020: *Utterances From The Chorus* emerged from Okpokwasili and Hussie-Taylor’s interest in creating containers for sharing artistic practices: “Could we create a Platform for artists to be in a conversation with one another and offer that to a broader audience?” The result is a program that will unfold over four weeks with multiple voices, artistic collaborations, and interdisciplinary juxtapositions.

Together, Okpokwasili and Hussie-Taylor developed these lines of curatorial inquiry for the Platform:

*How do we weave a collective song?
How can the voice and body be a site of resistance and transformation?
How can we share artistic practices – between artists and between artists and audiences?*

PLATFORM 2020 follows Okpokwasili's longstanding inquiries addressing the lives of young women of color. It borrows its title from Saidiya Hartman's introduction to her book *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*.

In addition to Okpokwasili and Hussie-Taylor, the Platform's curatorial team includes Danspace Associate Curator and Program Director, Lydia Bell, and Seta Morton, Assistant Curator, Public Engagement.

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Eva Yaa Asantewaa is Senior Curatorial Director of Gibney, New York's acclaimed center for dance and social activism. She won the 2017 Bessie Award for Outstanding Service to the Field of Dance as a veteran writer, curator and community educator. Since 1976, she has contributed writing on dance to Dance Magazine, The Village Voice, SoHo Weekly News, Gay City News, The Dance Enthusiast, Time Out New York and other publications and interviewed dance artists and advocates as host of two podcasts, Body and Soul and Serious Moonlight. She blogs on the arts, with dance as a specialty, for InfiniteBody. Ms. Yaa Asantewaa joined the curatorial team for Danspace Project's Platform 2016: *Lost & Found* and created *the skeleton architecture, or the future of our worlds*, an evening of group improvisation featuring 21 Black women and gender-nonconforming performers. Her cast was awarded a 2017 Bessie for Outstanding Performer. In 2018, Queer|Art named one of its awards in her honor, and Detroit-based choreographer Jennifer Harge won the Eva Yaa Asantewaa Grant for Queer Women(+) Dance Artists. In 2019, Yaa Asantewaa was a recipient of a BAX Arts & Artists in Progress Award.

Lydia Bell is a New York-based performance curator. As Program Director & Associate Curator at Danspace Project, she oversees programming, publications, and research initiatives. Recent projects include *Aki Sasamoto: Phase Transition* (2020), *collective terrain/s* (2019) with Jasmine Hearn, Tendayi Kuumba, Samita Sinha, and Tatyana Tenenbaum, and the Bessie Award-winning PLATFORM 2016: *A Body in Places* with Eiko Otake.

Maura Nguyen Donohue has been making, performing in, writing about, talking about, advocating for and curating performance works in NYC since 1994. She had a dance company and then 2 kids, so she got an MFA and a 'real' job as Associate Professor of Dance and is a Faculty Associate for Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College. She has been a

member of La MaMa's Great Jones Rep Co since 1997 and has served on The Bessies, as well as the Boards of Movement Research, the Congress on Research in Dance and Dance Theater Workshop. She went to Smith College twice, once for a BA in Anthropology/Dance and then again for her MFA. She's written for Culturebot and academic presses.

Judy Hussie-Taylor has served as Executive Director & Chief Curator of Danspace Project since 2008. She initiated and is artistic director of Danspace's Platform series and is editor-in-chief of Danspace's catalogue series. She organized PLATFORM 2012: *Judson NOW* and co-curated PLATFORM 2016: *A Body In Places* featuring Eiko Otake. From 1990-2008 Hussie-Taylor lived in Colorado where she contributed to the artistic and administrative leadership of the following organizations: Colorado Dance Festival, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Art/Denver. She served on the faculty of the University of Colorado-Boulder's in the Department of Art & Art History from 2000 – 2005. She is a faculty member and on the Advisory Committee of the Institute for Curatorial Practice in Performance at Wesleyan University. Hussie-Taylor was appointed Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government in 2014 and received the 2017 Bessie New York Dance & Performance Award, the first ever awarded to a curator.

Kristin Juarez, PhD, is currently a research specialist at the Getty Research Institute where she is working on an exhibition featuring video documentation of performances by Blondell Cummings. Her recently completed dissertation examined choreographies of the moving image.

Seta Morton is a New York-based dance artist and administrator. As Danspace Project Assistant Curator, Public Engagement, she contributes to curatorial research, the development of new initiatives, manages public programs and partnerships, and serves as an editor for both online and print publications. Recent work as a dance artist and writer include collaborating and performing in a new evening-length work choreographed by iele paloumpis. *In place of catastrophe, a clear night sky* will premiere at Danspace in May 2020.

Okwui Okpokwasili is a Brooklyn-based writer, performer, and choreographer who creates multidisciplinary performance pieces that seek to shape and amplify the shared psychic space the audience and performer inhabit, and, through centering the African/African American feminine, to illuminate universal human conditions. Her productions, created in collaboration with acclaimed designer, Peter Born, are highly experimental in form, bringing together elements of dance, theater, and the visual arts. Okpokwasili and Born's first New York production, *Pent-Up: A Revenge Dance*,

premiered at Performance Space 122 and received a 2010 New York Dance and Performance Award (Bessie) for Outstanding Production. Their second collaboration, *Bronx Gothic*, premiered at Danspace Project (co-commissioned by Danspace & PS122/PSNY) in 2014 and received a Bessie Award for Outstanding Production that same year. *Bronx Gothic* subsequently went on to tour nationally and internationally, was the subject of a documentary film by Andrew Rossi and was recently performed at the Young Vic Theater in London in a month long run in 2019. Currently touring work includes *Poor People's TV Room*, premiered at New York Live Arts in 2017; *Adaku's Revolt*, 2019, premiered at Abrons Art Center and *Sitting On a Man's Head*, appeared at the 2018 Berlin Biennale and at the 2019 CounterCurrent Festival in Houston. Okpokwasili frequently collaborates with award-winning director, Ralph Lemon. She has appeared as an actor in many productions including works by Nora Chipaumire, Julie Taymor, Young Jean Lee, Richard Foreman, and Richard Maxwell. Most recently, Okpokwasili performed as the Lady in Green at the Public Theater in *For Colored Girls Who Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf*. Film credits include Malorie's *Final Score*, Knut Åsdam's *Abyss*, *The Interpreter*, *The Hoax*, *I Am Legend*, and *Madeline's Madeline*. Okpokwasili is a 2018 MacArthur Fellow. She is the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, including a 2018 Doris Duke Artist Award, a 2018 Hodder Fellow at Princeton University, a 2018 United States Artist Fellowship, and a 2018 Herb Alpert Award. Her performance work has been commissioned by the Walker Art Center, Danspace Project, Performance Space New York, Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA, the 10th Annual Berlin Biennale, Jacob's Pillow, and New York Live Arts, where she was a Randjelovic/Stryker Resident Commissioned Artist.

Spiral Theory Test Kitchen is a queer food project~angel life as lived praxis. Bliss frequencies beckoning the songs of our spiraling life. STTK engages food as a psychosexual object that enacts anti-alienation through desire and the desire under desire. Communal breakdown of the self, resisting effacement through an earthly and otherworldly paradise. STTK is comprised of Precious Okoyomon, Quori Theodor & Bobbi Menuet.

Artist-poet **Cecilia Vicuña** creates songs, performances, installations, paintings, films, written works, books, lectures, and sculptures. Born in Chile, profoundly impacted by the encouraging time of Allende, the subsequent terrors of Pinochet and decades lived in exile, Vicuña makes work that is always attentive to ethics, the earth, and history. Her object making includes "precarious"- precarious works - composed of fragile materials, (sticks, feathers, leaves, stones, bones...) that disappear, regenerating the life force, and major large-scale installations of "quipus," dyed wool and fibers inspired by the complex Andean record keeping system of sets of knotted cords, a

forgotten system she transforms into poems in space, tactile representations of the interconnectedness between cosmological, natural, and human realms. Her improvisatory, participatory performances, often associated with site-specific installations, emphasize the collective nature of action and creativity to bring forth justice, balance and transformation of the world. Her works are included in museum collections such as the Tate London, MoMA New York, Guggenheim Museum, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Chile, Museo de Arte de Lima and Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Santiago de Chile. Her most recent group shows include New MoMA 2019, *Five Artists Take on the Future* at the Guggenheim Museum, 2019, and *Radical Women: Latin American Art 1960- 1985*, presented at the Hammer Museum and The Brooklyn Museum, and Pinacoteca de Sao Paulo. In 2017, her work was part of the 14th Documenta in Athens, Greece and Kassel, Germany. Vicuña is the author of 25 books of art and poetry. She is the co-founder of Oysi.org, dedicated to empower indigenous knowledge systems. Vicuña lives and works in New York and Santiago de Chile.

Asiya Wadud is the author of *Crosslight for Youngbird, day pulls down the sky... a filament in gold leaf* (written collaboratively with Okwui Okpokwasili), *Syncope*, and the forthcoming *No Knowledge Is Complete Until It Passes Through My Body*. Asiya teaches poetry at Saint Ann's School and is a member of the Belladonna Collaborative. Her work has been supported by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Foundation Jan Michalski, Brooklyn Poets, Dickinson House, Mount Tremper Arts, and the New York Public Library, among others. Asiya is a 2019-2020 Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Artist-in-Residence. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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Issue #10 of Danspace Project's Journal!

This week, read an excerpt from Platform co-curator Judy Hussie-Taylor's *Grief and Gratitude*, an introduction to Vol. I of the PLATFORM 2020: *Utterances From The Chorus* catalogue.

New journal posts each Monday!
at danspaceproject.org/journal

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PLATFORM 2020 Catalogue and Merchandise on sale at all Platform events and online

Okwui Okpokwasili, *day pulls down the sky* purple vinyl album (in-person: \$35 / \$30 Danspace members)

Asiya Wadud and Okwui Okpokwasili, *day pulls down the sky / a filament in gold leaf* (in-person: \$10)

PLATFORM 2020: *Utterances From The Chorus*,

Volume I (in-person: \$20 / \$15 Danspace members)

Streaming Soon!

The *day pulls down the sky* album will soon be available for sale on all major streaming sites!

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Funding for PLATFORM 2020

PLATFORM 2020: *Utterances From The Chorus* is made possible with lead support from the Lambent Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Ford Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Howard Gilman Foundation.

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About Danspace Project

Danspace Project presents new work in dance, supports a diverse range of choreographers in developing their work, encourages experimentation, and connects artists to audiences. For 45 years, Danspace Project has supported a vital community of contemporary dance artists in an environment unlike any other in the United States. Located in the historic St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, Danspace shares its facility with the Church, The Poetry Project, and New York Theatre Ballet. Danspace Project's Commissioning Initiative has commissioned over 540 new works since its inception in 1994.

Danspace Project pays respect to Lenape peoples. We acknowledge that this work is situated on the Lenape island of Manhahtaan (Mannahatta) in Lenapehoking, the Lenape homeland. We pay respect to Lenape land, water, and ancestors past, present and future.

Accessibility

Danspace Project's main entrance is wheelchair accessible via a ramp.

The Parish Hall is accessible through the 11th street doors via one (8 inch high) step or a (28.5 inch wide) temporary ramp with assistance from our staff. Please request the use of the temporary ramp, ahead of the event date.

All gender bathrooms are accessible via a stairway (24 steps that are all 7.5 inches high). A same-level, one

stall restroom is available near Danspace Project's main performance space in the church Sanctuary. The doorway of that bathroom is 33 inches wide. There is a small corridor to pass through when moving between the Sanctuary and Parish Hall, the narrowest corner of this corridor is 29 inches wide.

CART (Communication access real-time captioning) will be provided.

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PLATFORM 2020 Performances & Events

FEB 22 | 12-5PM Saturday Afternoon Conversation

#1: Platform as Practice: Lydia Bell, Maura Donohue, Judy Hussie-Taylor, Kristin Juarez, Seta Morton, Okwui Okpokwasili, Cecilia Vicuña, Asiya Wadud, Eva Yaa Asantewaa. Food installation by Spiral Theory Test Kitchen.

FEB 28, MAR 6, 13, & 20 | 6-10PM Okwui Okpokwasili & Peter Born: *SITTING ON A MAN'S HEAD*

FEB 29 | 12-4PM Saturday Afternoon Conversation #2: Kin & Care: Jaime Shearn Coan, Maura Donohue, devynn emory, iele paloumpis, and Angie Pittman

MAR 7 | 11AM-4PM Saturday Afternoon Conversation #3: Voice & Body: Saidiya Hartman, Simone Leigh, Okwui Okpokwasili in conversation with Jasmine Hearn, Tendayi Kuumba, Benedict Nguyen, Samita Sinha, Tatyana Tenenbaum, and Asiya Wadud

MAR 9-10 | 7PM Nacera Belaza and Meryem Jazouli: *A SHARED EVENING*

MAR 14 | 8PM Okwui Okpokwasili and Samita Sinha: *A SHARED EVENING*

MAR 19 | 8PM Poetic Utterance #1: Justin Hicks, NIC Kay, Tendayi Kuumba & Greg Purnell, Alice Sheppard, Pamela Sneed, and Ni'Ja Whitson

MAR 21 | 12-4PM Saturday Afternoon Conversation #4: Slowness: Okwui Okpokwasili, Tina Campt. Catering by YARDY.

MAR 21 | 8PM Poetic Utterance #2: Eisa Davis, Yves B Golden x Venison Man, Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich, M Lamar, Ogemdi Ude, and Mariana Valencia

Buy your tickets now at danspaceproject.org!

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