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# Danspace Project

Spring 2021

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**PLATFORM 2021:**  
*The Dream of the Audience*

# Danspace Project

## **Land Acknowledgment**

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.

## **Site Acknowledgment**

“Before we begin, let’s take a moment to acknowledge that the construction of this building, Saint Mark’s Church-in-the-Bowery, was completed in 1799. That same year, New York State enacted the Gradual Emancipation Act 1, so it is reasonable to assume that this building where we are when we stand, sit, dance, and some still worship, was built by enslaved individuals on what was the homeland of the Lenape people.”

– Ishmael Houston-Jones

# Danspace Project Presents

**Ishmael Houston-Jones**

**in collaboration with jose e. abad, Snowflake Calvert, Keith Hennessy, and Kevin O'Connor**

***TRY***  
***a rehearsal***

film premiere & conversation  
with Miguel Gutierrez

Friday, May 21, 5pm (ET)

Part of PLATFORM 2021: *The Dream of the Audience*  
curated by Judy Hussie-Taylor

**TRY**  
**a rehearsal**

3 May 2021

Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, New York (Mannahatta) and Counterpulse, San Francisco (Yelamu)

josé abad  
Snowflake Calvert  
Keith Hennessy  
Ishmael Houston-Jones  
Kevin O'Connor

Cameras:  
Alex Romania (NYC)  
Ainsley Tharp (SF)

Sound score:  
josé abad

Edited by:  
Alex Romania

Video taped at Danspace Project, St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, New York and CounterPulse, San Francisco, 2021

Commissioned and premiered by Danspace Project for Platform 2021: *The Dream of the Audience*.

TRY Is being created with support from the Hewlett Foundation 50 Arts Commission, The Kenneth Rainin Foundation, The California Arts Council, The San Francisco Arts Commission, The Boffo Foundation, and a co-commission as part of the Eureka Commissions program by the Onassis Foundation.

The TRY team expresses gratitude to Judy Hussie-Taylor, Benjamin Akio

Kimitch, Yolanda Royster and the entire Danspace Project staff for the assistance and care given this production.

Many thanks to the St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery congregation and community.

**Ishmael Houston-Jones'** improvised dance and text work has been performed in world-wide. Drawn to collaborations as a way to move beyond boundaries and the known, Houston-Jones celebrates the political aspect of cooperation. Houston-Jones and Fred Holland shared a 1984 New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award for *Cowboys, Dreams and Ladders*, which reintroduced the erased narrative of the Black cowboy back into the mythology of the American west. He was awarded his second "Bessie" Award for the 2010 revival of *THEM*, his 1985/86 collaboration with writer Dennis Cooper and composer Chris Cochrane. In 2017 he received a third "Bessie" for *Variations on Themes from Lost and Found: Scenes from a Life and other Works by John Bernd*. In 2020 he received a fourth "Bessie" for Service to the Field of Dance. Houston-Jones is the DraftWork curator for works-in-progress at Danspace Project in New York. Also at Danspace, he curated Platform 2012: *Parallels* which focused on choreographers from the African diaspora and postmodernism and co-curated with Will Rawls Platform 2016: *Lost & Found, Dance, New York, HIV/AIDS, Then and Now*. He has received awards from The Herb Alpert Foundation, The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, The Foundation for Contemporary Arts, The Robert

Rauschenberg Foundation and United States Artists.

**Miguel Gutierrez** is a choreographer, performer, music maker, writer, video artist, educator and Feldenkrais Method practitioner based in Lenapehoking, currently known as Brooklyn, NY. His work creates empathetic and irreverent spaces outside of traditional discourse. His work has been presented his work internationally in venues including the Wexner Art Center, REDCAT, Festival d'Automne/Paris and American Realness. He has received four New York Dance and Performance Bessie Awards, a 2016 Doris Duke Artist Award, and he was a selected artist for the 2014 Whitney Biennial. [www.miguelgutierrez.org](http://www.miguelgutierrez.org)

**jose e. abad** (they/them) is a multidisciplinary performance artist, DJ, and curator based in unceded Ramaytush Ohlone Territory. Born in Olongapo City, Philippines to a Filipina Mother and an Afro-Caribbean U.S. Naval Soldier, their work explores the complexities of cultural identity at the crossroads of gender, sexuality, class, and race in the United States. Through dance theater, sonic and visual experimentation, they unearth lost histories that reside in the body, that the mind has forgotten and dominant culture has erased.

**Snowflake Calvert** is an Indigenous Two-Spirit dance artist. Growing up on occupied Turtle Island from a family of Mexican Indigenous immigrants to the US has created unique perspectives that inform her work as a performing artist. She is an interdisciplinary dancer with a strong professional background

in classical ballet to Indigenous contemporary dance.

**Keith Hennessy**, MFA, PhD, is a dancer, writer, choreographer, witch, and teacher. Raised in Canada, based in San Francisco since 1982, he tours widely. Using improvisation, ritual, collaboration, and protest, Keith instigates embodied experiences that respond to political crises. Hennessy directs Circo Zero, co-founded the dance/art/etc spaces 848 and CounterPulse, and was a member of Sara Mann's Contraband, 1985-1994.

**Kevin O'Connor**: I am a dance and experimental circus artist born along the Deshkan Ziibi ("Antler River") in the Ojibwe language in London Ontario, and now based in the San Francisco Bay area. I am an instigator of the Sweet Labour Art collective, a decade-long artistic collective exploring participatory decolonizing performances within polluted watersheds in Ontario. Over the last few years, I have worked with NAKA dance in Oakland, Skywatchers in the Bay Area, Oncogrrrls feminist art collective in Spain, and collaborated with Inuit hunter and designer Paulette Metuq on a project in Nunavut in the Canadian Arctic. I am a Biodynamic Craniosacral practitioner and hold a Ph.D. at the intersections of performance studies and science and technology studies. In my research, I experiment with ways to document the affective ecologies that take shape between fascia researchers, dancers, and the lively biological-cultural material they study. This writing can be found at [www.ecologicalbodying.com](http://www.ecologicalbodying.com).

**Alex Romania** (editor / cinematographer)

is a multidisciplinary performance / dance / film --- maker --- based between NY and MA. During the pandemic Romania has had the honor of collaborating on yet to be released films with Stacy Lynn Smith - 'RECKONING' - and Daria Fain : 'Patch the Sky with 5 Colored Stones' . Romania is currently making performance with their now 78 year old father, a self identified non-performer, in a triptych of works ('KLUTZ', 'junkhead', and 'Face Eaters' - currently in process). Romania looks forward to presenting this trilogy in 2023/2024 with the full ensemble and live music by their band 'W.O.R.M.' Catch them next on the Grace Exhibition Space digital broadcast May 29.

**ainsley elizabeth tharp** (sf cinematographer) is a Bay Area (Ohlone territory) based alchemist + artist + activist. She grew up in a Texas town called Victoria (Karankawas territory), she carries with her influence from catholic school, celetic folklore, mexican/mesoamerican myth, and white southern trailer trash. She creates visual landscapes as performance using various modes and media, such as movement, magic, ritual, video, projection, lighting, and the sculpting of readymade objects. ainsley is a University of Iowa Graduate with a BFA in choreography and movement practices. She has performed and worked artistically in the Bay Area, Berlin, Brussels, Iowa City, and Austin.

### **About Platform 2021**

Platform 2021: *The Dream of the Audience* (May 15 - June 18, 2021), curated by Judy Hussie-Taylor, is a digital Platform featuring acclaimed artists and past Platform curators, each with longstanding relationships to Danspace Project: Ishmael Houston-Jones, Okwui Okpokwasili, Eiko Otake with Joan Jonas, and Reggie Wilson. Each of the artists are receiving residency time in St. Mark's Church and opportunities for live conversations. New short video works by the artists, created while in-residence at the church, will be screened during the Platform.

Each week of the Platform will feature: Monday Archives: Special Danspace archival footage released on the Online Journal, Issue 12.

Friday Film Screenings: A new film premiere, filmed on site at Danspace Project. Film premieres on Zoom.

In two Conversations Without Walls, Lydia Bell and Kristin Juarez will activate these archives. The Journal will also include new written works by Writer-in-residence, Maura Nguyen Donohue.

Platform 2021 takes inspiration from a poem by the late Korean American artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, in which Cha addresses the audience "as a distant relative." "Although written in 1977, Cha's text resonates with our current condition," says Hussie-Taylor. "This Platform is an homage to audiences."

***Audience Distant Relative, Teresa Hak  
Kyung Cha (1977)***

you are the audience

you are my distant audience

i address you

as i would a distant relative

as if a distant relative

seen only heard only through someone  
else's

description

**Funding for Platform 2021**

Special thanks to the Howard Gilman  
Foundation and the National Endowment  
for the Arts for their support for  
Danspace Project's 2021 Platform, and  
thank you to all our vital supporters.



**Journal Issue #12: *The Dream of the  
Audience***

visit [danspaceproject.org/journal](https://danspaceproject.org/journal)

## Platform 2021 Schedule

**Saturday, May 15 at 7pm (ET):** Platform Launch with Ishmael Houston-Jones, Eiko Otake, Joan Jonas, Okwui Okpokwasili, and Reggie Wilson. Facilitated by Judy Hussie-Taylor.

**Monday, May 17:** On the Online Journal: Ishmael Houston-Jones and Miguel Gutierrez: *Variations on Themes from Lost and Found...*

**Friday, May 21 at 5pm (ET):** Film  
Premiere: Ishmael Houston-Jones

**Monday, May 31:** On the Online Journal: Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born: *Sitting On a Man's Head*

**Friday, June 4 at 5pm (ET):** Film Premiere: Okwui Okpokwasili

**Monday, June 7:** On the Online Journal: Eiko Otake: *A Body in Places* & Joan Jonas' *Moving Off the Land*

**Monday, June 7 at 5pm (ET):**  
Conversations Without Walls: Revisiting Eiko Otake's *A Body in Places* and Ishmael Houston-Jones and Will Rawls' *Lost & Found* Platforms with Lydia Bell & Kristin Juarez

**Friday, June 11 at 5pm (ET):** Film  
Premiere: Eiko Otake & Joan Jonas

**Monday, June 14:** On the Online Journal: Reggie Wilson: *...they stood shaking while others began to shout*

**Monday, June 14 at 5pm (ET):**  
Conversations Without Walls: Revisiting Reggie Wilson's *Dancing Platform*, *Praying Grounds* and Okwui Okpokwasili's *Utterances From the Chorus* with Lydia Bell & Kristin Juarez

**Friday, June 18 at 5pm (ET):** Film  
Premiere: Reggie Wilson

RSVP at [danspaceproject.org!](https://danspaceproject.org/)



## **Mission & History**

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 over 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 570 new works since its inception in 1994.

Danspace Project's Choreographic Center Without Walls (CW<sup>2</sup>) provides context for audiences and increased support for artists. Our public programs (including Danspace Presents, Platforms, Food for Thought, DraftWork), Commissioning Initiative, residencies, guest artist curators, and contextualizing activities and materials are core components of CW<sup>2</sup> offering a responsive framework for artists' works. Since 2010, we have produced twelve Platforms, published thirteen print catalogues and five e-books, launched the Conversations Without Walls discussion series, and explored models for public discourse and residencies.

## **Follow Us**

Instagram: @DanspaceProject

Twitter: @DanspaceProject

Facebook: Danspace Project

[danspaceproject.org](http://danspaceproject.org)

## **Danspace Project's Online Journal**

Ongoing with new posts weekly!

[danspaceproject.org/journal](http://danspaceproject.org/journal)

## Thanks to our Funders

Danspace Project's 2020-2021 Commissioning Initiative and Residency Program receives generous support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and The New York State Council on the Arts, as well as the generous individuals that support the Creation Fund.

Danspace Project's 2020-2021 season, including the DraftWork and Conversations Without Walls series, is presented, in part, with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council. Danspace Project programs are made possible in part through **public funds** from the National Endowment for the Arts; the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; the NYS DanceForce, a partnership program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council; and Materials for the Arts (a joint program of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and the Department of Sanitation).

Danspace Project extends special thanks to City Council Majority Leader and Cultural Affairs Committee Chair Jimmy Van Bramer, City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, New York State Senator Brad Hoylman, and State Assembly Member Deborah J. Glick for their advocacy and support.

Danspace Project gratefully acknowledges the **private support** of Anonymous; The Joseph and Joan Cullman Foundation for the Arts; Barbara Bell Cumming Foundation; Cultural Services of the French Embassy; Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation; Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; FUSED (French U.S. Exchange in Dance), a program developed by FACE Foundation and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States with support from the Florence Gould Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Institut français- Paris, the French Ministry of Culture

and private donors; Howard Gilman Foundation; The Harkness Foundation for Dance; Marta Heflin Foundation; the Jerome Foundation; Lambent Foundation Fund of the Tides Foundation; The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Mertz Gilmore Foundation; The New York Community Trust; The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation; The Jerome Robbins Foundation; the James E. Robison Foundation; The Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Inc.; The Shubert Foundation; Joseph S. and Diane H. Steinberg Charitable Trust; and the Teiger Foundation.

Danspace Project is also appreciative of the support of individuals, including donors, Members at every level, and its 2020-2021 Leadership Circle, which includes Carol Bryce-Buchanan; Barbara Castelli; Terry Creach; Vallejo Gantner; Allyson Green; Gary Hattem & Frazier Holloway; Dorothy Lichtenstein; Glenn Ligon; Ellen & George Needham; Derek Sands; Martha Sherman; Christina Sterner; Lena Stringari; and David and Monica Zwirner.

Danspace Project receives additional support from the Barr Foundation, ExxonMobil Foundation, Google, Moody's Foundation, and The William Penn Foundation through matching gifts programs. Special thanks to the Mertz Gilmore Foundation and Community Funds, Inc. - LuEsther T. Mertz Advised Fund for support of equipment and technological upgrades.

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# Danspace Project Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Individuals

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Danspace Project is located inside historic St. Mark's  
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