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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**

**Okwui Okpokwasili & Peter Born**

film premiere & conversation

Friday, June 4, 2021  
5pm (ET)

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

Created by Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born

Videography by Peter Born and Iki Nakagawa

Edited by Peter Born

Music by Peter Born and Okwui Okpokwasili

Filmed at Danspace Project, St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, New York, 2021

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

Thanks to Umechi Born, Jen Brogle, Pia Brogle, Nima Brogle, Samita Sinha, Anais Maviel, mayfield brooks, Ralph Lemon, David Thomson, Melanie Kress, John Born, Judy Hussie-Taylor

**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 as part of Performance Space 122's COIL festival, and won a 2014 Bessie Award for Outstanding Production, toured nationally and internationally, is the subject of a documentary film directed 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, as well as at Danspace Project's Platform 2020: *Utterances From the Chorus*, which Okpokwasili co-curated. 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 *Her Composition*, *Knut Åsdam's AbyssY*, *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. Her first album, *day pulls down the sky*, was produced by Danspace Project and released in February 2020.

**Peter Born** works as a director, composer and designer of performance and installation work, most recently in collaboration with Okwui Okpokwasili on their piece *Sitting On a Man's Head*. Other collaborations with Okpokwasili include *Adaku's Revolt* (2019), *Poor People's TV Room* (2017), and *Bronx Gothic*. Three of Peter's collaborations have garnered New York Dance Performance "Bessie" Awards. His work as an art director and prop stylist has been featured in video and photo projects with Vogue, Estee Lauder, Barney's Co-op, Bloomingdales, Old Navy, "25" magazine, The Wall Street Journal and No Strings Puppet Productions. He is a former New York public high school teacher, itinerant floral designer, corporate actor-facilitator, video maker and furniture designer.

### **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.



## 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/)

**Journal Issue #12: *The Dream of the Audience***  
visit [danspaceproject.org/journal](https://danspaceproject.org/journal)

## **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.

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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.

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# Danspace Project Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Individuals

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