



**PARK AVENUE ARMORY ANNOUNCES
2013 ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE AND
UNDER CONSTRUCTION SERIES**

**Intimate Performances of Works-in-Progress Utilize Historic Period Rooms
and Give Audiences Insight into the Creative Process**

New York, NY – April 18, 2013 – Park Avenue Armory announced today its 2013 artists in residence, as well as the programming for the institution's *Under Construction* series. Selected through curatorial invitation, vocalist-songwriter **Somi**, multidisciplinary performer **Okwui Okpokwasili**, choreographer **Faye Driscoll**, **Ralph Lemon**, visual artist **Alex Dolan**, and **Trusty Sidekick Theater Company** have all been awarded residencies at the Armory and will also be featured in this year's *Under Construction* series.

The Armory's Artist-in-Residence program, instituted in 2010, provides artists with dedicated space in the building's historic period rooms within which they can research, create, and develop new works across a diverse array of disciplines. Previous artists-in-residence have included director, designer, and writer Julian Crouch, soprano Lauren Flanigan, musician Meredith Monk, sound artist Marina Rosenfeld, string quartet ETHEL, playwright and director Young Jean Lee, and Shen Wei Dance Arts.

An outgrowth of the residency program, the *Under Construction* series features artists-in-residence sharing works-in-progress at intimate events in the Armory's jewel-like period rooms and other dynamic spaces. Now in its second year, *Under Construction* provides audiences intimate glimpses into the creative process and includes discussions between artists and audiences that are intended to help shape works through public response.

"Our Artists-in-Residence are a vital daily presence here at the Armory," noted President and Executive Producer Rebecca Robertson. "*Under Construction* is another way for us to continue our support of contemporary artists in the creation of new work and to share the creative energy coursing through the building with our audiences—in these cases, through works-in-progress presented on a very intimate scale. Part of the objective in the revitalization of our building is to become a hub of creativity in the City by offering more space for artist residencies, and we are thrilled to welcome these exciting artists under our roof this year."

"The moment I learned I'd been granted an Armory residency, I felt like Little Orphan Annie when she first arrives at Daddy Warbuck's mansion," noted former Armory Artist-in-Residence Young Jean Lee. "Lack of rehearsal space has always been a huge challenge for me, and the access the Armory residency provided totally revolutionized the way I make shows. Without a doubt, I made MORE and BETTER work during the period of my residency than I would have made without it."

The Armory is currently undergoing an ongoing \$200-million revitalization of its historic building that will stabilize and preserve the building and create new resources and state-of-the-art spaces for exhibitions, installations, and performances, as well as Artist-in-Residence studios, rehearsal rooms, and back-of-

house amenities—offering dynamic environments for artists and audiences alike. The multi-year renovation and restoration project, designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron, reinvigorates the Armory's original design while stabilizing, preserving, and renewing the building for future generations. Recent work includes the restoration of the Park Avenue façade and entrance. Ongoing works includes the restoration and renovation of the period rooms. During the 2013 season, the Board of Officers Room—one of the largest and most important historic rooms in America and one of the few remaining interiors designed by Herter Brothers—will be unveiled and become home to the Armory's recital series.

Under Construction Series 2013 Calendar of Events

Somi

Friday, May 17 at 8pm

Veterans Room

Vocalist-Songwriter Somi returns following her Armory residency in 2012 to continue work on *The Lagos Music Salon*, a multidisciplinary presentation inspired by a 15-month creative sabbatical in Lagos, Nigeria. The work in progress frames a narrative through the juxtaposition of reflective journal entries, musical vignettes, images, and song.

Okwui Okpokwasili

Thursday, May 30 at 8pm

Veterans Room

Okpokwasili will continue to develop her new work *Bronx Gothic*, a performance piece that combines movement, spoken word, and songs framed within an oral storytelling tradition that recalls the West African griot tradition and the epistolary form of the Victorian Gothic novel. This work in progress, created in collaboration with director Peter Born, is designed to reflect an intimacy that is at once inviting and unsettling and that investigates a variety of possibilities and limitations within the framework of the one woman performance.

Faye Driscoll

August 2013

Company C

In Driscoll's new work, she examines the ritual of performance as a heightened reflection of how our bodies and stories relate to and depend on one another. In residence at the Armory, Driscoll will approach this exploration through the lens of dance structures and their historical relationship to performative ritual. Driscoll will consider how dance and performance, from ancient ceremonies to story ballets, have been used as tools to embody knowledge, pass on experience, and also to liberate the id, the erotic, and the fantastical. Using the intimate scale of the Armory's historic Company C, Driscoll and her dancers will explore how performance can create a space of group action and transformation and concentrate on the experience and role of the audience, with opportunities for participation, and the collusion of the public and private.

Trusty Sidekick Theater Company

October 6, 2013

North Hall

Trusty Sidekick will begin development of *The 7 ½ Mysteries of Toulouse McLane* during their residency, a new work that is part theatrical experience, part installation that casts the audience in the role of the

hero of the story and tasks them with solving the mystery as it unravels. The immersive play for young audiences will explore the mysterious past, present, and future of the elusive Toulouse, and propels audiences through seven generations of the McLane family lineage over the course of 125 years. The Company's residency will allow Trusty Sidekick artists to incorporate Armory history and collaborate alongside young people to develop a portion of this full-length work.

Alex Dolan

September 2013

Company C

During his residency, visual artist and curator Alex Dolan plans to begin work on a new series of sculptures, allowing the historic space of the Armory to inform the production and life of the work. Dolan was selected for the residency in partnership with 89plus, an ongoing research project conducted by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Simon Castets, which examines the generation of artists born in or after 1989. www.89plus.com.

A New Project by Ralph Lemon and Friends

Tuesday, November 12 at 8pm

Board of Officers Room

An artist long dedicated to collaborations across artistic disciplines and cultures, Ralph Lemon will return to residence at the Armory with a group of collaborators for work on a new project that takes the form of a "performance-lecture-musical."

Ticket Information

Single tickets for Somi and Okwui Okpokwasili go on sale April 29 (April 22 for Armory members and April 25 for subscribers). Single tickets for the rest of the *Under Construction* series go on sale June 17 (June 10 for Armory members and June 13 for subscribers).

To purchase tickets, visit armoryonpark.org or call Park Avenue Armory Ticket Services at (212) 933-5812.

About the Artists

Influenced by African and Jazz legacies, globetrotting Ugandan-Rwandan vocalist and songwriter **Somi** has captivated audiences with a vocal prowess that has been compared to the likes of Nina Simone and Diane Reeves. Somi moved to Lagos, Nigeria from New York City in 2011 to write and create material for her studio album scheduled for release in the Fall 2013. Curious about how the move back to the African continent might shift her musical perspective and lyrical inspiration, her new body of songs strives to transcend diasporic romanticization by privileging "inside-out" cultural nuance and social narrative. Somi recently finished recording this album in New York City alongside famed Nigerian producer Cobhams Asuquo and acclaimed American composer Keith Witty.

Okwui Okpokwasili is an actress/performer based in Brooklyn, NY. She works across performance disciplines and genres in theater and dance. Her original work, *Pent-Up: A Revenge Dance* at PS 122, described as "ruthlessly clean and clever" by Helen Shaw of Time Out NY, received a 2010 Bessie Award. The New York Times has described her as "incandescent". Her work in multidisciplinary performance is best exemplified by her ongoing artistic collaboration with Ralph Lemon, the Bessie Award winning Artistic Director of Cross Performance. Okwui won a 2005 Bessie Award for her

performance in the final part of Ralph Lemon's Geography Trilogy, "*Come Home, Charley Patton*". She is currently touring with Nora Chipaumire in Miriam.

Faye Driscoll is a Bessie-award winning choreographer who has been called "a startlingly original talent" by the New York Times. She has choreographed 4 evening-length works with commissions from The Kitchen, The Wexner Center for the Arts, Dance Theater Workshop, American Dance Festival, and HERE Arts Center. Driscoll has received commissions from the Zenon Dance Company and Barnard College, was a 2011 Choreographic Fellow at the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography, and was an Artist-in-Residence at the Baryshnikov Arts Center. She has collaborated extensively with theater artists including Young Jean Lee, Cynthia Hopkins, Taylor Mac, Jennifer Miller, and NTUSA. Her video work was exhibited in *Younger than Jesus*, a triennial at the New Museum. Driscoll has been an adjunct professor at Bard College and NYU's Playwrights Horizon's Theater School. Her work has toured to the Wexner Center for the Arts, the Fusebox Festival, UCLA, the ICA/Boston, and CounterPULSE, with upcoming tours to the American Dance Festival and The Yard.

Trusty Sidekick Theater Company is a multidisciplinary theater company dedicated to creating bold, original productions for young people and their families. The company's ensemble of collaborators includes artists trained in physical theater, puppetry, music, dance, animation, and video projection. Hailed by *The New York Times* for "*blur[ing] the boundaries between the imagined and the real*," Trusty Sidekick often creates performances in unconventional spaces, including a settlement house in the Lower East Side, an island in New York Harbor, and a Revolutionary War-era battleground. As an itinerant company that constantly reinvents the way that kids and adults interact with live performance, TSTC redefines the traditional theatrical experience for a new generation of audiences. The company's name embodies the philosophy that the young audience is the hero setting out on an adventure with each of our productions, and the artists creating that work are their trusty sidekicks, at their side while they experience it.

Alex Dolan is an artist and curator whose work samples the abundance of information, materials, and objects available online to create conceptual pieces across various mediums. His work focuses on the interaction of everyday life with complex material and information ecologies, with an aim to serve as spiritual guides for an increasingly complex and disorienting world. He is a co-curator of Appendix Space. Recent exhibitions include *Infinite Cell* at Autzen Gallery (Portland), *Cherry Picking* at Karma International (Zurich), and *Deep Freeze* at Generation Works (Tacoma).

Ralph Lemon is a dancer, choreographer, writer, and visual artist. He currently serves as the Artistic Director of Cross Performance, a company dedicated to the creation of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary performance and presentation.

Citi and Bloomberg are the Armory's 2013 season sponsors.

Support for Park Avenue Armory's artistic season has been generously provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Shubert Foundation, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, the Marc Haas Foundation, the May and Samuel Rudin Foundation, The Charles Evans Foundation, and the Isak and Rose Weinman Foundation.

About Park Avenue Armory

Part palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory fills a critical void in the cultural ecology of New York by enabling artists to create—and audiences to experience—unconventional work that cannot be mounted in traditional performance halls and museums. With its soaring 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall—reminiscent of 19th-century European train stations—and array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory offers a new platform for creativity across all art forms.

Since its first production in September 2007—Aaron Young’s *Greeting Card*, a 9,216-square-foot “action” painting created by the burned-out tire marks of ten choreographed motorcycles—the Armory has organized a series of immersive performances, installations, and works of art that have drawn critical and popular attention working independently or with other cultural institutions. Among the highlights of its first five years are: Bernd Zimmermann’s harrowing *Die Soldaten*, in which the audience moved “through the music”; the unprecedented six-week residency of the Royal Shakespeare Company, in their own theater rebuilt in the drill hall; a massive digital sound and video environment by Ryoji Ikeda; a sprawling, gauzy, multisensory labyrinth created by Ernesto Neto; the final performances of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company across three separate stages; and the New York Philharmonic performing Karlheinz Stockhausen’s sonic masterpiece *Gruppen* with three orchestras surrounding the audience. The Armory’s 2013 artistic season began in March, with the presentation Karlheinz Stockhausen’s electronic masterpiece *OKTOPHONIE* in a lunar environment by artist Rirkrit Tiravanija. Upcoming in the Armory’s 2013 season is a monumental installation by Paul McCarthy, *WS*; the U.S. premiere of *The Machine*, a new play by Matt Charman; a multimedia collaboration mixing music, film, and politics, *Massive Attack V Adam Curtis*; and the U.S. premiere of *The Life and Death of Marina Abramović* staged by Robert Wilson.

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