



**Park Avenue Armory in Collaboration with
The Aspen Institute Arts Program and ArtChangeUS Present
*Looking Back | Looking Forward: Culture in a Changing America***

**Thelma Golden, Nancy Buirski, Meshell Ndegeocello, Eric Foner,
Michelle Dorrance, Damian Woetzel, Teresita Fernandez, and Roberta Uno
Participate in the Second Annual Symposium**

Saturday, February 17, 2018

(New York—Updated February 8, 2018) – On Saturday, February 17, 2018, Park Avenue Armory launches its 2018 *Interrogations of Form* series with *Looking Back | Looking Forward: Culture in a Changing America*. Artists, activists, academics, and community leaders will gather for a symposium of conversations, performances, salons and open studios exploring artistic, social, and political perspectives on the fiftieth anniversary of the extraordinary world-changing events of 1968 and the promise of the next fifty years. The event is presented in collaboration with The Aspen Institute Arts Program and ArtChangeUS.

Looking Back | Looking Forward marks the second annual *Culture in a Changing America* gathering at the Armory. The symposium aims to look back and reflect upon the influential moments and events in the United States in 1968—such as the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, the Tet Offensive, the silent demonstration at the Mexico City Summer Olympics, the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as well as the airing of the first televised interracial kiss on *Star Trek*—while also looking forward beyond 2018, examining the impact of this pivotal year on our nation’s history. Artistic interventions and conversations across visual and performing arts, activism, literature, film, and poetry will take place in the historic period rooms—including the Board of Officers Room, Veterans Room, and the second-floor Company Rooms—reflecting the open, multi-disciplinary approach for which the Armory is known.

The symposium will feature three Sessions throughout the day that offer unique presentations and performances across a variety of creative disciplines. Between programs, audiences are invited to visit salons and open studios on the first and second floors. Select participants include tap dancer **Michelle Dorrance**; journalist **Greg Tate**; visual artist **Teresita Fernandez**; founder of National Black Theatre **Sade Lythcott**; bassist, vocalist, and songwriter **Meshell Ndegeocello** with photographer **LaToya Ruby Frazier**; opera singer **Davóne Tines**; performing artist and activist **Staceyann Chin**; theater director **Roberta Uno**; and former New York City Ballet Principal Dancer and Director of the Aspen Institute Arts Program **Damian Woetzel**, among others.

Now in its third year, the *Interrogations of Form* series is part of the Armory’s expanded public offerings, which include talks and panel discussions that draw together artists, scholars, cultural leaders, and social visionaries to explore cultural and civic issues and ideas; use Armory productions as springboards for examining contemporary interests and concerns; and provoke audiences to think beyond conventional interpretations and perspectives of art. Past *Interrogations of Form* symposia include the inaugural *Culture in a Changing America* symposium in February 2017, as well as *The Shape of Things* convening curated with multidisciplinary artist **Carrie Mae Weems** in December 2017.

“For more than a decade now, we have pushed artists and audiences to topple traditional boundaries of artistic expression,” said Rebecca Robertson, Executive Producer and President of Park Avenue Armory. “This series builds upon this mission, deepening engagement with our audiences and drawing in leaders from across the

artistic and social spectrum to examine our cultural moment more broadly and confront preconceived notions about the role of the arts in society.”

Additional upcoming programs at Park Avenue Armory include: *YERMA*, the 1934 drama by Federico García Lorca reimaged by Australian director and dramatist **Simon Stone** starring **Billie Piper** in her North American stage debut; *myRiad*, a hyperstitial “concertscape” by **Oneohtrix Point Never** imagined from the perspective of an alien intelligence that explores disorienting relationships between space and sound; *The Let Go*, a dance-based town hall by interdisciplinary artist **Nick Cave**, to which the community of New York is invited to “let go”; *The Damned*, Luchino Visconti's dark drama performed by the prestigious **Comédie-Française** and directed by Tony Award-winning **Ivo van Hove**; *The Six Brandenburg Concertos*, a new, evening length work by **Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker** exploring the movement, dance, and transcendental dimension found in J.S. Bach's iconic masterpiece; *The Head and the Load* by renowned South African artist **William Kentridge**, which synthesizes elements of his practice to conjure his grandest and most ambitious production to date, commissioned by the Armory; and an annual series of eclectic and intimate concerts and conversations held in the Armory’s head house spaces.

Looking Back | Looking Forward: Culture in a Changing America

Saturday, February 17, 2018

12:00-8:15 PM

Sessions and participants are subject to change

SESSION ONE

12:00-3:00 PM

Remembering 1968

12:00-12:45 PM

David Levering-Lewis (Pulitzer Prize winner, biographer of W.E.B DuBois and Professor of History, New York University), **Beth Lew-Williams** (Assistant Professor of History, Princeton University), and **Cheryl Wall** (Professor of English, Rutgers University) discuss 1968 as a pivotal year in our nation’s history with moderator **Eric Foner** (DeWitt Clinton Professor of History, Columbia University). Introductory reading by poet **lê thi diem thúy**.

The National Black Theatre presents *The Peculiar Patriot*

12:00-12:45 PM

The National Black Theatre, established in 1968, presents excerpts of *The Peculiar Patriot* (National Black Theatre/Hi-ARTS, 2017), created and performed by **Liza Jessie Peterson**, which confronts the complex and critical issue of mass incarceration. The work follows protagonist Betsy LaQuanda Ross (played by Peterson), a self-proclaimed “peculiar patriot”, as she makes regular visits to penitentiaries to boost the morale of her incarcerated friends and family, navigating love between barbed wire. The performance is followed by a conversation with **Liza Jessie Peterson** and **Jonathan McCrory** (Director of Theatre Arts Program, The National Black Theatre).

Salons

1:00-1:45 PM

The audience is invited to visit our Salons and open studios on the first and second floor; first come, first served. Salon hosts include: **Cannupa Hanska Luger** (multidisciplinary artist), **Beatrice Glow** and **Alec Inca** (*Mannahatta VR*), **Camille Zamora & Monica Yunus** (*Le Dernier Sorcier*), **Dance Theatre of Harlem** (Open Studio), and the **Armory Arts Education Program** (Art of the Future Salon). Screenings include: **Nancy Buirski’s *Rape of Recy Taylor*** and **LaMont Hamilton’s *This Da Good Part***.

Memorable Movements

2:00-2:45 PM

Virtuosic tap dancer and choreographer **Michelle Dorrance**, opera singer **Davóné Tines**, and visual artist **Teresita Fernandez** join in a collaborative discussion about the energy of the arts coming out of the 1960's. The conversation will be moderated by **Damian Woetzel** (former Principal Dancer of the New York City Ballet, Director of the Aspen Institute Arts Program, and President-Designate of The Juilliard School).

1968 and Beyond

2:00-2:45 PM

Mandy Carter (Black LGBTQIA activist), **Harry Gamboa Jr.** (artist), **Roger Harris** (Founder & CEO, Urban School Specialists, LLC), and **George Stonefish** (First Nations activist, traditional dancer & singer) discuss **1968 as a pivotal year in our nation's history with moderator John Kuo Wei Tchen** (Founding Director of Asian/Pacific/American Institute, NYU and co-founder Museum of Chinese in America). Introductory reading by poet **lê thi diem thúy**.

SESSION TWO

3:00-6:00 PM

The Cycle of History: 'The Rape of Recy Taylor'

3:00-3:45 PM

Producer/Director **Nancy Buirski** (*Loving* (2016), *By Sidney Lumet* (2015), *The Loving Story* (2011)) and Susan Fales-Hill (Author and Host of NYPR's Icons and Innovators) discusses the timeliness of her latest film, *The Rape of Recy Taylor* (2017), the story of a 24-year-old black sharecropper, who was gang raped by six white boys in 1944 Alabama. Her case was investigated by the NAACP's rape investigator Rosa Parks, who rallied support and triggered an unprecedented outcry for justice. The film exposes a legacy of physical abuse of black women, from sexual aggression on southern streets in 1940 to today's college campuses, to #MeToo and the recent Women's Marches.

Visualizing Change

3:00-3:45 PM

Melissa Calderón (artist), **Jasmine Murrell** (interdisciplinary artist and educator), and **Cannupa Hanska Luger** (multi-disciplinary artist) discuss the power of visual art to unearth hidden histories and expose societal issues with moderator **Kalia Brooks Nelson** (independent curator and educator).

Salons

4:00-4:45 PM

The audience is invited to visit our Salons and open studios on the first and second floor; first come, first served. Salon hosts include: **Beatrice Glow** (artist and multisensory storyteller) and **Alec Inca** (Founder of Highway101), **OlaRonke Akinmowo** (Free Black Women's Library), **Joseph Cuillier** and **Shani Peters** (The Black School), **Dance Theatre of Harlem** (Open Studio), and the **Armory Arts Education Program** (Art of the Future Salon). Screenings include: **Nancy Buirski's Rape of Recy Taylor** and **LaMont Hamilton's This Da Good Part**. Performance of selections from Pauline García Viardot's opera *Le Dernier Sorcier* (1868) presented by **Camille Zamora** and **Monica Yunus**.

The Power of the Word

5:00-5:45 PM

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán (author and organizer), **Kamilah Forbes** (Executive Producer, Apollo Theater), **Ebony Noelle Golden** (artist and strategist), and **lê thi diem thúy** (poet) discuss the impact of history on literary and artistic practices with moderator **Roberta Uno** (theatre director and Director, Arts in a Changing America). Discussion is followed by a performance of selections from *125th & FREEdom* by **Ebony Noelle Golden** and ensemble.

Art, Music & the Movement

5:00-5:45 PM

Dick Griffin (visual artist, composer and trombonist) joins his friend of over fifty years **Walter C. Jackson** (sculptor) to tell stories of growing up in 1960s Mississippi, the untimely assassination of their friend and neighbor activist Medgar Evers, and the impact of those formative years on their artistic development. Soprano **Camille Zamora** moderates.

SESSION THREE

6:00-8:15 PM

Salons

6:00-6:45

The audience is invited to visit our Salons and open studios on the first and second floor; first come, first served. Salon hosts include: **Beatrice Glow** and **Alec Inca** (*Mannahatta VR*), **OlaRonke Akinmowo** (Free Black Women's Library), **Camille Zamora & Monica Yunus** (*Le Dernier Sorcier*), **Lizania Cruz** (We the News Project), and the **Armory Arts Education Program** (Art of the Future Salon). Screening of **Nancy Buirski's Rape of Recy Taylor**. Conversation with **LaMont Hamilton** (interdisciplinary artist) and **Greg Tate** (journalist), following a screening of *This Da Good Part*.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

6:45-7:30 PM

Thelma Golden (Director and Chief Curator, The Studio Museum in Harlem), **Sade Lythcott** (Chief Executive Officer, National Black Theatre) and **Virginia Johnson** (Founding member, Principal Dancer and Artistic Director, Dance Theatre of Harlem) discuss the creation (in 1968/1969) of three of New York City's most enduring cultural institutions and the shaping of the city's cultural agenda over the last fifty years with **Tom Finkelpearl** (Commissioner, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs).

Looking Forward, Looking Back

6:45-7:30 PM

Johanna Fernández (Professor of History, Baruch College, CUNY), **Charon Hribar** (Director of Cultural Strategy for the Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice and Co-coordinator of Theomusicology and Movement Arts for the Poor People's Campaign: National Call for Moral Revival), and **Paola Mendoza** (filmmaker, Artistic Director, Women's March) address the impact of the protest movements of the 1960s, in particular the Poor People's Campaign of 1968, on current movements that challenge systemic racism, poverty, and gender inequality in American society. Invocation by **George Stonefish** (First Nations activist, traditional dancer & singer).

Special Performance of No More Water / The Fire Next Time

7:30-8:15 PM

Legendary bassist, vocalist, and songwriter **Meshell Ndegeocello**, in collaboration with director **Charlotte Brathwaite**, presents selections from *No More Water | The Fire Next Time: The Gospel According to James Baldwin*, an ever-evolving multi-disciplinary performance of artistic and activist responses to James Baldwin, featuring **Jebin Bruni** (keyboards), **Justin Hicks** (singer-songwriter) with special participation by **LaToya Ruby Frazier** (photographer), **Staceyann Chin** (performance artist), **Jadele McPherson** (interdisciplinary performer), **Paul Thompson** (Principal, Urban Assembly School of Music and Art, Brooklyn), and others.

TICKETS

Tickets: \$15 per Session

Tickets can be purchased at armoryonpark.org or by phone at (212) 933-5812.

SPONSORSHIP

Citi and Bloomberg Philanthropies are the Armory's 2018 season sponsors.

Support for Park Avenue Armory's artistic season has been generously provided by the Charina Endowment Fund, the Altman Foundation, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, The Emma and Georgina Bloomberg Foundation, the Marc Haas Foundation, The Kaplen Brothers Fund, the Juliet Lea Hillman Simonds Foundation, the Leon Levy Foundation, the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, and the Isak and Rose Weinman Foundation.

About the Aspen Institute Arts Program

The Aspen Institute Arts Program was established to support and invigorate the role of arts and culture in public life through initiatives, convenings, and strategy work across the United States. Directed by Damian Woetzel, it brings together artists, advocates, educators, government officials and others to exchange ideas and develop policies and programs that strengthen the reciprocal relationship between the arts and society. By examining how artists shape our views of community and country, the Arts Program draws us into causes of social concern and helps uncover creative solutions based in empathy and shared understanding.

About ArtChangeUS

Arts in a Changing America (ArtChangeUS) is a five-year initiative that embraces the dramatic demographic transformation of the United States and its profound impact on arts and culture. Based out of the California Institute of the Arts, ArtChangeUS is creating a vast network for artists, idea producers, and organizations across sectors to reframe the national arts conversation at the intersection of arts and social justice. ArtChangeUS serves as an urgently needed catalyst that brings unheard leadership voices in the arts to the forefront of social discourse, arts production and community change.

About the 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, students to explore, 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 an array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory offers a platform for creativity across all art forms. Together, these and other spaces within the historic building utilized for arts programming comprise the Thompson Arts Center, named in recognition of the Thompson family's ongoing support of the institution.

Since its first production in September 2007, the Armory has organized and commissioned immersive performances, installations, and cross-disciplinary collaborations in its vast drill hall that defy traditional categorization and challenge artists to push the boundaries of their practice. In its historic period rooms, the Armory presents small-scale performances and programs, including its acclaimed Recital Series, which showcases musical talent from across the globe within the intimate salon setting of the Board of Officers Room; and the new Artists Studio series in the newly restored Veterans Room, which features innovative artists and artistic pairings that harken back to the imaginative collaboration and improvisation of the original group of designers who conceived the space. The Armory also offers robust arts education programs at no cost to underserved New York City public school students, engaging them with the institution's artistic programming and the building's history and architecture.

Programmatic highlights from the Armory's first 10 years include Bernd Alois Zimmermann's harrowing *Die Soldaten*, in which the audience moved "through the music"; *the event of a thread*, a site-specific installation by Ann Hamilton; the final performances of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company across three separate stages; *WS* by Paul McCarthy, a monumental installation of fantasy, excess, and dystopia; an immersive *Macbeth* set in a Scottish heath by Rob Ashford and Kenneth Branagh; a profound staging of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* staged by Peter Sellars and performed by Sir Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker; Louis Andriessen's *De Materie* in a highly imaginative staging by director Heiner Goebbels that included floating zeppelins and a flock of 100 sheep; Taryn Simon's *An Occupation of Loss*, a monumental work with 30 professional mourners from around the world that blended sculpture, sound, architecture, and performance in an exploration of the boundaries of grief between living and dead, past and present, performer and viewer; Julian Rosefeldt's *Manifesto*, a multi-channel cinematic installation featuring Cate Blanchett; eight-time Drama Desk-nominated play *The Hairy Ape*, directed by Richard Jones and starring Bobby Cannavale; *Hansel & Gretel*, a new commission by Jacques Herzog, Pierre

de Meuron, and Ai Weiwei that explored the meaning of publicly shared space in the era of surveillance; and Pierre Boulez's masterwork *Répons*, performed twice each evening by Ensemble intercontemporain and IRCAM under the baton of Matthias Pintscher with the audience changing seats in between to get a new sonic perspective.

Concurrent with its artistic program, the Armory has undertaken an ongoing \$215-million revitalization of its historic building, designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron. www.armoryonpark.org

###

Media Contacts

For more information or to request images, please contact:

Tom Trayer, ttrayer@armoryonpark.org or (212) 933-5801

Natalie Schwich, nschwich@armoryonpark.org or (212) 933-5834