

**PARK AVENUE  
ARMORY**



**Carrie Mae Weems Curates Day-Long Convening that  
Critiques the History of Violence**

**Multidisciplinary artists join musicians, writers, and public intellectuals  
to consider *The Shape of Things*, concluding Park Avenue Armory's  
2017 *Interrogations of Form* Series**

**Sunday, December 17, 2017**

(New York—Updated December 14, 2017) – On Sunday, December 17, 2017, Park Avenue Armory artist-in-residence **Carrie Mae Weems** will host *The Shape of Things*, a day-long convening at the Armory that critiques the history of violence and questions the shape of things to come in the context of our current political state.

As she concludes her year-long residency, Weems continues to grapple with the history of violence in our country—personally and within her body of work. She has assembled like-minded contemporary artists, writers, poets, musicians, and social theorists to join her for *The Shape of Things* to critique our tumultuous political and social climate through a series of readings, performances, and conversations. Inspired by the concepts of Walter Benjamin's *Critique of Violence*, Weems will develop with her peers a deep, thoughtful social commentary reflective of our time.

Notable participants include: choreographer and dancer **Kyle Abraham**; poet **Elizabeth Alexander**; performer **Eric Berryman**; performance and installation artist **Tania Bruguera**; urban revitalization strategist **Majora Carter**; innovator **James Burling Chase**; actress and playwright **Eisa Davis**; architect **Elizabeth Diller**; The Met's **Kimberly Drew**; photographer **John Edmonds**; juvenile justice reformer **Adam Foss**; writer and performance artist **Malik Gaines**; social practice artist **Theaster Gates**; filmmaker **Tony Gerber**; FLEXN dance pioneer **Reggie (Regg Roc) Gray**; trombonist, painter, and composer **Dick Griffin**; dancer and choreographer **Francesca Harper**; trombonist **Craig Harris**; vocalist **Nona Hendryx**; playwright **Branden Jacobs-Jenkins**; cinematographer **Arthur Jafa**; artist and cultural worker **Shani Jamila**; trumpeter **JAWWAAD**; gaming pioneers **Navid** and **Vassiliki Khonsari**; NYU Professor and musician **Jason King**; philosopher **Gregg Lambert**; composer and Bang on the Can co-founder **David Lang**; novelist, filmmaker, and curator **Ernie Larsen**; Wooster Group founding member and director **Liz LeCompte**; Harvard Professor **Sarah Lewis**; journalist **Seamus McGraw**; poet **Aja Monet**; jazz pianist and composer **Jason Moran**; performance studies professor **Fred Moten**; visual artist **Shirin Neshat**; playwright **Lynn Nottage**; professor of contemporary rhetorical theory **Kendall Phillips**; doctor **Jeremy Richman**; poet **Carl Hancock Rux**; performance artist **Alexandro Segade**; writer and activist **Tanya Selvaratnam**; guitarist and composer **Marvin Sewell**; playwright and actress **Anna Deavere Smith**; conceptual artist **Hank Willis Thomas**; performance artist **Carmelita Tropicana**; puppeteer **Basil Twist**; theater director **Roberta Uno**; vocalist and composer **Imani Uzuri**; and Wooster Group founding member and actress **Kate Valk**, among others.

“Artists have continued to be the arbors of peace through times of unrest and uncertainty, providing glimmers of light and possibility through creative expression,” said Weems. “In the extraordinary times in which we live, the many ways artists process the moment through their ongoing artistic production is as urgent as ever before. It is perhaps more necessary now.”

*The Shape of Things* will activate the Armory’s historic period rooms, including the Board of Officers Room, Veterans Room, Parlor, Colonel’s Reception Room, and Company Rooms on the second floor, with artistic interventions and dialogue across visual and performing arts, literature, film, TV, poetry, and spoken word, reflecting the open, multi-disciplinary approach for which the Armory is known.

The series is part of the Armory’s expanded public offerings as the groundbreaking organization enters its 10<sup>th</sup> year of programming, which includes 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.

“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.”

### ***The Shape of Things***

**Sunday, December 17, 2017**

**12:00-10:00PM**

#### **TICKETS**

Visitors may purchase tickets for the entire day of activities.

Tickets: \$45

Tickets can be purchased at [armoryonpark.org](http://armoryonpark.org) or by phone at (212) 933-5812.

#### **SPONSORSHIP**

Citi; Pershing Square Capital Management, LP; and Bloomberg Philanthropies are the Armory’s 2017 season sponsors.

Support for Park Avenue Armory’s artistic season has been generously provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Altman Foundation, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, the Howard Gilman Foundation, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, The Shubert 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 Carrie Mae Weems**

Carrie Mae Weems is a multi-media artist who has created a complex body of work centered on her commitment to better understanding the present by examining our collective past. She explores this concept through image, text, photography, performance, film and video, along with her historic convenings of artists, composers, and public intellectuals across various disciplines. Weems is the recipient of numerous awards, including the MacArthur “Genius” Award, the Rome Prize, and the National Medal of Art. Her work can be seen internationally and is found in major public and private collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Tate Modern, and the Museum of Modern Art.

### **About the Artist-in-Residence Program**

Launched in 2010, the Armory's artist-in-residence program supports artists across genres in the creation and development of new work. Each artist sets up a studio in one of the Armory's period rooms, providing a unique backdrop that can serve as both inspiration and as a collaborator in their project development. Residencies also include participation in the Armory's arts education program. Current artists-in-residence include installation and performance artist Tania Bruguera; performance artists Malik Gaines and Alexandro Segade; choreographer and FLEXN dance pioneer Reggie (Regg Roc) Gray and his company the D.R.E.A.M. Ring; playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins and performance artist Carmelita Tropicana; set designer and director Christine Jones and choreographer Steven Hoggett; playwright and screenwriter Lynn Nottage; composer and guitarist Marvin Sewell; and photographer and visual artist Carrie Mae Weems. The Artist-in-Residence Program is made possible by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Previous Armory artists-in-residence have included inventive theater company 600 Highwaymen; theater artists Taylor Mac and Machine Dazzle; writer, director, and production designer Andrew Ondrejcek; vocalist, composer, and cultural worker Imani Uzuri; dancer and choreographer Wally Cardona; visual artist and choreographer Jason Akira Somma; soprano Lauren Flanigan; writer Sasha Frere-Jones; Trusty Sidekick Theater company; vocalist-songwriter Somi; multidisciplinary performer Okwui Okpokwasili; choreographer Faye Driscoll; artist Ralph Lemon; visual artist Alex Dolan; Musician Meredith Monk; sound artist Marina Rosenfeld; string quartet ETHEL; playwright and director Young Jean Lee; and Shen Wei Dance Arts; among others.

### **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 19<sup>th</sup>-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 Hairly 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](http://www.armoryonpark.org).

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### **Media Contacts**

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