



**Park Avenue Armory Presents
Queer Hip Hop Cypher on May 15 as part of Making Space Public Programming Series**

**Afro-Cuban Hip Hop Cypher Headlined by Astraea-Award Winning Duo Krudxs Cubensi
Features Dance, Drumming, Film Screenings, Procession, and
Celebration of BIPOC Vegan Foodways**

**Roundtable Curated by Hip Hop Scholar Dr. Shanté Paradigm Smalls Tackles the
Multicultural and Non-Binary Histories and Futures of New York Hip Hop**

New York, NY – Thursday, August 28, 2022 – Park Avenue Armory continues its Making Space Public Programming Series with **Queer Hip Hop Cypher**, an exploration of the queer origins and aesthetics of hip hop through discussion, film, and performance on **Sunday, May 15, 2022 at 3pm**. The event includes a session with Soul Fire Farm on BIPOC farming, food justice, and their connection to community-centered activism, a panel discussion centering on the queer underground hip hop scene led by *Hip Hop Heresies* author and scholar **Dr. Shanté Paradigm Smalls**, and a Black Healing Portal curated by Astraea award-winning duo **Krudxs Cubensi**.

The event begins with a pre-recorded virtual keynote address by Soul Fire Farm Co-Founder and Farm Manager, **Leah Penniman**. Attendees also share a vegan meal. (Options for various dietary restrictions will be available.) Krudxs Cubensi members Odaymar Cuesta and Oli Prendes adhere to vegan lifestyles and politics, lifting up the importance of BIPOC food sovereignty, food justice, and ancestral connection between food and land.

Audiences have the opportunity to view a curated selection of videos throughout the event from Krudxs Cubensi's *Archivocubecuir* (Queer Cuban Film Archive) as well as excerpts of Shanté Paradigm Smalls' 2006 hip hop documentary *Pick up the Mic* and music videos by Afro-Latina Brooklyn-based Mcee and activist **Ms.Boogie**.

The event continues in the Veterans Room with a session and roundtable discussion led by hip hop scholar, musician, and dharma teacher **Shanté Paradigm Smalls** and opened with a performance by Creative Capital grant-winner and Priestess of Twerk **Nia Witherspoon**. A roundtable discussion moderated by follows in the Veterans Room. Pulling from the topics of Smalls' forthcoming book, *Hip Hop Heresies*, the roundtable focuses on the ways that hip hop cultural production in New York City from the 1970s through the early 21st century produced film, visual art, and music that offer queer articulations of race, gender, and sexuality, and how this might affect the future of hip hop. Panelists include: Ms.Boogie; Founding Co-Editor of *Vibe* Magazine **Scott Poulson-Bryant**; educator, poet, youth advocate, and hip hop artist **tim'm west**; and Nia Witherspoon.

The event concludes with Krudxs Cubensi's *Black Healing Portal II: Más allá del tiempo / Beyond Time*, an interdisciplinary, multidimensional performance and community offering centering the lives and artistic work of Afro Caribbean and Latin American multilingual transfeminist warriors. The portal begins with a procession from the Veterans Room to the Board of Officers Room, led by Afro-Cuban dancer **Yesenia Selier** and batá drummers. Krudxs Cubensi then present their music and art, linking Afro-Yoruba spiritual practices to modern

rapping and exploring race, religion, gender, temporality, class, and sexuality. (This portion of the event takes place in Spanish and English.) This session is emceed by poet and Executive Director of the Nuyorican Poet's Cafe **Caridad "La Bruja" De La Luz** and with music by a DJ to be announced.

This is the second iteration of the duo's Black Healing Portal; the first iteration took place at the University of California at Berkeley on Wednesday, April 20, 2022, presented by the university's Black Studies Collaboratory co-led by Professors Leigh Raiford and Tianna Paschel.

"The cypher is a gathering space in hip hop culture where all voices can get into the mix, and this cypher centers the intersectional, multicultural, queer, and feminist voices that have always been a part of hip hop," says **Curator of Public Programming at Park Avenue Armory, Tavia Nyong'o**. "Shanté and Krudxs are both looking to the past to inform what we want our present and future to look like, and I'm excited to make space for this event at our historic venue."

"For more than a decade now, we have brought together some of the most innovative artists of our time and pushed audiences to topple traditional boundaries of artistic expression," says **Rebecca Robertson, Founding President and Executive Producer**. "Our Public Programming series builds upon this mission, deepening engagement with our audiences and drawing in leaders from across the artistic, social, and scholastic spectrum to examine how our community understands culture more broadly and confront preconceived notions about the role of the arts in our current moment."

QUEER HIP HOP CYPHER
WITH KRUDXS CUBENSI AND SHANTÉ PARADIGM SMALLS
Sunday, May 15, 2022

3:00pm – 4:00pm: Second Floor Hallway
Celebration of BIPOC Vegan Foodways

Opening remarks, including pre-recorded keynote address by Soul Fire Farm Co-Founder and Farm Manager, **Leah Penniman**
Accompanied by vegan catering

3:00pm – 7:00pm: 19K
Films on Loop

Including: Music videos by Ms.Boogie, Excerpts from *Pick up the mic* (2005), award-winning documentary about the queer hip-hop scene

4:00pm – 5:15pm: Veterans Room
Hip Hop Heresies Roundtable

Panel discussion on the queer aesthetics in hip hop, from the 1990's underground scene in New York to today, opened with a performance by Creative Capital grant-winner and Priestess of Twerk **Nia Witherspoon**. Panelists include: **Dr. Shanté Paradigm Smalls**, CLAGS Award-Winning Hip Hop Scholar and Dharma Teacher; **Ms.Boogie**, Afro-Latina Brooklyn-based Mcee and activist; **Scott Poulson-Bryant**, Founding Co-Editor of *Vibe* Magazine; **tim'm west**, educator, poet, youth advocate, and hip-hop artist; and **Nia Witherspoon**, Priestess of Twerk. The session concludes with additional excerpts from *Archivocubequir* films by **Krudxs Cubensi**.

5:15pm – 5:30pm: First Floor Hallway

Procession

Audience moves from the Veterans Room to the Board of Officers Room, led by Afro-Cuban dancer **Yesenia Selier** and batá drummers.

5:30pm – 7:00pm: Board of Officers Room

Black Healing Portal II: Más allá del tiempo / Beyond Time

Includes performances by **Krudxs Cubensi**, emceed by poet and Executive Director of the Nuyorican Poet's Café **Caridad "La Bruja" De La Luz**

TICKETING

Tickets at \$25 (plus fees) may be purchased by phone through the Armory Box Office at (212) 933-5812, Monday through Friday from 10am to 6pm; and online at armoryonpark.org.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Health and safety while at the Armory is of the utmost importance. The Armory requires that all ticket holders be **fully vaccinated**. Upon entry to the building, ticket holders will be required to show **proof of full vaccination** (the New York State Excelsior Pass or a hard copy or photo of your vaccination card), as well as a **government-issued photo ID**. The Armory will continue to follow all city, state, and CDC guidelines in regard to COVID-19 safety protocols. All patrons and staff are **required to wear masks** while inside the Armory (N95, KN95 or KF94 masks are encouraged).

ABOUT KRUDXS CUBENSI

Internationally recognized as Krudxs Cubensi, Odaymar Cuesta (b. 1973; Havana, Cuba) and Oli Prendes (b. 1971; Guantanamo, Cuba) are Cuban queer nonbinary artists, feminist hip hop pioneers, working class independent musicians, and justice fighters standing for Black people, trans people, woman, queers, immigrants, and intersectional beings. They twist powerful crispy flow, fierce feminist rebel lyrics and Afro-Cuban sounds into a unique musical style with uplifting messages and irresistible delivery.

Cuesta and Prendes formed their powerful duo in 2004, relocating from Cuba to Austin, Texas in 2006 to escape government censorship. Since its inception, the duo has recorded over 200 original songs, 8 original albums, and 30 art and music videos. They have given over 500 performances in national and international tours, appearing in such prestigious venues as Minneapolis' First Avenue Theatre Minneapolis, San Francisco's Brava Theatre and Mission Cultural Center, Austin's SXSW Film and Music Festival, New York City's Lincoln Center, and DC's Kennedy Center.

Awards include: an Astraea Foundation Global Arts Fund grant (2017); Best Hip Hop Video at the Lucas Video Awards in Havana, Cuba (2016); a residency at allgo, a Texan organization supporting queer people of color; and Best Topical Documentary for *Somos Krudas* at the Lone Star Emmys (produced by Arts in Context with PBS). Krudxs Cubensi was appointed to the Abolition Democracy Program in the Black Studies Collaboratory at University of California at Berkeley in August 2021.

ABOUT DR. SHANTÉ PARADIGM SMALLS

Dr. Shanté Paradigm Smalls is a scholar, artist, and writer. Smalls's teaching and research focuses on Black popular culture in music, film, visual art, genre fiction, and other aesthetic forms. Smalls' first book, *Hip Hop Heresies: Queer Aesthetics in New York City*, which won the 2016 CLAGS Fellowship Award for best manuscript in LGBTQ Studies, will be published by NYU Press in June 2022. Smalls makes music, poetry, and other creative musings.

SPONSORSHIP

Citi and Bloomberg Philanthropies are the Armory's 2022 Season Sponsors.

Support for Park Avenue Armory's artistic season has been generously provided by the Charina Endowment Fund, the Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, the Howard Gilman Foundation, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, The Emma and Georgina Bloomberg Foundation, the Marc Haas Foundation, the Leon Levy Foundation, the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, Gregory Annenberg Weingarten, GRoW @ Annenberg, the Richenthal Foundation, and the Isak and Rose Weinman Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the Armory's Artistic Council.

ABOUT PUBLIC PROGRAMMING AT THE ARMORY

Park Avenue Armory's Public Programming series brings diverse artists and cultural thought-leaders together for discussion and performance around the important issues of our time viewed through an artistic lens. Launched in 2017, the series encompasses a variety of programs including large-scale community events; multi-day symposia; intimate salons featuring performances, panels, and discussions; Artist Talks in relation to the Armory's Drill Hall programming; and other creative interventions.

Highlights from the Public Programming series include: **Carrie Mae Weems'** 2017 event *The Shape of Things* and 2021 convening and concert series *Land of Broken Dreams*, whose participants included **Elizabeth Alexander, Theaster Gates, Elizabeth Diller, Nona Hendryx, Somi, and Spike Lee**, among others; a daylong Lenape Pow Wow and Standing Ground Symposium held in the Wade Thompson Drill Hall, the first congregation of Lenape Elders on Manhattan Island since the 1700s; "A New Vision for Justice in America" conversation series in collaboration with Common Justice, exploring new coalitions, insights, and ways of understanding question of justice and injustice in relation moderated by *FLEXN Evolution* creators **Reggie "Regg Roc" Gray** and director **Peter Sellars**; Culture in a Changing America Symposia exploring the role of art, creativity, and imagination in the social and political issues in American society today; the 2019 *Black Artists Retreat* hosted by **Theaster Gates**, which included public talks and performances, private sessions for the 300 attending artists, and a roller skating rink; and *100 Years | 100 Women*, a multiorganization commissioning project that invited 100 women artists and cultural creators to respond to women's suffrage.

Notable Public Programming salons include: the Literature Salon hosted by **Branden Jacobs-Jenkins**, whose participants included **Lynn Nottage, Suzan Lori-Parks, and Jeremy O. Harris**, a Spoken Word Salon co-hosted with the **Nuyorican Poets Cafe**; a Film Salon featuring the works of immersive artist and film director **Lynette Wallworth**; "Museum as Sanctuary" led by installation artist and Artist-in-Residence **Tania Bruguera**, curated by **Sonia Guíñansaca** and **CultureStrike**, and featuring undocu-artists **Julio Salgado** and **Emulsify**; and a Dance Salon presented in partnership with **Dance Theater of Harlem**, including New York City Ballet's **Wendy Whelan** and choreographer **Francesca Harper**, among others.

Artist Talks have featured esteemed artists, scholars, and thought leaders, such as: architects **Jacques Herzog** and **Pierre de Meuron** in conversation with **Ai Wei Wei**, moderated by Juilliard president **Damian Woetzel**; director **Ariane Mnouchkine** and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright **Tony Kushner** in conversation with *New Yorker* editor **David Remnick**; director **Ivo van Hove** in conversation with **James Nicola**, Artistic Director of New York Theater Workshop; artist **William Kentridge** and his collaborators **Philip Miller** and **Thuthuka Sibisi** in conversation with **Dr. Augustus Casely Hayford**, Director of the Smithsonian, National Museum of African Art; *Lehman Trilogy* director **Sam Mendez** and adapter **Ben Power** in conversation with playwright **Lynn Nottage**; artist and composer **Heiner Goebbels** in conversation with composer, vocalist, and scholar **Gelsey Bell**; and choreographer **Bill T. Jones** in conversation with architect **Elizabeth Diller** and designer **Peter Nigrini**, moderated by vocalist and performance artist **Helga Davis**.

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