



**Park Avenue Armory Presents *BLOOM* by Nao Bustamante
as part of Making Space Public Programming Series**

**Artist Probes Patriarchal and Exploitative Past of Vaginal Speculum Through Installation,
Video, and Performance with Geo Wyex, Marcus Kuiland-Nazario, and Pamela Martínez
Against Backdrop of Supreme Court Curtailing of Reproductive Rights**

**Artistic and Collaborative Process Explores Design for a New and More Comfortable
Medical Device for People with Uteruses**

New York, NY – August 8, 2022 – Chicana performance and visual artist **Nao Bustamante** prototypes a new vision for feminist autonomy in the second iteration of her project ***BLOOM***, a cross-disciplinary investigation centered around the redesign of the speculum and history of the pelvic examination and rooted in both research and object-making, presented at Park Avenue Armory on **Saturday, September 10, 2022 at 3pm** as part of the organization’s Making Space public programming series.

Speculums have shown up in archaeological digs as far back as 79 AD amidst the dust of Pompeii; however, the apparatus most people experience today in vaginal exams is credited to the physician James Marion Sims, sometimes called the “father of American gynecology,” a moniker earned on the backs of experiments conducted on enslaved women. As part of her ***BLOOM*** project, Bustamante works to open dialogue about the vaginal speculum’s history and to workshop the most significant redesign of the tool since 1943, holding particular resonance in the wake of recent political attacks on the health of those undergoing pelvic examinations.

Joined by musician and performance artist **Geo Wyex**, interdisciplinary artist **Marcus Kuiland-Nazario**, and composer and reiki master **Pamela Martínez**, Bustamante dematerializes Sims in a new performance that is part séance, part pageant to make way for a new era of examination of the device as well as its patriarchal inventors. Anthropomorphized speculum puppets take the stage to share their backgrounds usage, and the biographies of their patent holders, in a mise-en-scene of Bustamante’s object, video, and sound installations.

And while the desired result is an invitation to think about ways to make the tool less unpleasant for the millions of patients who encounter it each year, the work also boldly focuses on the speculum’s impact on timely issues of health practices for those with uteruses.

The project was originally inspired by a routine gynecology visit and pelvic exam the artist experienced in 2011. “For me the projects that come to fruition are usually those that stick in my head. I call those projects ‘brain burrs.’ It’s a thought that won’t go away and sits there, in some cases, for years,” said Bustamante. “Like many women, I wondered why the medical industry cannot create more comfortable apparatus for such basic procedures.”

Bustamante developed the idea into an exhibition and performance at Artpace in San Antonio, Texas during her 2021 residency, using her unique style as well as dialogue with physicians and medical professionals to create her sculptures and models. This first iteration of ***BLOOM*** was open to the public at Artpace in the summer of 2021.

The wide-ranging project will culminate in 2024, using Bustamante's artistic process and design to create a new vaginal speculum available for use by doctors and nurses across the United States. In the fall of 2021, Bustamante received an Advancing Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences Research and Creative Grant from University of Southern California, which will allow her to engage with patent drawers, 3D print technology specialists, and material scientists to hone and develop her speculum prototypes for eventual widespread usage.

The 2022 Making Space Public Programming series curated by Tavia Nyong'o began with *Captcha: Dancing, Data, Liberation*, an artist salon on February 20, 2022 anchored by interdisciplinary artist Rashaad Newsome's Drill Hall production *Assembly*. *Captcha* participants also included Afro-Latina MC and activist Ms.Boogie; multidisciplinary artist and capoeirista Puma Camillê; Yale scholar and dancer/choreographer Aimee Meredith Cox; performance artist and poet Dazié Rustin Grego-Sykes; Columbia University English Professor Saidiya Hartman; artist, curator, and composer Robert Aiki Aubrey Lowe; and artist and scholar Kiyan Williams. On May 15, 2022, *Queer Hip Hop Cypher* explored the queer origins and aesthetics of hip hop through discussion, film, performance, and food, with performances by Astraea award-winning duo Krudxs Cubensi and a panel discussion on the queer underground hip hop scene led by author and scholar Dr. Shanté Paradigm Smalls. The Armory honored and celebrated Juneteenth with an immersive art installation *Archer Aymes Lost and Found Retrospective: A Juneteenth Exhibition*, curated by Carl Hancock Rux, with Tavia Nyong'o and Dianne Smith, and featuring a concert performance by mezzo soprano Alicia Hall Moran and pianist Aaron Diehl. This event was one component of a three-part series curated by Carl Hancock Rux in commemoration of Juneteenth, in collaboration with Harlem Stage and Lincoln Center as part of the Festival of New York. *Skillshare*, on August 21, 2022, invited audiences to participate in open studios, workshops, discussions, and activations led by Armory Artists-in-Residence, Teaching Artists, Youth Corps, and partners inspired by the tradition of artists helping artists and engaging in mutual aid.

TICKETING

Tickets at \$25 (plus fees) are available for purchase online at armoryonpark.org or through the Box Office in person at 643 Park Avenue or by phone at (212) 933-5812, from 10am to 6pm, Monday through Friday.

HEALTH & SAFETY

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.

SPONSORSHIP

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. Park Avenue Armory is deeply grateful for Senator Charles E. Schumer's visionary leadership of the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant program.

ABOUT NAO BUSTAMANTE

Nao Bustamante is a Los Angeles-based artist whose precarious work encompasses performance art, video installation, filmmaking, sculpture, and writing. Bustamante has presented in galleries, museums, universities, and underground sites around the world, including London's Institute of Contemporary Arts, the MoMA, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Sundance International Film Festival/New Frontier, Outfest International Film Festival, El Museo del Barrio, First International Performance Biennial, *Deformes* in Santiago, Chile, and Kiasma Museum of Helsinki. Her 2020 VR film, "The Wooden People" presented at REDCAT in 2021 received producing grants from the Mike Kelley Foundation and National Performance Network. She appeared on Bravo's "Work of Art: The Next Great Artist." She has received *Anonymous Was a Woman* (2001), New York Foundation for the Arts (2007), Lambent, and CMAS-Benson Latin American Collection Research (2013) fellowships. Awards include the Chase Legacy Award in Film and Makers Muse Award from the Kindle Foundation. Bustamante has served as Artist in Residence at UC Riverside and UC MEXUS Scholar in Residence at LA's Vincent Price Art Museum. Education includes San Francisco Art Institute and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Honorary doctorate SFAI. Professor of Art, USC Roski School of Art and Design. Her work, Bloom, has been supported by a COLA (City of Los Angeles) fellowship, an Artpace Residency, and a USC Arts and Humanities award.

ABOUT GEO WYEX

Geo Wyex is an artist and educator who works in music, performance, sculpture, sound, and video. His most recent record, *ATM FM* (2020), was released through Muck Studies Dept.—a constellational narrative framework and imaginary city agent that surveys the bottom of low-lying water areas, "looking for stars out of what stinks." Muck Studies Dept. merges inherited Black Atlantic funk and folk poetics with investigative journalism; it connects mud, water, ass, rocks, coins, keys, extractive industry, and sensual expression of belonging to that flood. Wyex has presented work at MoMA PS1, The New Museum, Stedelijk Museum, The Studio Museum in Harlem, Dutch National Opera, L'Arsenic, Joe's Pub, etc. He was a resident at the Rijksakademie in 2015-2016. Recent collaborators include AK Burns, Every Ocean Hughes, Colin Self, and Tourmaline. He lives and work in Rotterdam, NL next to the Maas River.

ABOUT MARCUS KUILAND-NAZARIO

Los Angeles native **Marcus Kuiland-Nazario** is an interdisciplinary artist, performance curator and producer. He is a founding artist of 18th Street Arts Center and Highways Performance Space as well as co-founder of Oficina de Proyectos Culturales, a contemporary art center in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico and LA Community Health Project, a harm reduction, street-based needle exchange program. Kuiland-Nazario's works are long-term research-based cross-genre projects exploring extreme states of emotion such as grief, anger, and loss influenced by the cultural and spiritual traditions of the African Diaspora. His performance works have been included in national and international festivals including the Rapture Festival, ICA London, London; the Rompeforma Festival, San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Pacific Standard Time LA/LA, Los Angeles. Kuiland-Nazario is the recipient of the 2020 Santa Monica Artist Fellowship award.

ABOUT PAMELA MARTÍNEZ

Pamela Martínez is a composer, reiki master, educator, multi-instrumentalist, and musician in healing who creates music and immersive experiences under the moniker Teletextile. Martinez brings to life music-centered rituals through Teletextile that explore our connections with our inner voices and to each other through a mixture of performance and spiritual practice. Her recent directing and performing credits include *Teletextile: Connected* and *Whisperlodge*. *The New York Times* dubbed *Whisperlodge* “an unusual mix of theater and therapy”; the work has also been featured in *BuzzFeed*, *The Atlantic*, *Netflix*, *Vice*, and other outlets. Her “Bjork-like” sound (*The Boston Globe*) moves from vocal layering and “electronic wizardry” (*Metronome Magazine*) to “dense, stormy guitar, piano and electronics” (*Time Out New York*). Martinez has toured extensively in the US, Europe, the UK, and Asia. Martinez holds a bachelor’s degree in Music Education from Berklee College of Music.

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; multiday 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 cohosted 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 Guiñansaca** 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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