



## **Park Avenue Armory Presents Artist Salon in Conjunction with Rashaad Newsome's *Assembly***

### **Event Convenes Artists and Scholars for Exploration of Technology, Race, and Liberation through Conversation and Performance**

**New York, NY** – February 9, 2022 – On February 20, Park Avenue Armory will present *Captcha: Dancing, Data, Liberation*, an artist salon organized by the Armory's **Curator of Public Programming, Tavia Nyong'o**, and anchored by interdisciplinary artist **Rashaad Newsome**, featuring conversations and performances by an illustrious group of artists and scholars whose work engages with Blackness, technology, and liberation. Marking the continuation of the Armory's public programming as the first program in a new series titled **Making Space**, *Captcha* will offer audiences the opportunity to explore more deeply Newsome's [\*Assembly\*](#), a new multi-experiential commission that will transform the expansive Wade Thompson Drill Hall into an exhibition space, performance hall, classroom, and theater during its run from February 18 through March 6, 2022. Encompassing many facets of Newsome's practice, *Assembly* offers a captivating new vision of liberty and humanity through the lens of the Black and Queer experience, the advancement of technology, and the ways in which they are interconnected.

*Captcha* builds upon themes presented in *Assembly*, stimulating dynamic conversations around Black visual complexity and spirit and the pursuit of personal and collective liberation. The salon will feature Newsome in dialogue with his collaborators on *Assembly*, as well as additional artists and scholars in roundtable conversations about the emergence of a Black quantum visual language and the making of *Assembly*. It will also include a performance showcase featuring local and international vogueurs and a special preview of *Get Your 10s*, an in-process documentary on Newsome and *Assembly*.

"We are thrilled to relaunch the Armory's dynamic public programming with *Captcha*," said **Rebecca Robertson, the Armory's Founding President and Executive Producer**. "Delving deeper into the threads of dialogue sparked by *Assembly*, *Captcha* gives participants the chance to explore the many ways in which Rashaad Newsome's work allows us to reflect upon the societal complexities laid bare over the last two years, and how it can provide us a path forward."

"*Captcha* allows us an intimate view into Rashaad's expansive black queer world-building and an opportunity to dialogue around the issues he is raising with *Assembly*," said **Tavia Nyong'o, Curator of Public Programming at Park Avenue Armory**. "Through this multi-faceted event, he invites audiences to embrace the joy and dynamism of Black creativity and personhood, and to consider new perspectives on how we might transcend the binary between blackness and technology, freeing ourselves from established social structures."

In addition to Newsome and Nyong'o, participants include **Ms. Boogie**, an Afro-Latina Brooklyn-based MC and activist; **Puma Camillê**, an internationally renowned multidisciplinary artist, capoeirista, digital influencer, dancer, model, social educator, and speaker; **Aimee Meredith Cox**, a dancer and choreographer who is jointly appointed in the departments of African American Studies and Anthropology at Yale; **Dazié Rustin Grego-Sykes**, an Oakland, California-based performance artist and poet; **Saidiya Hartman**, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University; **Robert Aiki Aubrey Lowe**, an artist, curator, and composer

working with voice and modular synthesizer in spontaneous sound; and **Kiyan Williams**, an artist and scholar from Newark working fluidly across performance, sculpture, video, and 2D realms.

The event marks the relaunch of **Making Space**, the Armory's public programming series, formerly titled Interrogations of Form. Curated by Nyong'o, Making Space offers to audiences a series of intimate talks, salons, symposia, performances, and other activations. Through this ongoing programming, the Armory invites artists, performers, scholars, and other cultural leaders to explore how art can address the fault-lines in our racial and social order, while celebrating resilience, joy, and creativity.

## EVENT DETAILS:

### *Captcha: Dancing, Data, Liberation*

Sunday, February 20, 2022

3pm – 6:30pm

- **3:00pm – 4:00pm: Veterans Room**  
A conversation on the emergence of a Black quantum visual language with **Rashaad Newsome**, **Saidiya Hartman**, **Tavia Nyong'o**, **Kiyan Williams**, and **Aimee Meredith Cox**.
- **4:15pm – 4:45pm: Board of Officers Room**  
A performance and activation by *Assembly* artists **Ms. Boogie**, **Puma Camillê**, and **Dazié Rustin Grego-Sykes**.
- **5:15pm – 6:30pm: Veterans Room**  
Preview screening of *Get Your 10s*, an in-process documentary on the making of *Assembly*, and a talkback with *Assembly* artists **Ms. Boogie**, **Puma Camillê**, **Dazié Rustin Grego-Sykes**, and **Robert Aiki Aubrey Lowe**.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Park Avenue Armory requires proof of a booster shot for all those for whom the timing of earlier vaccinations makes them eligible for a booster.** Those not yet eligible will be able to continue to enter provided they are two weeks past their second dose in a two-dose vaccine series or two weeks after receiving a single-dose vaccine.

In compliance with New York City's Key to NYC all ticket holders above the age of 5 years old **must be fully vaccinated**. "Fully vaccinated" means that you received your final dose of an FDA or WHO-approved vaccine at least 14 days before your performance date. At check-in, 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) and a **government-issued photo ID** (for ticket holders 18 years of age or older).

In addition to the precautions taken above, **all patrons and staff are required to wear N95, KN95 or KF94 masks** while inside the Armory.

## TICKETS

Tickets are \$25 (plus fees) and are available for purchase at [armoryonpark.org](http://armoryonpark.org).

## ABOUT PARK AVENUE ARMORY

Part palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory fills a critical void in the cultural ecology of New York, supporting unconventional works in the performing and visual arts that cannot be fully realized in a traditional proscenium theater, concert hall, or white wall gallery. With its soaring 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson

Drill Hall and an array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory enables a diverse range of artists to create, students to explore, and audiences to experience epic, adventurous, relevant work that cannot be done elsewhere in New York.

Programmatic highlights from the Wade Thompson Drill Hall include Ernesto Neto's *anthropodino*, a magical labyrinth extended across the Drill Hall; 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 on three separate stages; an immersive *Macbeth* set in a Scottish heath with Kenneth Branagh; *WS* by Paul McCarthy, a monumental installation of fantasy, excess, and dystopia; a radically inclusive staging of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* staged by Peter Sellars and performed by Sir Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker; eight-time Drama Desk-nominated play *The Hairy Ape*, directed by Richard Jones and starring Bobby Cannavale; *Hansel & Gretel*, a new commission by Ai Weiwei, Jacques Herzog, and Pierre de Meuron about privacy and surveillance; *FLEXN* and *FLEXN Evolution*, two Armory-commissioned presentations of the Brooklyn-born dance-activist group the D.R.E.A.M. Ring, created by Reggie "Regg Roc" Gray and director Peter Sellars; Simon Stone's heralded production of *Yerma* starring Billie Piper in her North American debut; *The Let Go*, a site-specific immersive dance celebration by Nick Cave; Satoshi Miyagi's stunning production of *Antigone* set in a lake; Sam Mendes' critically acclaimed production of *The Lehman Trilogy*; the *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; *Deep Blue Sea* by Bill T. Jones and the Bill T. Jones/Arne Zane Dance Companies; and *The Shape of Things*, a multi-work installation, convening, and performance series by Carrie Mae Weems. Productions in the Armory's Social Distance Hall included works by Bill T. Jones; David Byrne, Christine Jones, and Steven Hoggett; Laurie Anderson and Robert Icke.

In its historic period rooms, the Armory presents more intimate 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; the *Artists Studio* series curated by MacArthur "Genius" and jazz phenom Jason Moran in the newly restored Veterans Room, which features a diverse array of innovative artists and artistic pairings that reflect the imaginative improvisation of the young designers and artists who originally conceived the space; a Public Programming series that brings diverse artists and cultural thought-leaders together for discussion and performance around the important issues of our time viewed through an artistic lens; and the Malkin Lecture Series that presents scholars and writers on topics related to the social, political, and aesthetic history of the building.

Among the performers who have appeared in the *Recital Series* and the *Artists Studio* in the Armory's restored Veterans Room and the Board of Officers Room are: Christian Gerhaher; Ian Bostridge; Jason Moran; Lawrence Brownlee; Barbara Hannigan; Lisette Oropesa; Roscoe Mitchell; Conrad Tao and Tyshawn Sorey; Rashaad Newsome; and Krecy Garcia ("El Prodigio").

Highlights from the Public Programming series include: symposiums such as Carrie Mae Weems' daylong event called *The Shape of Things*, whose participants included Elizabeth Alexander, Theaster Gates, Elizabeth Diller, and Nona Hendryx; 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; salons such as the Literature Salon hosted by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, whose participants included Lynn Nottage, Suzan Lori-Parks, and Jeremy O. Harris, and a Spoken Word Salon co-hosted with the Nuyorican Poets Cafe; and most recently, *100 Years | 100 Women*, a multiorganization commissioning project that invited 100 women artists and cultural creators to respond to women's suffrage.

Current Artists-in-Residence at the Armory include two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage; Obie winner and Pulitzer short-listed playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins and Carmelita Tropicana; Reggie “Regg Roc” Gray and the D.R.E.A.M. Ring; singer and composer Sara Serpa; Tony Award-winning set designer and director Christine Jones and choreographer Steven Hoggett; and Mimi Lien, the first set designer to receive a MacArthur Fellowship. The Armory also supports artists through an active commissioning program including such artists as Bill T. Jones, Lynn Nottage, Carrie Mae Weems, Michel van der Aa, Tyshawn Sorey, Rashaad Newsome, Julian Rosefeldt, Branden Jacobs- Jenkins, and others.

The Armory also offers creativity-based arts education programs at no cost to thousands of students from underserved New York City public schools, engaging them with the institution’s artistic programming and outside-the-box creative processes. Annually, more than 5,000 young adults from 50+ under-resourced public schools attend a dedicated student matinee of each Armory production with workshops by Master Teaching Artists provided in the classroom and at the site. In seven partner schools, Teaching Artists facilitate in-depth semester- or year-long residencies that support the schools’ curriculum. Youth Corps, the Armory’s year-round paid, monitored internship program, begins in high school and continues into the critical post-high school years, providing interns with over 14,000 hours per year of mentored employment, job training, and skill development, as well as a network of peers and mentors to support their individual college and career goals.

The Armory is undergoing a multi-phase renovation and restoration of its historic building led by architects Herzog & de Meuron, with Platt Byard Dovell White as Executive Architects.

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