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EMPAC Announces Fall 2024 Programs

Welcomes Tara Aisha Willis as Curator-in-Residence, Dance & Theater



16th Fall Highlights Include:

US Premieres from Marina Rosenfeld and Bassem Saad & Sanja Grozdanić

Concert Performances by Charles Curtis, Sarah Davachi, and Charmaine Lee & Conrad Tao

Artist Talks with Laurie Anderson, Raven Chacon, and Shawné Michaelain Holloway

Also, four thematic series present opportunities to explore art and ideas across experimental film/video, music, new media, choreography, and performance throughout the fall.

Troy, NY: EMPAC / the Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute announces its schedule of public presentations for the fall 2024 season. From August through December, the EMPAC curatorial program presents 20 opportunities for audiences to explore the boundaries of art, science, and technology with the artists of its commissioning and

residency initiatives. Free artist talks and a free work-in-progress event, as well as a dynamic program of film/video screenings, concert performances, and premieres continues EMPAC's commitment to artists who are making challenging new work, and to the audiences who thrill in the experience.

Those who venture in can engage with ideas of artmaking, art histories, and social currents while encountering extraordinary experimental artworks within one of the world's most technically advanced centers for artistic production.

Tickets and full info for events taking place at EMPAC are available now at empac.rpi.edu.

EMPAC is pleased to announce that **Tara Aisha Willis** has joined the curatorial program as Curator-in-Residence, Dance & Theater. Willis is a curator, writer, and dance artist whose curatorial work centers contemporary dance and performance artists. Her research and writing emphasizes Black dance and arts discourses while grappling with archival and historical context.

Willis holds a doctorate from New York University and is a postdoctoral fellow with Getty Research Institute and its African American Art History Initiative for their 2024-2025 cohort of scholars. Previously, she was a curator at MCA Chicago and a programmer at Movement Research in New York City.

In her role as curator-in-residence at EMPAC, Willis has organized *Ephemeral Organ*, a series of residencies, performances, and talks by artists whose work explores choreography and bodily motion as technologies for transmitting memory, history, and Black lived experience.

Tara Aisha Willis's year-long *Ephemeral Organ* series begins in November 2024 and includes projects with artists **Leslie Cuyjet**, **SHAWNÉ MICHAELAIN HOLLOWAY**, **Steffani Jemison**, **A.J. McClenon**, **Katherine Simone Reynolds**, and others. It culminates in April 2025 with a weekend festival of public programs presented throughout the center. Festival details to be announced.

This fall, the *Ephemeral Organ* series begins with two presentations that aim to bring new media technologists and dance history audiences together, first for a curator's talk with **Tara Aisha Willis** (November 12) introducing series themes and sparking connections across Willis's practices as curator, writer, and dance artist, followed by an artist talk from **SHAWNÉ MICHAELAIN HOLLOWAY** (November 14) while she is in residence to develop technology embedded in her current multimedia performance projects.

The *Surge Conditions* series features a new program each month from September through November for audiences interested in joining curator **Katherine C.M. Adams**'s programs that inquire into film and video as a spatial practice, with a screening of experimental films by **Tatiana Mazú González** and **Thuy-Han Nguyen-Chi** (September 5), a live appearance from **Sharlene Bamboat** (October 11), and the US Premiere of a new work commissioned with Gwangju Biennale from **Marina Rosenfeld** (November 8).

The *Decommission* series, also from curator **Katherine C.M. Adams**, entreats audiences of choreography, film, and sculpture to join us for three programs in seven days this October—including performances of MIKE by **Dana Michel** (October 4 & 5), short films of five filmmakers in the program **a gift horse's mouth** (October 2), and an artist talk by **Constantina Zavitsanos** (October 8)—that each and all together play against technology's entanglement with social architecture.

The *Within | Without Limit* series from curator **Amadeus Julian Regucera** invites live music audiences to discover the rewards of experiencing the center's differentiated venues, presenting two distinct programs—one in the Concert Hall and another in Studio 2—from renowned cellist and composer **Charles Curtis**, playing **Éliane Radigue**, **Carolyn Chen**, and Curtis's own compositions, alongside selections of early music.

About all the presentations in the EMPAC 2024 FALL program.
Presentations are listed in chronological order.

Brigitta Muntendorf: TRILOGY

Sunday, August 11, 2024 at 7:30PM

Mary Flagler Cary Hall, DiMenna Center for Classical Music (NYC)

US Premiere. Co-presentation with TIME:SPANS 2024.

Performance. Tickets: [TIME:SPANS 2024](#) (NYC)

German-Austrian composer **Brigitta Muntendorf** spends a week in Troy with EMPAC audio engineers before making her way to New York City for the US premiere of ***Trilogy for two pianos, tape, and live electronics, (2014-2018)*** (August 11) at TIME:SPANS 2024, [previously announced](#). Amadeus Julian Regucera, EMPAC music curator, appears at the premiere to give the concert introduction with the composer.

Laurie Anderson: Building an ARK

Thursday, August 29, 2024 at 6PM

EMPAC Theater

Talk. Tickets: Free, no ticket required.

Renowned artist and musician **Laurie Anderson** opens the fall season at EMPAC with the free artist talk, ***Building an ARK*** (August 29), revealing some of the process and innovative technology at play in her newest major stage work, described as “a hallucinatory incantation on history and time, a dark comedy for the end of the world.” (factoryinternational.org)

Tatiana Mazú González and Thuy-Han Nguyen-Chi: in a plenum space

Surge Conditions Series

Thursday, September 5, 2024 at 7PM

EMPAC Theater

Film/Video. Tickets: \$10

Filmmakers **Thuy-Han Nguyen-Chi** (Berlin & London), known for her “mastery of cinematic storytelling” (Art in America), and **Tatiana Mazú González** (Argentina), recognized for her “incredible eye, her taste for playful meta ploys” (MUBI Notebook), have works in the program ***in a plenum space*** (September 5). The first presentation of the *Surge Conditions* thematic series from curator Katherine C.M. Adams, the screening includes two shorts and a feature that experiment with ways sound can take prominence when film is used to search for something that the viewer never sees.

Charmaine Lee & Conrad Tao: Feedback

Friday, September 13, 2024 at 7PM

EMPAC Studio 1—Goodman

Performance. Tickets: \$20

Award-winning pianist and composer **Conrad Tao** and experimental vocalist **Charmaine Lee** continue their eight-year collaboration traversing genres from pop to ambient to feedback noise music with the concert performance ***Feedback*** (September 13), where they each make a solo set and perform a set together debuting new material designed especially for the immersive sound environment of the EMPAC Studio 1—Goodman venue using a battery of electronic, acoustic, and found instruments.

Sarah Davachi: Constants

Wednesday, September 18, 2024 at 7PM

EMPAC Concert Hall

Performance. Tickets: \$20

While in residence for preliminary recording of a new work, composer and performer **Sarah Davachi** performs the concert ***Constants*** (September 18), filling the expansive and resonant EMPAC Concert Hall with an hour-long piece from her first album in two years, *The Head as Form'd in the Crier's Choir*, just days after its release. Davachi's signature electroacoustic ambient and drone compositions, relished as "the sound of solitude and solace" (Pitchfork), beckon the concert goer to an inner world of musical and sonic detail.

Revital Cohen & Tuur Van Balen, Ho Rui An, Bahar Noorizadeh, Total Refusal, and Wu Tsang: a gift horse's mouth

Decommission Series

Wednesday, October 2, 2024 at 7PM

EMPAC Theater

Film/Video. Tickets: \$10

a gift horse's mouth (October 2) screens works by **Revital Cohen & Tuur Van Balen, Ho Rui An, Bahar Noorizadeh, Total Refusal, and Wu Tsang** that critique technology's effects on body and economy. This program of short films engages the labor film genre, choreography, militancy in video-games, and a fictional time travel economy to playfully begin curator Katherine C.M. Adams's *Decommission* series, which continues that week with two additional presentations through October 8.

Dana Michel: MIKE

Decommission Series

Friday, October 4, 2024 at 6PM & Saturday, October 5, 2024 at 2PM

EMPAC Studio 1—Goodman Theater & Public Spaces

Performance. Tickets: \$20

Toronto-based choreographer **Dana Michel**—recognized for her innovative and risk-taking performances with awards including Silver Lion for Innovation in Dance, Venice Biennale—begins her

solo **MIKE** (October 4 & 5) in the EMPAC Studio 1—Goodman venue and extends each 3-hour performance through public lobbies, stairwells, and outdoor spaces across three levels, encountering objects removed from their routine maintenance and work contexts—as though they’ve been *decommissioned*—asking with both candor and curiosity, “is it possible to live public lives that reflect our inner selves?”

Constantina Zavitsanos: Works in Sensing and Feeling

Decommission Series

Tuesday, October 8 at 6PM

EMPAC Theater

Talk. Tickets: Free, no ticket required.

Concluding the *Decommission* series, conceptual artist **Constantina Zavitsanos** contributes the talk ***Works in Sensing and Feeling*** (October 8), which considers how debt and dependency factor into the artist’s sculpture and performance practice—often experimenting with exhibition architecture using principles of care, contingency, and sometimes insights from physics—as can be felt in Zavitsanos’s installation currently on view in the 2024 Whitney Biennial, and other works.

Sharlene Bamboat: A showing of BOTH, INSTRUMENT & SOUND

Surge Conditions Series

Friday, October 11, 2024 at 7PM

EMPAC Theater & Studio 1—Goodman

Film/Video. Tickets: \$10.

Sharlene Bamboat is at EMPAC for ***A showing of Both, Instrument & Sound*** (October 11) while she is in residence to expand the feature-length film *Both, Instrument & Sound* (2024) into a multi-screen video installation. The presentation includes both a complete viewing of the film and a look into the artist’s new installation-in-progress, where she brings the film’s sensorially rich perspective on practices of alliance-building into spatial form. Bamboat’s engagement is the second of three programs in the *Surge Conditions* series.

Bassem Saad & Sanja Grozdanić: An Evening with Bassem Saad and Sanja Grozdanić

Wednesday, October 23, 2024 at 7PM

EMPAC Theater

Film/Video. Tickets: \$10.

Filmmaker **Bassem Saad** and writer **Sanja Grozdanić** share an artist-curated screening program of short films during ***An Evening with Bassem Saad and Sanja Grozdanić*** (October 23). While in residence at EMPAC to develop the new film version of their collaborative piece *Permanent Trespass* (which debuted in 2021 as a script-based performance), Saad and Grozdanić share a selection of films by other artists that have informed their work, and reflect on dramaturgy, film making, and themes of historical memory.

Bassem Saad & Sanja Grozdanić: PERMANENT TRESPASS

Friday, October 25, 2024 at 7PM

EMPAC Studio 1—Goodman Theater

US Premiere. Commission with NW Aalst.

Performance. Tickets: \$20

Artists **Bassem Saad** and **Sanja Grozdanić** perform the US Premiere of a new adaptation of their stage work ***Permanent Trespass (Beirut of the Balkans and the American Century)*** (October 25) that builds on prior versions of the work—previously presented in Dro (Italy), The Hague, Beirut, and Frankfurt. Commissioned by EMPAC and NW Aalst, this iteration of the work integrates a new sound score, film material, and additional experimental projection, facilitated by their residency in Troy (NY) at EMPAC in October.

Marina Rosenfeld: μ (MU)

Surge Conditions Series

Friday, November 8, 2024 at 7PM

EMPAC Studio 2

US Premiere. Commission with Gwangju Biennale.

Performance. Tickets: \$20

Marina Rosenfeld is at EMPAC to make the US Premiere of her newest project, ***μ (mu)*** (November 8) following its 2024 world premiere in one of Asia's most high-profile art events, the Gwangju Biennale (South Korea). Rosenfeld's multi-channel video installation, a co-commission with the 15th Biennale, uses the microscopic regions of a dubplate to engage the unruly origins of sound. This presentation includes a live performance using a Yamaha transacoustic piano, and concludes the *Surge Conditions* series. Marina Rosenfeld has recently been recognized as a "risk-taking" artist for her works that "embrace the traces of things, after-sound and distortion, the body as an amalgam of social, libidinal, and inherited possibility" (The Herb Alpert Award in the Arts 2024).

Tara Aisha Willis: Ephemeral Organs: Dance Curation, Research, and Performance

Ephemeral Organ Series

Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at 6PM

EMPAC Theater

Talk. Tickets: Free, no ticket required.

Curator, writer, and dance artist **Tara Aisha Willis** introduces her year-long programming series as curator-in-residence with the talk ***Ephemeral Organs: Dance Curation, Research, and Performance*** (November 12), exploring choreography and bodily motion as technologies for transmitting memory, history, and Black lived experience, alongside discussion of her forthcoming book projects and her past curatorial work with MCA Chicago and with Movement Research (NYC).

SHAWNÉ MICHAELAIN HOLLOWAY: Investigating trigger mechanisms, machine learning, and bodily gesture

Ephemeral Organ Series

Thursday, November 14, 2024 at 6PM

EMPAC Studio 1—Goodman Theater
Talk. Tickets: Free, no ticket required.

New media artist **SHAWNÉ MICHAELAIN HOLLOWAY** culminates her EMPAC residency with the artist talk *Investigating trigger mechanisms, machine learning, and bodily gesture* (November 14) as part of the *Ephemeral Organ* series from curator-in-residence Tara Aisha Willis, exploring HOLLOWAY's overall practice and demonstrating interactive cuing technology she is developing for two of her latest multimedia performance projects.

Raven Chacon: A talk on new and recent work

Thursday, November 21, 2024 at 6PM
EMPAC Studio 2
Commission.
Talk. Tickets: Free, no ticket required.

Pulitzer Prize winning composer and artist **Raven Chacon** gives *A talk on new and recent work* (November 21) while in residence with San Francisco-based experimental music duo The Living Earth Show to develop a commissioned new work anticipated for premiere in Troy in fall 2025. In this free event held in EMPAC Studio 2, Chacon follows threads of his experimental practice, across topics of Indigenous sovereignty and environmental justice, and through media including sound, video, scores, sculpture, and performance.

Kite: Open rehearsal for a new score

Thursday, December 5, 2024. Time to be announced.
EMPAC Studio 1—Goodman Theater
Presented with iEAR Presents!
Work-in-progress. Tickets: Free, no ticket required.

In a project co-presented with the iEAR Presents! series, public audiences are welcome to observe an *Open rehearsal for a new score* (December 5) where **Kite**, an award-winning Oglála Lakḥóta artist, composer, and academic, leads RPI student musicians in her artistic practice that draws from Indigenous Lakḥóta ontologies to consider the possibility of *kindred* collaboration with technologies such as artificial intelligence.

Kite: Wógligleya/Imákḥaheye (Geometry/Method): Workshop for Dream Scores

Friday, December 6, 2024 at 7PM
EMPAC Studio 1—Goodman Theater
Presented with iEAR Presents!
Performance. Tickets: \$20

Oglála Lakḥóta performance artist, visual artist, and composer **Kite** leads an ensemble of Rensselaer student musicians in *Wógligleya/Imákḥaheye (Geometry/Method): Workshop for Dream Scores* (December 6) in the culminating performance of a project co-presented with the iEAR Presents! Series, previewing a new score by **Kite** using graphic notation she derives from geometric shapes and

symbols of traditional Lakḥóta quillwork and beadwork, as well as shapes and symbols that appear in dreams.

Charles Curtis: NALDJORLAK

Friday, December 13, 2024 at 7PM

EMPAC Studio 2

Performance. Tickets: \$20

Internationally acclaimed cellist **Charles Curtis** performs French composer Éliane Radigue's hour-long **Naldjorlak** (December 13), composed specifically for Curtis and premiered in 2005, exhibiting what Radigue calls, "a wild and frail, versatile and volatile world of sounds" that pierces through to an intense intimacy. With the limited seating in the EMPAC Studio 2 venue, this presentation is a rare opportunity to experience this intensity, and Curtis's distinctive performing persona, up-close.

Charles Curtis: Within | Without Limit: Music for Cello

Saturday, December 14, 2024 at 2PM

EMPAC Concert Hall

Performance. Tickets: \$20

Charles Curtis performs a second solo concert, **Within | Without Limit: Music for Cello** (December 14), in a program that takes full advantage of the generous acoustic properties and seating capacity of the EMPAC Concert Hall, showcasing repertoire that asks the listener to attend to subtle processes of transformation and speculation, including Carolyn Chen's *Rara Avis* (2015), Éliane Radigue's *Occam V* (2012), and Curtis's own *Unfinished Song* (1998), along with three other selections.

To complement its presented programs, EMPAC also offers building tours held on fall weekends and led by individual staff engineers and curators.

General admission single tickets for all performances are \$20, and EMPAC offers \$15 reduced price tickets for ages 55+, students, and RPI faculty.

Single tickets for film/video events are \$10.

No reservations are necessary for talks, tours, and work-in-progress programs, which are always free to attend.

Please let us know if you'd like to arrange for any interviews or would like media access to a performance, or if there's anything else you need for coverage consideration.

Curators

Amadeus Julian Regucera, Music

Katherine C.M. Adams, Time-based Visual Arts

Tara Willis, Curator-in-Residence, Dance & Theater

Special Thanks

EMPAC 2024 FALL is made possible by Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. EMPAC's programs are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. Additional program support provided by NW, Open House for Contemporary Art and Film in Aalst; and by Gwangju Biennale.

ABOUT EMPAC

EMPAC / the Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center at Rensselaer located on the corner of 8th Street and College Avenue in Troy, NY, is both a place—a 220,000-square foot facility designed expressly for the creation and presentation of experimental media and performing arts—and an artist-centered curatorial program, where artists, researchers, and audiences come together to explore the boundaries of art, science, and technology.

The EMPAC curatorial program has supported the realization of more than 600 performances and new works since the building's opening in 2008 through residencies, commissions, partnerships, premieres, installations, publications, and more. Curators for dance/theater, music, and time-based visual art—and a staff of highly skilled experts in fields of video, audio, lighting, and stage technology—provide in-depth support of artists over extended periods of time to develop and realize complex projects. The program's polyvocal curatorial approach resonates through each project, generating time-based artworks diverse in content, method, technology, and audience experience.

"One of the country's most invigorating hubs for performance... When it puts on a public-facing show, it knows what it can do... At EMPAC, this memorable performance was just one in a series of important events... Keep an eye on EMPAC's offerings."

– New York Times

URLs: empac.rpi.edu

Social Media Links:

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/empac_rpi/

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/EMPACRensselaer>

Podcast: https://open.spotify.com/episode/6AEvCGfX5TO_Twylo21AdO3

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