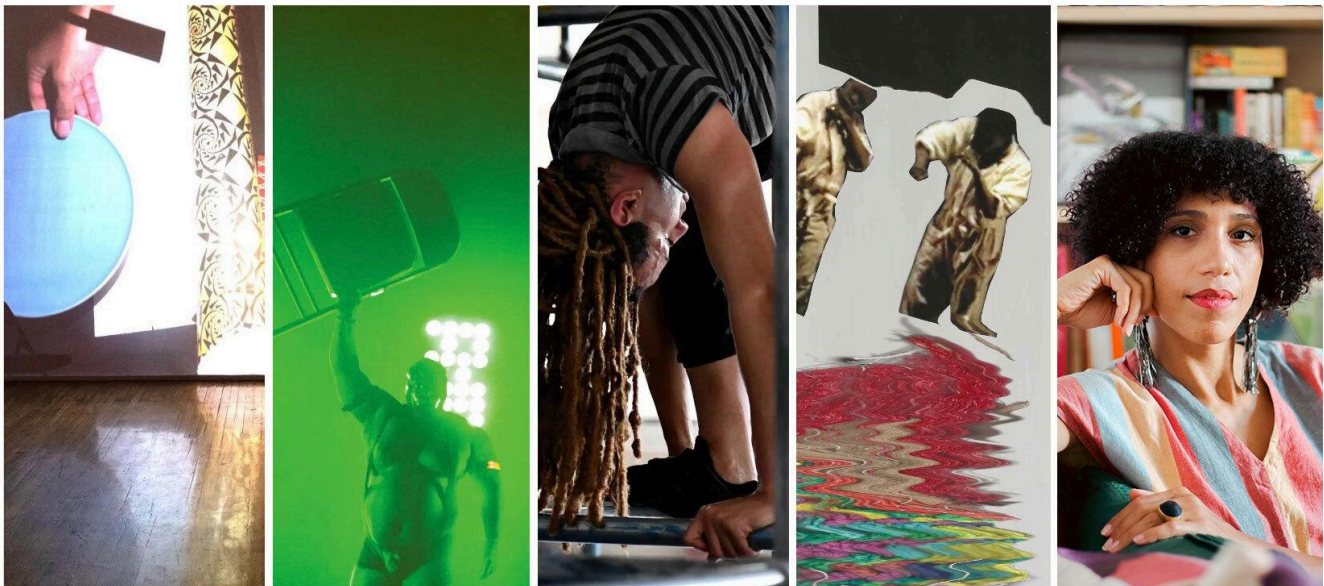


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EMPAC BEGINS SERIES TITLED EPHEMERAL ORGAN WITH TALK FROM TARA AISHA WILLIS NOVEMBER 12

Rigorous and Thoughtful, Ephemeral Organ Advances Experimental Works from Artists across North America and presents Two-Day Festival April 2025



Troy, NY: EMPAC / the Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute proudly continues its 2024 FALL season with the start of Ephemeral Organ, a series of residencies, talks, and performances from visionary artists **Justine A. Chambers**, **Leslie Cuyjet**, **SHAWNÉ MICHAELAIN HOLLOWAY**, **Steffani Jemison**, and collaborative duo **Katherine Simóne Reynolds & A.J. McClenon**.

Developed by Curator-in-Residence, Dance & Theater **Tara Aisha Willis**, programming for the Ephemeral Organ series explores choreography and bodily motion as technologies for transmitting memory, history, and Black lived experience. The series exemplifies the center's commitment to new research at the intersection of art, science, and technology with artists who are making challenging works in experimental media and performance.

All Ephemeral Organ activities take place at the center located on the corner of 8th Street and College Avenue in Troy. Residencies provide the artists with dedicated resources for creative exploration uniquely enabled by the center's production engineers and infrastructure. Audiences are invited to all series presentations, beginning with two talks on [November 12](#) and [November 14](#), and culminating with a two-day festival, [April 17-18, 2025](#):

Ephemeral Organ series presentations

[November 12, 2024](#)—In the first presentation of the Ephemeral Organ series, curator, writer, and dance artist **Tara Aisha Willis** introduces its thematic arc during the talk *Ephemeral Organs: Dance Curation, Research, and Performance*, and connects this series to her forthcoming book projects, and to her past curatorial work with MCA Chicago and with Movement Research (NYC).

[November 14, 2024](#)—While at the center for a research residency, new media artist **SHAWNÉ MICHAELAIN HOLLOWAY** (Chicago) invites technologists and new media enthusiasts into her process with the presented talk *Investigating trigger mechanisms, machine learning, and bodily gesture*.

“Known for her experiments with noisy, electronic sculpture and her unique approach to expanded cinema, **SHAWNÉ MICHAELAIN HOLLOWAY** is shaping the grammars of computer programming and sadomasochism into tools for exposing structures and narratives of power,” writes Willis. “I am thrilled to launch the Ephemeral Organ series this same week with her. I can’t wait to find out how she’ll use the resources available at the center to develop two different projects and share her findings with the region’s adventurous audiences.”

[April 17-18, 2025](#)—*Newly announcing full artist line-up*—The Ephemeral Organ Festival celebrates each ambitious investigation happening throughout the series by convening its artists for two days of simultaneous performance, installation, and presented talks with audiences. A performance of *With Marion* (2023) by **Leslie Cuyjet** (NYC), a new installation and performance of *Gestures Investigating the Good and Not So Good In Relationships – As Shown to Us by Blondell Cummings* (2022) by **Katherine Simóne Reynolds** (southern Illinois) and **A.J. McClenon** (Chicago), and artist talks on their latest works by the prolific **Steffani Jemison** (NYC) and dance artist **Justine A. Chambers** (Vancouver) activate the center’s spaces, so that gathering at the facilities becomes a vital part of our collective human enterprise.

Ephemeral Organ series residencies

[November 9–14, 2024](#)—SHAWNÉ MICHAELAIN HOLLOWAY’s residency investigates the mutual possibilities of technology and body to track, mediate, and generate a theatrical experience through trigger mechanisms and machine learning.

[November 18–22, 2024](#)—Visual and performance artists Katherine Simóne Reynolds and A. J. McClenon translate their collaboration, *Gestures Investigating the Good and Not So Good In*

Relationships – As Shown to Us by Blondell Cummings (2022), from its previous website form into a multi-channel installation.

[December 14–20, 2024](#)—Steffani Jemison revisits a recent performance work combining sculpture, movement, and narration to create a new iteration for video.

About the Curator

Tara Aisha Willis joined the EMPAC curatorial program as Curator-in-Residence, Dance & Theater in May 2024. 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 its 2024-2025 cohort. Previously, she was a curator at MCA Chicago and a programmer at Movement Research in New York City.

Learn more about the series curator, artists, artworks, and activities [here](#).

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.

Ticket Info

No reservations are necessary for [talk](#) presentations, which are open to the public and free to attend.

Info and Tickets for the Ephemeral Organ festival presentations available in January.

Curators

Amadeus Julian Regucera, Music
Katherine C.M. Adams, Time-based Visual Arts
Tara Aisha Willis, Curator-in-Residence, Dance & Theater

ABOUT EMPAC

EMPAC / the Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center at Rensselaer is located on the corner of 8th Street and College Avenue in Troy, NY. Its four differentiated venues, purpose-built for human-scale research and production, are rewarding for audiences and have supported the creation and realization of more than 600 artworks through the commissions, residencies, premieres, publications, of the artist-centered curatorial program, renowned throughout the world for generating complex time-based artworks for 16 years.

EMPAC 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.

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/6AEvCGfX5TOTwylo21AdO3>

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Photo Credits: Leslie Cuyjet, *With Marion*, The Kitchen, 2023. Courtesy of artist. Photo: Walter Wlodarczyk; SHAWNÉ MICHAELAIN HOLLOWAY, *DEWCLAW*, Institute for Contemporary Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University, 2022. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Keshia Eugene; Steffani Jemison, *In Succession (Means)*, 2024. Performed by Nimia Gracious, Loren Tschannen, and Steffani Jemison at Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, June 7–8, 2024. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Zoé Aubry; A.J. McClenon, *Inspired by For J.B. and 3B49*, collages with video stills from recording of Blondell Cummings in *For J.B. and 3B49* at The Kitchen, November 30–December 3, 1989, 2022. Courtesy the artist; Tara Aisha Willis. Photo: zakkiyyah najeebah dumas o'neal.