



EMPAC

SPRING

2020

We, all of EMPAC's team, invite you to our spring program! Come and jointly experience the events specifically created for an audience—a performance, a talk, a film screening or an exchange with artists who develop new work at EMPAC. See the stafflist in the back of this brochure—indeed, it does take all of us to create and offer this program for changing times and times to change.

There is something new to be discovered at each event: a new perspective, a different take, or just the sheer energy of works created and performed for that very moment when artists and their work meet you and some sparks fly across all of us.

We are very happy that this spring season of EMPAC public events is programmed by the curatorial team: Vic Brooks as Curator for Time-Based Visual Art, Ashley Ferro-Murray as Curator for Theater and Dance, and Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti having joined EMPAC just recently as Music Curator.

The directions, flows, and streams of EMPAC's program are shaped by the curators within the realms of “experimental media and performing arts,” and the dynamics change as each new curator contributes a fresh perspective. And over the time of her tenure at EMPAC, a curator may move from one emphasis of her programming into another direction or add a new artistic focus. The program we offer at EMPAC is always as much in flux as it is very focused. This is no contradiction as you may discover when coming to our, to *your* events.

The curators are not only programming the public events, but the majority of their work lies in developing new projects with artists in residence. The process of research, development, and production of new works realized at EMPAC often extend over months and years. And most times they are premiered at EMPAC and then may go out to the world. This spring there will be three such premieres. And the work-in-progress events allow a window into ongoing residencies with “behind the scenes” presentations and exchanges with the audience, which, in turn, is important for the development of some works.

We hope you can enjoy our programs as much as the artists value working with our team, sharing in their expertise and in the unique means EMPAC provides. All artistic work created and shown at EMPAC is meant to be performed and shared and experienced with an audience. It is “time-based,” meaning that while each work has a beginning and an end, it only comes to life with a live audience, with you.

JOHANNES GOEBEL
DIRECTOR, EMPAC

SPRING 2020

CALENDAR

TICKETS

For tickets, directions, or to find out more about the Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, visit us on the web at empac.rpi.edu or call us at 518.276.3921.

Performances: \$20, \$15 for seniors, faculty, and non-RPI students.

Films and special events: \$10

Talks and work-in-progress events: Free

Rensselaer students: Free admission to all events by swiping your ID card before the show and joining EMPAC®.

Advance tickets for students: \$6.

EVELYN'S CAFÉ

Evelyn's Café offers a menu of beverages, meals, and snacks, as well as a selection of wines before performances, screenings, and talks. Service continues during intermissions. Evelyn's is also open for lunch on weekdays featuring a rotating menu using locally sourced ingredients. On most Wednesdays coinciding with the beginning of the semester, the student-run Terra Café serves a weekly menu of local and organic foods, featuring a vegetarian or meat option as well as dessert.

FUNDING

EMPAC Spring 2020 presentations, residencies, and commissions are made possible by Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts; and Vlaamse Gemeenschap, department of Culture, Youth, and Media. Additional project support by CCS Bard; National Culture and Arts Foundation, Taiwan; New Music USA; National Performance Network (NPN); New York Live Arts; and the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University in partnership with Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Tanz im August/HAU Hebbel am Ufer, and NPN.

JANUARY

**THURS 23
6PM**
SU WEN-CHI
Work in progress
Studio 1—Goodman
DANCE

**WED 29
6PM**
JENNIFER RHEE
*The Robotic Imaginary:
The Human & the Price of
Dehumanized Labor*
Theater
TALK

FEBRUARY

**SAT 8
11AM-6PM**
GERARD BYRNE
In Our Time
Studio 1—Goodman
INSTALLATION

**SAT 8
11AM-6PM**
STAN DOUGLAS
Luanda-Kinshasa
Studio 1—Goodman
FILM / VIDEO

**SAT 8
2PM**
BUILDING TOUR
*with Curators Vic Brooks
and Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti*

**SAT 8
4PM**
BUILDING TOUR
*with Lead Audio Engineer
Todd Vos*

**TUES 11
11AM-5PM**
GERARD BYRNE
In Our Time
Studio 1—Goodman
INSTALLATION

**WED 12
11AM-9PM**
GERARD BYRNE
In Our Time
Studio 1—Goodman
INSTALLATION

**WED 12
6PM**
**RUCHIR JOSHI
ONYEKA IGWE
TRINH T. MINH-HA**
A Hundred Schools of Thought
Theater
FILM / VIDEO

**THURS 13
11AM-8PM**
GERARD BYRNE
In Our Time
Studio 1—Goodman
INSTALLATION

**FRI 14
11AM-10PM**
GERARD BYRNE
In Our Time
Studio 1—Goodman
INSTALLATION

**FRI 14
7PM**
**TAMAR GUIMARÃES
ERIC BAUDELAIRE**
*What Are We Doing
Here Together?*
Theater
FILM / VIDEO

**THURS 20
7PM**
CHRISTOPHER K. MORGAN
*Native Intelligence /
Innate Intelligence*
Work in progress
Studio 1—Goodman
DANCE

**THURS 27
7PM**
MICHELLE ELLSWORTH
Work in progress
Studio 1—Goodman
TALK

MARCH

**THURS 5
6PM**
SONDRA PERRY
Lecture performance
Studio 2
TALK

**THURS 19
7PM**
**NINA C. YOUNG
AMERICAN BRASS QUINTET**
*The Glow That Illuminates,
the Glare That Obscures*
Theater
MUSIC / SOUND

**SAT 21
11AM**
BUILDING TOUR
with Director Johannes Goebel

**TUES 24
6PM**
PAIGE MORGAN JOHNSON
*Performing Waria: Genre as
Technology for Shaping
Trans-Identity in Indonesia*
Studio 2
TALK

APRIL

**THURS 2
7PM**
JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO
Chameleon: A Biomythography
Theater
DANCE

**THURS 9
7PM**
EPHRAIM ASILI
Inheritance
Theater
FILM / VIDEO

**FRI 17
7PM**
SETH PARKER WOODS
*Translating the Atrocities of
Our Past, Composing the
Language of Our Future*
Studio 1—Goodman
MUSIC

**SAT 18
11AM**
BUILDING TOUR
*with Director for Stage
Technologies Geoff Abbas*

MAY

**FRI 1
7PM**
HEARTBEAT OPERA
Lady M
Work in progress
Theater
MUSIC

**FRI 8
7PM**
AMANDA TURNER POHAN
Alexa Echoes
Theater
PERFORMANCE

SU WEN-CHI

WORK IN PROGRESS

CURATOR ASHLEY FERRO-MURRAY

THURSDAY
JANUARY 23, 7PM
STUDIO 1—GOODMAN

FREE ADMISSION

In dance, gravity is often associated with ascension and descension. Taiwanese choreographer and new-media artist Su Wen-Chi is collaborating with physicists to more accurately embody the principle of gravity in dance.

Su Wen-Chi is well versed at working with interactive media in live performance. Her large-scale solo *WAVE* (2011/2014), for example, included an 81-channel audio installation of individually motorized LED light boxes that were choreographed in concert with the dancer's movements. Su is founder of YiLab, which is a group of artists integrating technology with the performing arts to expand their palette of performance.

She is in residence at EMPAC during the prototyping stages of the new work. The artist and three collaborators will explore how live interaction between a dancer, EMPAC's Wave Field Synthesis Array, and light might open possibilities for illustrating the effects of gravity as floating and suspension in outer space. Along with her team from Taiwan, Su will work in the studio with local Hudson, NY-based choreographer Adam Weinert and will then present a work-in-progress event at the end of her residency.

Work-in-progress events offer a window into the research, development, and production of new works by artists in residence at EMPAC. These free events open up a dialogue between our audiences, artists, and EMPAC staff. National Culture and Arts Foundation, Taiwan.

JENNIFER RHEE

THE ROBOTIC IMAGINARY: THE HUMAN & THE PRICE OF DEHUMANIZED LABOR

Taking into account robotics technologies' increasing presence in our lives, labors, and wars, scholar Jenny Rhee visits EMPAC to present the following questions: How is *the human* defined in these robotic visions and technological relations? What are the histories of erasures and exclusions that brought this definition of human into being? Whose lives and labors are excluded from these considerations of the human? This talk draws on Rhee's book, *The Robotic Imaginary: The Human & the Price of Dehumanized Labor* (University of Minnesota Press, 2018), which argues that robotic and AI systems reflect historical gendered and racial devaluations around labor.

Rhee's talk will begin by briefly plotting how labor devaluations are proliferated by AI assistants, vacuum-cleaning robots, and emotion-recognition AIs. She will then focus specifically on U.S. military drone warfare, which requires the racialized dehumanization of drone-strike victims. In conversation with contemporary artistic responses drone warfare, she will connect this to the U.S.'s history and continued present of racialized state violence.

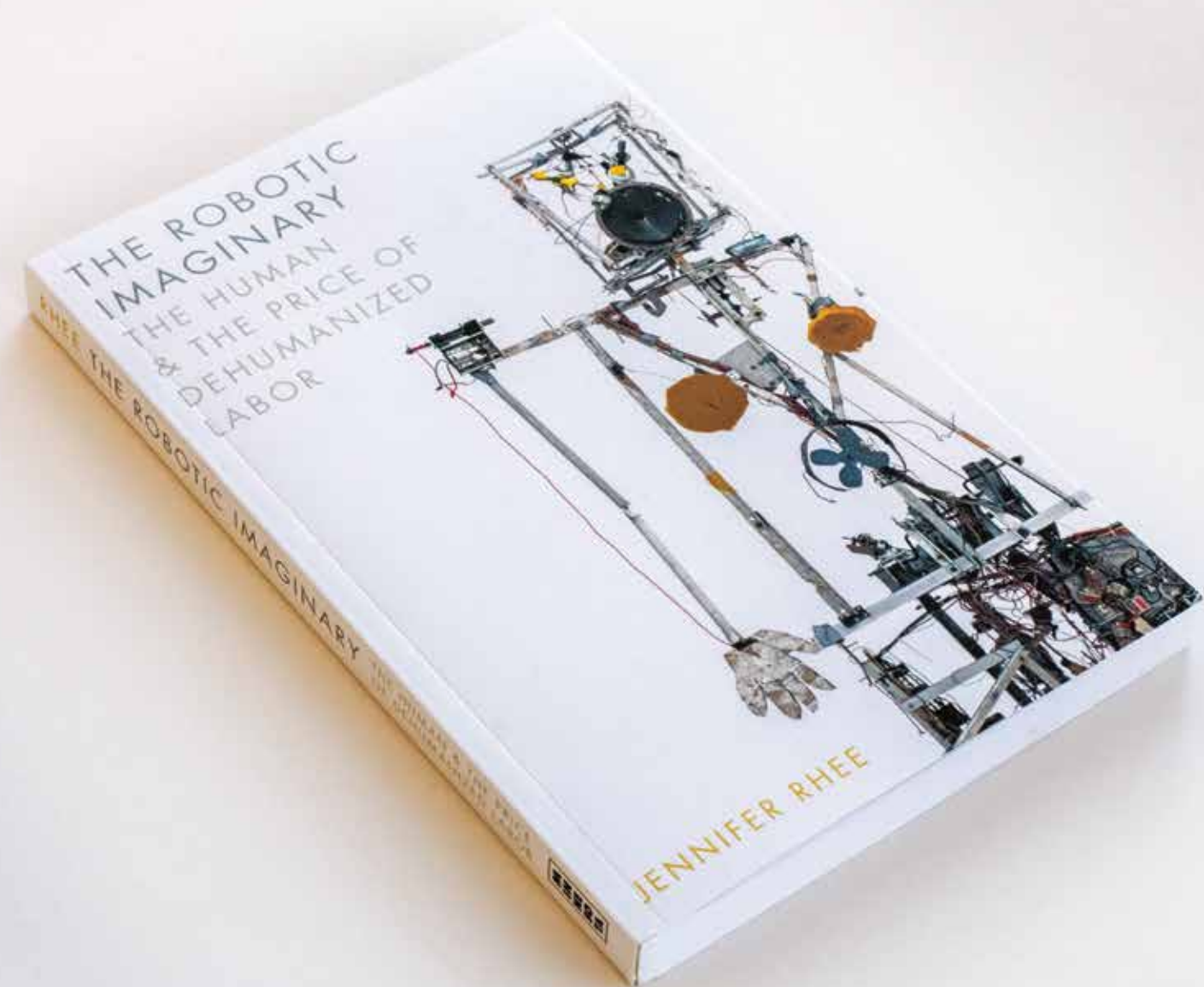
The Robotic Imaginary will be available at a signing table hosted by Market Block Books following the lecture.

Jennifer Rhee is associate professor of English at Virginia Commonwealth University.

CURATOR ASHLEY FERRO-MURRAY

WEDNESDAY
JANUARY 29, 6PM
THEATER

FREE ADMISSION



JUMP THE LINE

FILM SERIES

INSTALLATION, STUDIO 1—GOODMAN IN OUR TIME

BY GERARD BYRNE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 11AM–6PM

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 11AM–5PM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 11AM–9PM

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 11AM–5PM

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 11AM–10PM

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 12–6PM

LUANDA-KINSHASA

BY STAN DOUGLAS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 6PM

A HUNDRED SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

SHOOT FOR THE CONTENTS

BY TRINH T. MINH-HA

TALES FROM PLANET KOLKATA

BY RUCHIR JOSHI

SPECIALISED TECHNIQUE

BY ONYEKA IGWE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 7PM

WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE TOGETHER?

UN FILM DRAMATIQUE

BY ERIC BAUDELAIRE

O ENSAIO / THE REHEARSAL

BY TAMAR GUIMARÃES

To “jump the line” in filmmaking means to break a basic rule of cinematic realism—moving the camera across an imaginary 180° line that normally allows viewers to maintain their natural sense of left and right within the film. This week-long film series celebrates jumping the line by presenting moving image works whose directors deliberately break the rules to reveal the unquestioned structural and stylistic conventions of image and sound production.

Jump the Line is a reflexive take on the multiple timescales and varied technical and dramaturgical strategies that make up films, recordings, performances, and broadcasts. By focusing on how, why, and for whom such things are made, *Jump the Line* represents what EMPAC stands for as an institution: the daily work of producing new artworks behind studio doors, invisible to the public until completion.

Spanning the week of film events, Gerard Byrne’s installation *In Our Time* is open to the public in Studio 1 where the film’s temporal reality is synched to the actual hours of each day. A radio host goes about the repetitive activities of a daily live broadcast, reinforcing Byrne’s questions around synchronicity, (in)visibility, and the dramaturgy of production.

In much the same way, Stan Douglas’s legendary jazz epic *Luanda-Kinshasa* (2013) is presented for the first time ever as a single six-hour theatrical screening. *Luanda-Kinshasa* depicts a fictional 1970s jazz-funk band engaged in a seemingly endless real-time jam turning EMPAC’s Concert Hall into the recording studio.

Two further screening programs are presented using the double- and triple-bill format: The first framed by Trinh T. Minh-ha’s *Shoot for the Contents* that renders “the real in the illusory and the illusory in the real” in a journey through Chinese storytelling, and the second anchored by Eric Baudelaire’s newly released documentary, *Un film dramatique*, that charts the artist’s four-year collaboration with a group of Parisian middle-school artists, who learn to use the camera in ways unique to their burgeoning points of view.

FEBRUARY

8 to 14

GERARD BYRNE

IN OUR TIME

FEBRUARY 8 & 11 to 14
STUDIO 1—GOODMAN

IN OUR TIME (2017)
BY GERARD BYRNE

Irish artist Gerard Byrne's video installation *In Our Time* unfolds, in real time, the inner workings of a recording studio during the golden era of analog radio.

On first look, the video has the familiar register of a period piece set in a meticulously recreated control-booth of a radio station of its day. However, the linear timeline of the broadcast—with its repetitions of commercial breaks, the lilt and timbre of the radio host's voice, the classic pop, and the weather segments—slowly disengages and falls apart. Soon, the songs played are not those that have been announced, the station's name sounds different, the news events skip from decade to decade, and all the while the band simply continues to tune-up. In this radio booth, where the repetition of broadcast rhythms dictates the consecutive daily events, the image and soundtracks appear to remain resolutely synchronous. But the gradual disconnection between *what is seen* and *what is heard* produces a surreal uncertainty around the fixity of time within the temporal monotony of the radio station.

In Our Time brings into focus not only the time of broadcast—its rhythms, in-jokes, and pop riffs—but reinforces the temporal reality in which we all exist, on the sublevel of our daily routine to the looping of political and historical cycles. The record might change, but our cultural and technological concept of time remains constant.

INSTALLATION OPENING TIMES IN STUDIO 1—GOODMAN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 11AM–6PM
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 11AM–5PM
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 11AM–9PM
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 11AM–8PM
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 11AM–10PM

CURATOR VIC BROOKS

FREE ADMISSION

STAN DOUGLAS LUANDA-KINSHASA

SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 8, 12-6PM
CONCERT HALL

LUANDA-KINSHASA (2013)

BY STAN DOUGLAS

Stan Douglas's *Luanda-Kinshasa* documents a jazz-funk recording session at The Church, Columbia Records' legendary New York studio that was shuttered in 1981. The film telegraphs a group of contemporary musicians back to the 1970s to improvise in a reconstruction of the original Columbia 30th Street Studio, the site of such diverse and seminal recordings as Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue* (1959), Pink Floyd's *The Wall* (1979), and Glenn Gould's *Bach: The Goldberg Variations* (1955).

Luanda-Kinshasa connects the New York music scene of the 1970s with its African roots, moving through funk, jazz, and Afrobeat to produce subtle pancultural connections played by musicians brought together by jazz pianist and composer Jason Moran. At EMPAC, the recording session is projected theatrically and into a concert hall for the first time, reinforcing the real-time durations that exist between production and performance in the film. Edited sequences are cut together in homage to Miles Davis, with loops and repetitions integral as much to the experience of listening to the music as to the temporal flow of the images themselves. The film's six-hour duration stretches far beyond the usual confines of the cinema and into the time of production, as the camera focuses on the band while technicians, producers, and groupies populate the edges of the frame.

Luanda-Kinshasa is a film by Canadian artist Stan Douglas and features musicians Jason Moran, Kahlil Kwame Bell, Liberty Ellman, Jason Lindner, Abdou Mboup, Nitin Mitta, Antoine Roney, Marvin Sewell, Kimberly Thompson, and Burniss Earl Travis.

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED THROUGHOUT.

**ONGOING: INSTALLATION IN STUDIO 1—GOODMAN
IN OUR TIME** BY GERARD BYRNE / 11AM-6PM

BUILDING TOUR

2PM, WITH CURATORS VIC BROOKS
AND ANNE LEILEHUA LANZILOTTI

BUILDING TOUR

4PM, WITH LEAD AUDIO ENGINEER TODD VOS

CURATOR VIC BROOKS

\$10 / RPI STUDENTS: IN ADVANCE \$6, SAME DAY FREE

RUCHIR JOSHI ONYEKA IGWE TRINH T. MINH-HA A HUNDRED SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 12, 6PM
THEATER

TALES FROM PLANET KOLKATA (1993)

BY RUCHIR JOSHI

Filmed in 1990s Calcutta, India, *Tales from Planet Kolkata* is a sharply canny satire on the city's continued portrayal by the western media as a "black hole" and "the worst place in the world." As lovingly photographed as it is acutely observed, the film is shot through with references from Godard to Hollywood, opening with Ruchir Joshi's take on Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, as the director leads us on a riotous journey through the city along with a local Patua (a traditional Bengali scroll painter) and an African American video artist. In search of answers to perennial questions of cultural identity and belonging, *Tales* was originally commissioned by the UK's Channel 4 television to shift the perspective of the dominant western gaze towards that of the global south.

SPECIALISED TECHNIQUE (2019)

BY ONYEKA IGWE

Specialised Technique is one of a trio of films made with images from the British Colonial Film Unit archives of the Aba Women's War of 1929, the first major anti-colonial protest to British authority in West Africa, and a struggle led specifically by women. Onyeka Igwe's own film delves deep into the technique of the Colonial Film Unit's practice, and draws out how certain actions and gestures, like sequences of West African's dancing, propagandized a positive image of British rule. A methodical and at times joyful reflection on questions of how, why, and for whom such images are produced, Igwe in turn develops her own filmic language in the reframing of these archival images in direct resistance to the violence of the colonial gaze.

SHOOT FOR THE CONTENTS (1992)

BY TRINH T. MINH-HA

Shoot for the Contents is a richly layered documentary that hinges on the protests that sparked the massacre at Tiananmen Square in 1989. Trinh T. Minh-ha draws out the expansive relationship between images, sounds, and the process of filmmaking itself in order to translate the complex motifs of Chinese allegory through the moving image. Titled after a Chinese guessing game, *Shoot for the Contents* delicately layers the voices of women artists and philosophers with Chinese music in an intimate meditation on Mao's iconic phrase: "Let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend." All the while questioning conventions of the documentary format and questions of veracity in terms of political representation, structures of power, and the production of cultural identity.

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

**ONGOING: INSTALLATION IN STUDIO 1—GOODMAN
IN OUR TIME** BY GERARD BYRNE / 11AM-9PM

CURATOR VIC BROOKS

\$10 / RPI STUDENTS: IN ADVANCE \$6, SAME DAY FREE



TAMAR GUIMARÃES
ERIC BAUDELAIRE

WHAT ARE WE
DOING HERE
TOGETHER?

FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 14, 7PM
THEATER

O ENSAIO / THE REHEARSAL (2018)

BY TAMAR GUIMARÃES

Bubbling underneath the wryly comedic attempts to rehearse a dramatization of Machado de Assis's nineteenth-century satirical novel, *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*, lies is a searing critique of the racism and sexism of Brazilian society. *O Ensaio* follows a group of performers directed by a young artist, Isa, as they encounter multiplying difficulties putting together a play for an exhibition. Punctuated by the neurotic repetitions of rehearsal structures and the accompanying group dynamics, the screenplay was developed by Tamar Guimarães in tandem with the cast of largely nonprofessional actors. Described by the artist as a film about "short-lived revolutionary actions," *O Ensaio* delves into 1880 Machado de Assis's prediction that, although the end of slavery would come, "everything would remain the same."

UN FILM DRAMATIQUE (2019)

BY ERIC BAUDELAIRE

Eric Baudelaire's principle that "we would make a film that starts as a film about them, slowly becoming a film made with them, and eventually, after four years, it would end up as a film by them," produces a brilliantly incisive and intimate feature film that was shot over four years with a group of middle-school students from the Dora Maar School in Saint-Denis, France. Riffing on their own lives, and all that is happening politically and socially around them, the young artists use the implicitly collaborative process of filmmaking as an explicit way to make their own voices heard. Going up against the power structures inherent to the world they will one day inherit, they debate issues of discrimination in the face of the current struggles around racism and immigration in Europe to attempt to answer the central question: "What are we doing here together?"

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

**ONGOING: INSTALLATION IN STUDIO 1—GOODMAN
IN OUR TIME** BY GERARD BYRNE / 11AM-10PM

CURATOR VIC BROOKS

\$10 / RPI STUDENTS: IN ADVANCE \$6, SAME DAY FREE

CHRISTOPHER K. MORGAN

NATIVE INTELLIGENCE / INNATE INTELLIGENCE

WORK IN PROGRESS

Contemporary-dance choreographer Christopher K. Morgan is artistic director of his namesake Washington, DC-based dance company, as well as Executive Artistic Director of Dance Place in DC and Director of the Dance Omi International Dance Collective in Ghent, NY. For his last work, *Pōhaku* (2016), Morgan diverged from his principal roll as choreographer of a contemporary-dance ensemble to create a personal solo that addressed his indigenous Hawaiian heritage and separation from his ancestral land. In *Pōhaku*, the choreographer explored the aesthetic and social complexities between Morgan's Western modern and Indigenous Hawaiian dance lineages. Now continuing similar investigations with his company, Morgan's new work *Native Intelligence / Innate Intelligence* incorporates modern dance, hula, Hawaiian chant, and live music to examine the location and meaning of home and belonging.

Morgan is at EMPAC to develop and build the set for *Native Intelligence / Innate Intelligence* by collaborating with mixed-media sculpture artist Brenda Mallory. Mallory uses cloth, fibers, beeswax, and found objects together with what she identifies as "crude hardware" to create works that imply tenuous connections or evidence of repair.

CURATOR ASHLEY FERRO-MURRAY

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 20, 7PM
STUDIO 1—GOODMAN

FREE ADMISSION

While Morgan and Mallory will be at work with EMPAC's crew to construct the set of *Native Intelligence / Innate Intelligence* during the days of this residency, Morgan's company dancers will work in the studio at night to develop a movement vocabulary from the materials designed for the stage set. These explorations between the sculptural materials of the set in relationship to movement are the focus of this event.

Please check the website for a event-related workshop at empac.rpi.edu

Work-in-progress events offer a window into the research, development, and production of new works by artists in residence at EMPAC. These free events open up a dialogue between our audiences, artists, and EMPAC staff.

Native Intelligence / Innate Intelligence was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Native Intelligence / Innate Intelligence is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund and Development Fund Project co-commissioned by Maui Arts & Cultural Center and PA'I Foundation in partnership with Dance Place and NPN. For more information: nnpweb.org

Additional support from the Western Arts Alliance's Native Launchpad Program.



MICHELLE ELLSWORTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

Choreographer Michelle Ellsworth has a prolific body of work that skirts the disciplinary perimeters of dance, theater, film, carpentry, web design, and more. She has a knack for mixing humor and candor to perform elaborate systems with physical materials like wood and gears. Her work cleaves—paradoxically meaning both “divide” and “adhere”—the body and technology.

Ellsworth and her technicians will work with the EMPAC team in an exploratory collaboration. Residencies immerse us in the creative process of artists we trust and whose work we cherish as they work with our team to discover new ideas and approaches.

As a part of this residency and to introduce the artist to EMPAC audiences, Ellsworth will be in conversation with curator Ashley Ferro-Murray at a work-in-progress event to contextualize her body of work and illuminate her creative process in developing the new project.

Work-in-progress events offer a window into the research, development, and production of new works by artists in residence at EMPAC. These free events open up a dialogue between our audiences, artists, and EMPAC staff.

Support from the University of Colorado, Boulder.

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

CURATOR ASHLEY FERRO-MURRAY

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 27, 7PM
STUDIO 1—GOODMAN

FREE ADMISSION



SONDRA PERRY IN COLLABORATION WITH iEAR PRESENTS!

Sondra Perry makes videos, performances, and installations that foreground digital tools as a way to critically reflect on new technologies of representation and remobilize their potential. Perry's engagement with consumer image-making technologies produces artworks that reveal the calibration, protocols, and algorithms inherent in these devices.

She repurposes exercise machines, video games, chroma studios, and computer graphics in multidisciplinary artworks that together form a corrective against the unreflective naturalization of technology. Her works examine how images are produced in order to reveal the way photographic representations are captured and re-circulated.

Sondra Perry's lecture performance is produced in collaboration with iEAR Presents! (a project of Rensselaer's Arts Department), which is sponsored by New York State Council of the Arts and Rensselaer's School of HASS.

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

CURATORS VIC BROOKS, KATHY HIGH, AND BRANDA MILLER

THURSDAY MARCH 5, 6PM STUDIO 2

FREE ADMISSION



NINA C. YOUNG

AMERICAN BRASS QUINTET

THE GLOW THAT ILLUMINATES, THE GLARE THAT OBSCURES

When we are close to something brilliant, what is the difference between that which lights our way, and that which impedes our journey? Young's *The Glow that Illuminates, the Glare that Obscures* explores the intricacies of an old love—Renaissance architectural and musical practices—through new compositional forms and strategies. Architecturally, light and space have long been in conversation defining each other. Young uses EMPAC's Wave Field Synthesis Array to allow the audience to follow the resonance of sound through architectural space.

The acoustic version was commissioned by Shriver Hall Concert Series for the American Brass Quintet. The premiere was given in Shriver Hall, Baltimore, MD, on December 8, 2019.

An evening-length audio-visual performance-installation version for overhead wave field synthesis, projections, and brass quintet was commissioned by EMPAC. Additional production support and residency provided by EMPAC leading up to this world premiere.

The Glow that Illuminates, The Glare that Obscures by Nina C. Young, performed by the American Brass Quintet was provided additional support by New Music USA, made possible by annual program support and/or endowment gifts from Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, Helen F. Whitaker Fund, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc., New York State Council on the Arts.

THURSDAY MARCH 19, 7PM THEATER

CURATORS ANNE LEILEHUA LANZILOTTI AND JOHANNES GOEBEL

\$20 / \$15 / RPI STUDENTS: IN ADVANCE \$6, SAME DAY FREE

PAIGE MORGAN JOHNSON

PERFORMING WARIA: GENRE AS TECHNOLOGY FOR SHAPING TRANS-IDENTITY IN INDONESIA

In this talk, performance scholar Paige Morgan Johnson discusses her decade-long research on contemporary Indonesian performance practice, queer cabaret scene, and *waria* (an Indonesian term for transgender women). Johnson will describe the function of genre within contemporary Indonesian performance practices as a means of showing how queer and transgender bodies in Indonesia shape, and are shaped by, performance.

The aesthetic conventions of drag, for example, offer waria ways to perform the complex relationship between local understandings of Trans*-ness and global, predominantly Western, iterations of nonbinary embodiment. Of special interest are the ways waria entertainers perform the racialized femininity of Black pop stars—a practice that enables movement across affective, cultural, and geographic borders.

Paige Morgan Johnson is Assistant Professor of Performance & Race in the Department of Theater at Barnard College/Columbia University.

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

CURATOR ASHLEY FERRO-MURRAY

TUESDAY
MARCH 24, 6PM
STUDIO 2

FREE ADMISSION



JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO

CHAMELEON: A BIOMYTHOGRAPHY

Artist Jaamil Olawale Kosoko is at EMPAC for the world premiere of *Chameleon: A Biomythography*. The result of four technical development residencies at EMPAC, *Chameleon* is a multimedia live artwork that explores: “the fugitive realities and shapeshifting demands of surviving at the intersection of Blackness, feminism, and queerness in contemporary America.” In this new work, the stage is saturated with melanated tones and pigments—intensified by Africanist texts and iconography from Luther Vandross to Audre Lorde’s *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*, where the term “biomythography” originates.

The stage becomes a site of ecstatic spiritual fantasy in which grief is punctuated by moments of beauty, care, and pleasure. The setting features live and recorded performers who embody, film, document, and re-embody sources of curated archival imagery. Drawing from an ongoing fascination with Black diasporic spiritual practice and by what the artist calls “erotic digitality,” Kosoko uses the apparatus of the theater to conjure an environment of disarming emotional complexity.

As a complement to the live work, you can now listen to Kosoko’s American Chameleon podcast on Spotify. Former iterations of *Chameleon: A Biomythography* held various titles including *Chameleon (The Troy Installments)* and *the hold*.

Chameleon: A Biomythography is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by EMPAC / Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY; the New York Live Arts Live Feed Residency creative residency program by New York Live Arts; and the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University, in partnership with Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA), Tanz im August/HAU Hebbel am Ufer, and NPN.

CURATOR ASHLEY FERRO-MURRAY

THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 7PM

THEATER

\$20 / \$15 / RPI STUDENTS: IN ADVANCE \$6, SAME DAY FREE

EPHRAIM ASILI INHERITANCE PREVIEW

Ephraim Asili's *Inheritance* weaves histories of the West Philadelphia-based MOVE Organization, the Black Arts Movement, and dramatizations of the life of the filmmaker when he was a member of a Black Marxist Collective.

Centering on what Asili describes as a "speculative reenactment" of his time in a West Philadelphia collective, the actors scripted lives on set are entwined with cameos by the MOVE Organization's Debbie Africa, Mike Africa Sr., and Mike Africa Jr., and poet-activists Sonia Sanchez and Ursula Rucker.

This screening is a preview of *Inheritance*, commissioned by EMPAC. It was filmed in Studio 1—Goodman and on location in Philadelphia.

There will be a postscreening exchange and reception with the artist to give time and space for open discussion and feedback on this first presentation of the film in a public context.

CURATOR VIC BROOKS

THURSDAY APRIL 9, 7PM THEATER

\$10 / RPI STUDENTS: IN ADVANCE \$6, SAME DAY FREE

SETH PARKER WOODS

TRANSLATING THE ATROCITIES OF OUR PAST, COMPOSING THE LANGUAGE OF OUR FUTURE

Seth Parker Woods performs new works on the theme of “translation” for cello and electronics composed by Freida Abtan, Monty Adkins, Ryan Carter, Nathalie Joachim, and Pierre Alexandre Tremblay.

When translation is treated as a mere concept, misunderstandings can be discussed to try to overcome challenges. However, when the meaning of what’s lost in translation bleeds over into actual losses for living beings, the consequences of theoretical misunderstandings can be devastating. Joachim’s work *The Race: 1915* uses newspaper texts from *The Chicago Defender* that used translation and specificity of words to empower its readers by challenging the way language could be used to gloss over the atrocities faced by African Americans during that time. In recalling this language, Joachim asks the listener to examine their own assumptions about the current situation in the United States.

Some of the other works approach this search for understanding through multimedia, such as the collaboration between Adkins and McLean layering textures of snow/sound, while others try to reach clarity of expression through a common memory of a shared past. The final work is accompanied by a new film by British artist Zoe McLean.

CURATOR ANNE LEILEHUA LANZILOTTI

FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 7PM

STUDIO 1—GOODMAN

\$20 / \$15 / RPI STUDENTS: IN ADVANCE \$6, SAME DAY FREE



HEARTBEAT OPERA

LADY M

WORK IN PROGRESS

In intimate venues, with essentialized casts and bands, Heartbeat Opera reenvisions and rearranges operas—their scores and libretti—to speak to contemporary audiences. Through taking apart and then putting back together these classics, Heartbeat helps us hear, see, and experience operas in new ways. Especially in demonstrating the way women are portrayed in opera, the company brings these works to life with thoughtful, provocative renditions.

Lady M is a reordered, 90-minute version of Giuseppe Verdi's *Macbeth*, featuring six singers, six instrumentalists, and extensive electronic sound design. Putting special focus on Lady Macbeth, Heartbeat Opera tells the story through a contemporary lens asking: What does it mean to be an ambitious, driven woman today? How do power and wealth corrupt? By stripping away the clichés that have accumulated around the story as received from Shakespeare's text and Verdi's music, Heartbeat makes new art on old ground.

Heartbeat shares this work in progress before taking it to Irondale in Brooklyn, May 11–16.

DIRECTED AND ADAPTED BY ETHAN HEARD

MUSIC DIRECTED BY JACOB ASHWORTH

ARRANGED BY DANIEL SCHLOSBERG

ELECTRONIC SOUND DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE BY SENEM PIRLER

CURATOR ANNE LEILEHUA LANZILOTTI

FRIDAY

MAY 1, 7PM

THEATER

FREE ADMISSION



AMANDA TURNER POHAN ALEXA ECHOES

Alexa Echoes is a chamber opera by visual artist Amanda Turner Pohan in collaboration with composer Charlie Looker and choreographer Dages Juvelier Keates. The first iteration in a series of three performances, *Alexa Echoes* recasts the relationship between cultural movements and commercial technologies through the history of women's devocalization and disembodiment, beginning with mythical Greek figures including Echo and leading up to Amazon's smart speaker Echo for Alexa, its digital voice-based assistant.

As in much of Pohan's interdisciplinary oeuvre, this performance looks at the body's complicated relationship to technology as it relates to autonomy, animation, and the melismatic sound of breath. Using choreographed movement, spoken word, and song set to an orchestral score, *Alexa Echoes* abstracts the gendered decisions that go into framing these newer media technologies, pointing toward the corporate entities which choreographed them.

The premiere of *Alexa Echoes* is curated by second-year students from CCS Bard, working with EMPAC curator Vic Brooks.

Supported by the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College.

CURATORS MUHEB ESMAT, MARISA ESPE, BERGEN HENDRICKSON, CIENA LESHLEY, ANA LOPES,
LIZ LORENZ, BROOKE NICOLAS, ELIZAVETA SHNEYDERMAN, AND RACHEL VERA STEINBERG

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 7PM THEATER

\$20 / \$15 / RPI STUDENTS: IN ADVANCE \$6, SAME DAY FREE

EMPAC TOURS

EMPAC building tours are offered throughout the spring season. In February, two tours—one with Curators Vic Brooks and Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti and another with Audio Engineer Todd Vos—will be led in conjunction with the matinee presentation of Stan Douglas’s six-hour film *Luanda-Kinshasa* in the Concert Hall. In March, the tour will be led by EMPAC’s Director, Johannes Goebel; and in April, Director for Stage Technologies Geoff Abbas will delve into the architectural and technological capabilities of the building.

Visitors should meet at the box office.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2PM **VIC BROOKS AND** **ANNE LEILEHUA LANZILOTTI / CURATORS**

Join EMPAC’s Time-Based Visual Art Senior Curator Vic Brooks and Music Curator Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti for a behind-the-scenes look at EMPAC’s extraordinary production facilities. From precisely calibrated studios, to a concert hall on springs, the Curators will discuss the acoustic and visual potential of EMPAC’s venues for the making of complex artworks, along with their approach to the connection of EMPAC’s artists and audiences.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 4PM **TODD VOS / LEAD AUDIO ENGINEER**

From the specialized sound-diffusive panels in Studio 1, to the frequency-calibrated Nomex ceiling fabric in the Concert Hall, and into the miles of fiber-optic cable that connect each of EMPAC’s performance spaces to its recording studios, Lead Audio Engineer Todd Vos will take audiophiles on a deep-dive into EMPAC’s acoustic design and capabilities.

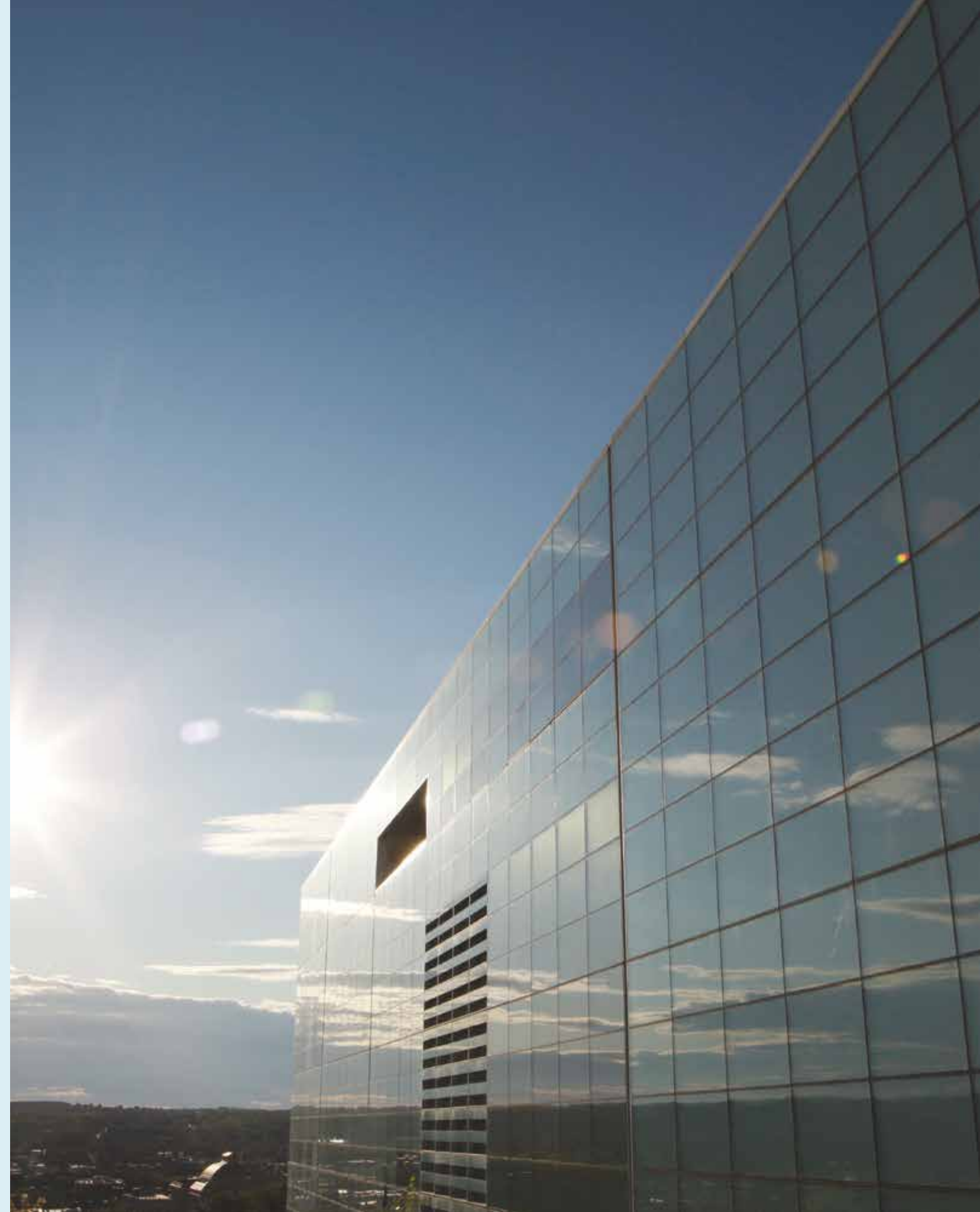
These two tours are presented in conjunction with *Luanda-Kinshasa* in the Concert Hall (12–6PM) and *In Our Time* in Studio 1—Goodman (11AM–6PM). See page 9 for details.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 11AM **JOHANNES GOEBEL / DIRECTOR**

Join EMPAC’s founding Director Johannes Goebel for a tour of the building he guided through design and construction and an overview of the program he began establishing in 2001. Goebel will take visitors through the EMPAC building with an eye and an ear to the “human-scale” functions he strove to achieve in taking the project from a lofty vision to one of the most advanced centers for new artistic production and research in immersive environments.

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 11AM **GEOFF ABBAS /** **DIRECTOR FOR STAGE TECHNOLOGIES**

A general overview of the EMPAC building, with a focus on its architectural highlights and programmatic capabilities, this tour will take guests through all four EMPAC venues, audio and video recording facilities, and the many spaces in between.



STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

From student work to research and performance opportunities, extracurricular clubs to special events, EMPAC offers a range of ways for Rensselaer students to be involved.

All EMPAC-curated events are open to Rensselaer students at the price of \$6, and free admission is available to classes that integrate the programming into their curricula and to members of the EMPAC[®] program. Tickets for non-Rensselaer students are available at the discounted rate of \$15.

Every year, the Rensselaer department of the arts programs seven events utilizing the infrastructure and support of the production teams at EMPAC. These productions often include final graduate projects that are developed in the venues themselves. As a part of the Rensselaer initiative to integrate art across the institute's curriculum, EMPAC hosts interdisciplinary Art_X classes taught by faculty who use the EMPAC-curated program as an artistic and experiential part of the class's specific topic of inquiry. Students are also often involved with research projects conducted by Rensselaer faculty using EMPAC infrastructure.

A large number of student workers support EMPAC's operation in the box office, as ushers, and with the various production (video, audio, IT, stage, lighting, etc.) and administrative (artist services, design/marketing, etc.) teams.

For employment opportunities, please visit the student page on EMPAC's website: empac.rpi.edu/program/students

EMPAC⁺

EMPAC[®] is a program open to all Rensselaer students that offers deeper ways of exploring the EMPAC program. Upon enrollment, members will receive free admission to all EMPAC-curated events. Every week the EMPAC[®] community will receive news about upcoming shows, have the chance to meet our curators and artists in residence, and enjoy inside access to EMPAC productions as they are being created.



ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

Artist residencies are the heart of the curatorial program at EMPAC and figure into the overarching programming vision of the attending curator. Residencies often provide space, resources, and expertise unavailable elsewhere.

SPRING 2020 ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

EPHRAIM ASILI (VARIOUS DATES)

Hudson Valley-based filmmaker Ephraim Asili is in residence to work on post-production for his EMPAC commissioned feature film *Inheritance*. Based on real events, the film's protagonist inherits a house in West Philadelphia that becomes home to an urban collective for activists of color. The increasingly claustrophobic drama unfolds as the group attempts to live together and find consensus through Black political discourse and social philosophy.

BEATRIZ SANTIAGO MUÑOZ (VARIOUS DATES)

Puerto Rican artist Beatriz Santiago Muñoz is in residence for post-production for an EMPAC commissioned moving image installation inspired by Monique Wittig's 1969 novel *Les Guérillères*, filmed at EMPAC and on-location in Puerto Rico in 2019.

SU WEN-CHI (JANUARY 13-24)

Choreographer and new-media artist Su Wen-Chi is in residence with three collaborators to explore live interaction between a performer, EMPAC's Wave Field Synthesis Array, and light. The artist will explore the concept of gravity and the residency will culminate in a work-in-progress event.

MARIA CHÁVEZ (JANUARY 6-16)

Abstract turntablist Maria Chávez comes to EMPAC for the first of several residencies to develop a newly commissioned work. Her interest in exploring extremely quiet sounds will be developed in EMPAC's acoustically generous spaces.

ANNA CRAYCROFT (FEBRUARY 3-7)

Anna Craycroft is in residence to continue production on her new theatrical work *Only Breath, Words*, which plays with the identification and manipulation of the source of a speaker's voice. From harnessing the sonic potential of the air-handling system and the acoustic character of room to sculpting light sources and projection, the performance activates every part of the theater's architecture.

CHRISTOPHER K. MORGAN (FEBRUARY 10-22)

Choreographer Christopher K. Morgan is in residence with artistic collaborator Brenda Mallory to design and construct a set for the choreographer's new work, *Native Intelligence / Innate Intelligence*. There will be a work-in-progress event at EMPAC before the work premieres at Dance Place in Washington, DC, in spring 2020.

NINA C. YOUNG (FEBRUARY 20-MARCH 20)

Continuing her work here at EMPAC with spatial audio and in particular, EMPAC's Wave Field Synthesis Array, Nina C. Young will develop her acoustic brass quintet into a multimedia work for live musicians, spatial audio, and live video processing based on geometric forms and Renaissance music. The residency culminates in the premiere of the new evening-length work on March 19th in the Theater.

MIVOS QUARTET (FEBRUARY 10-MARCH 27)

Mivos Quartet returns to EMPAC to record American composer Steve Reich's works. Each week they will focus on a different work and record multiple layovers to achieve a unity of sound and new, pristine recordings of these seminal works.

MICHELLE ELLSWORTH (FEBRUARY 25-MARCH 4)

Ellsworth and her technical collaborators will meet with EMPAC engineers to develop a new work. Ellsworth will present past works and share the process behind the new work in a work-in-progress event.

CAMILA GALAZ (MARCH 9-20)

The 2019 Australian Arts Council artist in residence, Camila Galaz will be at EMPAC to continue the post-production on her installation *Vecino Vecino (Neighbour Neighbour)*. The video work is based on a 1986 French TV documentary about the MAPU-Lautaro, a Chilean student resistance group who fought against the Pinochet dictatorship, that included the the artist's father.

LESLEY FLANIGAN (MARCH 9-13)

Lesley Flanigan continues her work at EMPAC working with her signature sculpture instruments and developing her practice of long-form improvisations. In this residency she will explore a new acoustic space at EMPAC while also working with EMPAC's engineers to develop future collaborations.

JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO (MARCH 23-APRIL 3)

Jaamil Olawale Kosoko is in residence for the last of four residencies to finish *Chameleon: A Biomythography*. This residency will focus on completing set and technical elements as well as rehearsals toward the world premiere of this new work on April 2.

JAMES RICHARDS (APRIL 6-17)

Berlin-based artist James Richards is in residence to continue to develop his EMPAC commissioned work for the theater, that moves between voice, image, and movement.

HEARTBEAT OPERA (APRIL 20-MAY 1)

This New York opera company comes to EMPAC at the end of our season to develop a new reordered and reorchestrated version of Giuseppe Verdi's *Macbeth*, here renamed *Lady M*. The company will use their time at EMPAC to collaborate with sound artist and RPI alumna Senem Pirlir, creating the supernatural sound of the witches—manipulating their voices through electronic processing.

AMANDA TURNER POHAN (MAY 4-8)

Pohan will be in residence with with composer Charlie Looker and choreographer Dages Juvelier Keates to stage the chamber opera *Alexa Echoes*. This residency is organized by Muheb Esmat, Marisa Espe, Bergen Hendrickson, Ciena Leshley, Ana Lopes, Liz Lorenz, Brooke Nicolas, Elizaveta Shneyderman, Rachel Vera Steinberg, second-year students from CCS Bard, working in collaboration with EMPAC curator Vic Brooks.

THE UNDO FELLOWSHIP (MAY 14-17)

EMPAC will host a retreat for the four pairs of artists and writers awarded the UNDO FELLOWSHIP, an initiative by Union Docs to expand radical filmmaking practices and research new languages of documentary cinema. The fellowship recipients include scholar Erika Balsom with filmmaker Eric Baudelaire, essayist and artist Steve Reinke with collaborative artists Dani and Sheilah ReStack, film scholar and programmer Nzingha Kendall with filmmaker Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich, and writer and editor Matthew Shen Goodman with filmmaker James N. Kienitz Wilkins.

BORA YOON (MAY 17-21)

Sound artist, composer, and performer Bora Yoon comes to EMPAC for an exploratory residency to experiment with EMPAC's Wave Field Synthesis Array. The bold shapes in her music as well as her dramatic sense of space offer room to push the system in new ways.

NI'JA WHITSON (JUNE 11-21)

Ni'Ja Whitson is in residence to research and work on *The Unarrival Experiments*, which is a performance project exploring relationships between astrophysics, cosmology, Blackness, Trans* embodiedness, and premature death.

IMAGE CREDITS

(FROM FRONT TO BACK)

PAGE 4. SU WEN-CHI, IMAGE OF NASA'S GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER.

PAGE 7. JENNY RHEE, BOOK COVER IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NAM JUNE PAIK ESTATE
AND THE FRIEDRICH CHRISTIAN FLICK COLLECTION.

PAGE 8. TAMAR GUIMARÃES, *O ENSAIO* (2019), COURTESY OF THE ARTIST
AND ARSENAL-INSTITUT FÜR FILM UND VIDEOKUNST E.V.

PAGE 10. GERARD BYRNE, *IN OUR TIME* (2017), COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND LISSON GALLERY.

PAGE 12. STAN DOUGLAS, *LUANDA-KINSHASA* (2013), COURTESY OF THE ARTIST
AND DAVID ZWIRNER.

PAGE 14. RUCHIR JOSHI, *TALES FROM PLANET KOLKATA* (1993), COURTESY OF THE ARTIST
AND ARSENAL-INSTITUT FÜR FILM UND VIDEOKUNST E.V.

PAGE 16. ERIC BAUDELAIRE, *UN FILM DRAMATIQUE* (2019), COURTESY OF THE ARTIST
AND THE CINEMA GUILD.

PAGE 19. CHRISTOPHER K. MORGAN, *NATIVE INTELLIGENCE / INNATE INTELLIGENCE*,
COURTESY OF MARIO GALLUCCI.

PAGE 20. MICHELLE ELLSWORTH, PHOTO BY MAX BERNSTEIN.

PAGE 22. SONDRRA PERRY, PHOTO BY THORSTEN ARENDT.

PAGE 24. NINA C. YOUNG, *THE GLOW THAT ILLUMINATES, THE GLARE THAT OBSCURES*,
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

PAGE 26. PAIGE MORGAN JOHNSON, *PERFORMING WARIA: GENRE AS TECHNOLOGY FOR
SHAPING TRANS-IDENTITY IN INDONESIA*, PHOTO BY SANA JAVERI KADRI.

PAGE 28. JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO, *CHAMELEON: A BIOMYTHOGRAPHY*,
PHOTO BY MICHAEL VALIQUETTE.

PAGE 30. EPHRAIM ASILI, *INHERITANCE* PRODUCTION STILL, PHOTO BY MICK BELLO.

PAGE 33. SETH PARKER WOODS, *TRANSLATING THE ATROCITIES OF OUR PAST,
COMPOSING THE LANGUAGE OF OUR FUTURE*, PHOTO BY MICHAEL YU.

PAGE 34. HEARTBEAT OPERA, *LADY M*, PHOTO BY VINCENT TULLO.

PAGE 36. AMANDA TURNER POHAN, *ALEXA ECHOES*, PHOTO BY MARIE GARNIER.

PAGE 39. EMPAC, PHOTO BY KRIS QUA.

PAGE 40, 44. PHOTOS BY SARA GRIFFITH.

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