

EMPAC



CHAMELEON
(THE LIVING INSTALLMENTS)

JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO
EARTH DAY APRIL 22

 Rensselaer

CURTIS R. PRIEM EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA
AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

wexner center
for the arts
AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK
STRA
LIVE
EVENTS



Chameleon (The Living Installments) is a response to the postponement of Jaamil Olawale Kosoko's *Chameleon: A Biomythography*, which was planned to have its premiere on April 2, 2020. The project, originally a co-commission by EMPAC, New York Live Arts, the Wexner Center, Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, and Tanz im August/HAU has been in development for over three years.

In the hold of the novel coronavirus and subsequent live performance cancellations, Kosoko has been re-imagining what his practice might look like during these times. The artist chose Earth Day to propose an invitation for healing both online and off as he opens his practice to conversation and collective convening in the form of *Chameleon* (The Living Installments). This iteration of Kosoko's *Chameleon* projects will include the release of archival materials, new video material, an interactive Syllabus for Survival, and live exchanges with collaborators and colleagues. Rather than a live streamed performance, what audiences will experience in The Living Installments is an experiment in interactive pedagogy that includes performative elements and proposes a model for creation through conversation and archival practice.

APRIL 22, 2020 / EARTH DAY

THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE WILL ALL TAKE PLACE
AND BE VIEWABLE WITHIN THE LIVESTREAM.

11AM
EDT

SYLLABUS RELEASE/WELCOME/PERFORMANCE
WELCOME FROM JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO
PIDGIN CHORUS PERFORMANCE WITH MAYFIELD BROOKS,
JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO, NILE HARRIS,
AND EVERETT-ASIS SAUNDERS

CHAMELEON: A SYLLABUS FOR SURVIVAL

11:30AM
EDT

LIVESTREAM/VIDEO
*TESTIFY: A CONVERSATION BETWEEN BILL T. JONES
AND JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO*

12PM
EDT

LIVESTREAM/VIDEO/WORLD PREMIERE
STANK FROM CHAMELEON: A VISUAL ALBUM

12:30PM
EDT

HEALING SESSION
SOMATIC HEALING WITH MICHELLE BOULÉ

1PM
EDT

Q&A/DISCUSSION
CHAMELEONIC ADAPTATION
DISCUSSION WITH JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO,
ASHON CRAWLEY, AUTUMN KNIGHT, NI'JA WHITSON,
AND *CHAMELEON* COLLABORATORS

2:30PM
EDT

CLOSING MUSIC PERFORMANCE
THE HOLD MUSIC BY EVERETT-ASIS SAUNDERS

BIOGRAPHIES

Jaamil Olawale Kosoko (Director and Host) is a Nigerian American performance artist, poet, and curator originally from Detroit, MI. His creative practice draws from Black study and queer theories of the body, weaving together visual performance, lecture, ritual, and spiritual practice. Recent awards include a 2019 NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship in Choreography, 2019 NPN Development Fund Award, 2019-21 Movement Research Artist in Residence, 2018-20 Live Feed Artist at New York Live Arts, 2017-19 Princeton Arts Fellow, 2019 Red Bull Writing Fellow, 2017 MAP Fund recipient, and a 2017 Cave Canem Poetry Fellow. His works have toured internationally to South Africa, Europe, Canada, and throughout the US appearing in festivals and venues such as The Centre for the Less Good Idea (Johannesburg), Fusebox Festival (Austin), PICA | Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Tanz im August (Berlin), Moving in November (Finland), Within Practice (Sweden), TakeMeSomewhere (UK), Brighton Festival (UK), Oslo Teaterfestival (Norway), and Zürich MOVES! (Switzerland) among others. He is the author of two chapbooks: *Animal in Cyberspace* and *Notes on An Urban Killfloor*. His poems and essays have been included in The American Poetry Review, The Dunes Review, The Broad Street Review, among others. Season 1 of his interview-based podcast, *American Chameleon* can be found on all podcast platforms. Visit jaamil.com or follow [@chameleon_coalition](https://www.instagram.com/chameleon_coalition) on Instagram for more information.

John D. Alexander (Production Manager/Lighting Design) is thrilled to work with Jaamil and the entire team on *Chameleon*. Recent designs include: *Royale* (Theatre Squared); *Paradise Blue* (Detroit Public Theater); *HERstory* (F.R.E.S.H.H. Inc. and The John F. Kennedy Center); *ELECTROGYNOUS* (Columbia College Dance Center); *Airness* (Keegan Theater); *Fabulation or, the Re-Education of Undine* (Mosaic Theatre Co.). OFF-BROADWAY: *Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence* (New Victory Theater). Upcoming designs include: *Next to Normal* (Catholic University); *The Niceties* (Mosaic Theatre Co.); *The House of the Negro Insane and Sheepdog* (CATF) and *Haint Blu* (Urban Bush Women). He was also nominated for a Helen Hayes Award for his work on *Top Dog Underdog* (Avant Bard). He holds a BFA in Lighting Design from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

mayfield brooks (Performance Collaborator) improvises while black, and is currently based in brooklyn, new york working as a movement-based performance artist, vocalist, urban farmer, writer, and wanderer. they studied contemporary dance at the school for new dance (sndo) in amsterdam, moving on center in oakland, ca, and holds a mfa in interdisciplinary performance from uc davis and a masters in performance studies from northwestern university. mayfield was a 2017 artist in residence at movement research new york, a 2019 dance and process (dap) artist at the kitchen nyc, and is currently an artist in residence at the center for performance research (cpr) and abrons arts center in new york. mayfield teaches urban farming courses for farm school new york (fsny), and teaches & performs dance and vocal improvisation nationally and internationally.

Alyssa Gersony (Research Assistant), b.1990, is a performance artist based in New York City since 2012. Her work has been presented by Gibney Dance, Movement Research at the Judson Church, the Center for Performance Research, Dixon Place, and Triskelion Arts. She has served as a research assistant to Jaamil Olawale Kosoko since 2016, and previously worked as a choreographic assistant to Thomas Lehmen and Grisha Coleman. Alyssa holds an MFA in Interdisciplinary Studies (Choreography and Intermedia Performance) from the University of Iowa, under the Iowa Arts Fellowship and Graduate College Fellowship. Her current work studies the limitations of solo performance in relation to whiteness and neoliberalism. Gersony is a 2020-2021 Fulbright research awardee in dance to Latvia.

Nile Harris (Performance Collaborator) is a Brooklyn based interdisciplinary artist working in the intersections of theatre, choreography, and time based media. His work has been presented at the Palais de Tokyo, Dixon Place, Secret Project Robot, Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance, Movement Research at Judson Church and The Watermill Center, where his commissioned installation, curated by Robert Wilson, was featured in publications such as New York Magazine, W Magazine, Art News, and Vulture. His work has been supported with residencies at Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Abrons Arts Center, and Otion Front Studio with funding support from the National YoungArts Foundation, Foundation for Contemporary Art, and Pepatián. As a performer, he has performed for various artists including 600 HIGHWAYMEN, Jaamil Olawale Kosoko, Malcolm-x Betts and in Broadway and Off-Broadway productions including 'The Inheritance' and 'Occupied Territories'.

Of Nigerian and Finnish descent, **Ima Iduozee (Film Co-Director)** is a choreographer, performer and filmmaker based in Helsinki. His debut solo, *This is the Title*, premiered in 2012 and went on to garner international acclaim, touring in 15 countries across Europe, North America and Asia. Recent commissions include works for the Finnish National Opera (*Don Giovanni* 2020), Finnish National Theatre (*Julia & Romeo* 2018), French fashion house Aalto International (*After Nature One* 2017), Stockholm City Theatre (*Purple Nights* 2015) and Helsinki City Theatre (*Perfect Day* 2014 & *Bonfire* 2019). Iduozee has directed music videos for Finnish artists such as Malla, Yeboyah and Isaac Sene. His on-going film project, *Diaspora Mixtapes*, is a series of video portraits that celebrate black cultural identity in the contemporary African Diaspora. In 2015, the annual honorary prize of the Finnish Critics Association, *Critics Spurs*, was given to Iduozee, as an acknowledgement for the best artistic breakthrough of the year.

Jennifer Kidwell (Assistant Director/Artistic Doula) is a performing artist. Recent projects – Underground Railroad Game (Obie Award, Best New American Theatre Work; 2018 Edinburgh Fringe First Award; Lucille Lortel, Helen Hayes nominations), Home (Bessie Award, Outstanding Production), Demolishing Everything with Amazing Speed, I Understand Everything Better (Bessie Award, Outstanding Production), Antigone (The Wilma Theater), A Hard Time, Superterranean, Fire Burns Hot: Little Reno!, I Promised Myself to Live Faster, 99 Break-Ups (Pig Iron Theatre Company), Dick's Last Stand (Whitney Biennial 2014, as Donelle Woolford), Zinnias: the Life of Clementine Hunter. Pig Iron Theatre Company & Lightning Rod Special company member, Wilma Theater Associated Artist, & JACK co-founder. Published in movement research Performance Journal #45 and hyperallergic.com. 2013 TCG/Fox Resident Actor Fellowship (with PITC), 2015 Leeway Foundation Art & Change Grant, 2016 Pew Fellow, 2017 Independence Fellow.

Alexis McCrimmon (Film Editor) is an interdisciplinary artist, filmmaker and film editor based in the Midwest. As Studio Editor for the Film/Video Studio, a post-production artist residency, at the Wexner Center for the Arts she has had the pleasure of working with artists from all over the globe, such as Ann Carlson, Rodney Evans, Pilar Mata Dupont, Hope Ginsburg, Bárbara Wagner, and Benjamin DeBurca. Her artistic practice explores commodity attachment, phenomenological transformation, and the aesthetic marriage between commercial and fine arts histories. Alexis has screened nationally and internationally including the Athens International Film and Video Festival, BFI Flare, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Frameline, East End Film Festival, and MIX NYC.

Meena Murugesan (Video Projection Design) is an award-winning video and dance artist based in Los Angeles, via Montreal, Canada. Meena creates experimental non-linear narratives with moving images at the intersection of live performance, video art and social justice issues. Rooted in the movement practices of bharata natyam, improvisation and somatic bodywork, as well as the film practices of contemplative documentary and collage, Meena centers a decolonial, anti-caste, feminist, queer, dravidian and melanated creative liberatory practice. Meena designs multi-channel video installations for live performance with directors/choreographers such as Jaamil Olawale-Kosoko, taisha paggett, d. Sabela grimes, Marjani Forte-Saunders (Bessie Award for Best Visual Design, "Memoirs of a...Unicorn," 2019), Embodiment Project, Sita Frederick, Christopher Emile/No)one.Art House, Lionel Popkin and D'Lo among others, and is currently working on two self-directed performance/video projects - KARUPPU and The South Asian Melanin Project. Meena's artistic work and designs have been presented at venues such as ODC, YBCA, Gibney, NYLA, Pregones Theater, Dixon Theater, Getty Villa, MOCA Los Angeles, Bootleg Theater, The Ford Amphitheater, Pieter, LACE, UCLA, Pearlstein Gallery, Black Star Film Festival, ICA Philadelphia, Opera Omaha, Colorado College, Tangente, MAI, Le Gesu, Monument National and others. Since 2002, Meena has been blessed with funding for video or dance work from organizations such as Pieter, we live in space, CHIME, UCLA, SODEC, CALQ, CAC and MAI.

Emily Reilly (Dramaturg) is a British/Irish performance maker and dramaturg working across a number of different disciplines. She holds an M.F.A in Dramaturgy & Dramatic Criticism from The Yale School of Drama and a B.A. from Trinity College Dublin. She has presented work in the U.S. and internationally at a variety of venues and found spaces including (selected): The Project Arts Centre, Dublin; The Samuel Beckett Theatre, Dublin; The Tron Theatre, Glasgow; The Gilded Balloon, Edinburgh; The Volksbühne, Berlin; The Invisible Dog Art Center; The Baryshnikov Arts Center, and The Clemente Soto Véllez Cultural Center in NYC. In 2011 her production, Minute After Midday, was awarded a prestigious Fringe First Award at The Edinburgh Festival. She is an alumna of the Urban Bush Women's Summer Leadership Institute. She is also co-founder and co-artistic director of HORSE, whose production Vaska premiered in Amsterdam in the fall of 2018.

Everett Saunders (Sound Design) is a Composer, and Sound Designer specializing in collaborative processes, score and soundscape development for theater and film. His approach to film and theater is not only supported by his musicality, but his understanding of the distinct nuances of the genres. Working with directorial minds such as Damon Colquhoun of Ron Howard's Project Imagination and internationally renowned dance companies such as Urban Bush Women his unique understanding of musical dramaturgy and theatrical score development has impacted audiences across the nation. His latest and ongoing work in the production Memoirs of a... Unicorn, received a 2018 Bessie Award for Outstanding Production, and recently had its International premiere in Brussels, Belgium. Saunders was awarded a New Music USA grant to research and develop a 3-Dimensional Binaural Soundscape and Score for the performance work being Here. His latest work can be found within Urban Bush Women's recent production of *Hair & Other Stories*, and as a composer and sound designer on choreographer Jaamil Kosoko's multi-platformed project, *Chameleon*. Anchored in a steady collaboration with partner and choreographer Marjani Forté-Saunders (2020 FCA Awardee), and now emerging as 7NMS, the duo has produced 7 award-winning works over the last 10 yrs. 7NMS are also founding directors of ART & POWER (2018), a radical vanguard and platform for thought, innovation, and action.

SaVonne N. Whitfield, M.A. (Wardrobe and Fabrication) Born and raised in Oakland, CA now based in Las Vegas, NV. SaVonne is a fashion designer, wardrobe consultant, self-taught seamstress and small business owner of 27Hangers (creating customized clothing for all body types). As a style enthusiast, SaVonne has experience working in cities such as— Houston, Los Angeles and New York. From assisting in NYFW model casting and logistics, to working as a bridal stylist, as well as taking on costuming and wardrobe lead in theater production; SaVonne has earned a trusted rapport of style and garment constructing from her exposure and desire to learn and experience the multi-faceted elements of all things fashion, style and body positivity.

Peiyi Wong (Co-Scenic Design) is an interdisciplinary artist and designer of sets, installation, and costume based in Brooklyn, NY. Select credits: sets/installation - *You Are Under Our Space Control* (Object Collection/LaMama), *Memoirs of a... Unicorn* (New York Live Arts/Collapsible Hole, 2018 Bessie Award), *MukhAgni* (Under the Radar @ The Public), *SPEECH* (Lightning Rod Special/BRIC Arts), *Beast Thing* (Williams College), *Charleses* (Glass Bandits and The Tank/The Brick; Hewes Award nomination), *Now is the Time* (Little Lord/Abrons Arts), *The Tower* (Antimatter Collective/HERE Arts); sets + costume - *A Hunger Artist* (Sinking Ship/The Connelly), *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine* (Transport Group), *rasgos asiaticos* (Soho Rep Lab); costume - *Grace by Monteverde* (WP Pipeline Festival/cancelled due to CV19), *some higher glimmer in a landscape of flat* (Buran Theater), *Namour* (ARRAY feature film, on Netflix). MFA, CalArts. www.peiyiameliawong.com

INVITED ARTISTS

Michelle Boulé is dance artist, teacher, life coach, and healer, who is interested in bringing more love into the world. Her work explores how movement, creativity, and consciousness intersect with traditional and contemporary healing practices. The goal is to create aesthetically enlivened experiences that remind us of the truth and potential of who we are, individually and collectively. Boulé has received recent commissions, presentations, and awards from The Chocolate Factory, Danspace Project, Triple Canopy, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Summer Stages Dance @ICA Boston, and The Met Breur (with Okkyung Lee), University of Illinois Distinguished Legacy Award, New York Foundation for the Arts Choreography Fellowship, LMCC's Extended Life Dance Development Program, PICA Creative Exchange Lab, and MacDowell Colony. She is a "Bessie" Award winning performer who has worked Miguel Gutierrez (2001-15), Deborah Hay, Bebe Miller, and John Jasperse, amongst others. Michelle teaches internationally and also maintains an online coaching+healing practice. michelleboule.com

Ashon T. Crawley is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and African American Studies at the University of Virginia and author of *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility* (Fordham University Press), winner of the 2019 Judy Tsou Critical Race Studies Award from the American Musicological Society; and *The Lonely Letters* (Duke University Press). He is currently working on a cultural studies, gender and sexuality history of the Hammond Organ and its use in black sacred contexts, a project titled "Made Instrument: Polyphonic Intention." All his work is about alternatives to normative function and form, the practice of otherwise possibility. **Autumn Knight** is an interdisciplinary artist working with performance, installation, video and text. Her performance work has been on view at various institutions including Krannert Art Museum (IL), The Institute for Contemporary Art (VCU), Human Resources Los Angeles (HRLA) and Akademie der Kunst, (Berlin).

Ebony Golden is an artist, scholar, and culture strategist whose work consists of site-specific performance rituals and live art installations that explore relationships between creativity and liberation. She relies on transparent and equitable partnerships with community members, institutions, and creatives in pursuit of social justice. In addition to her artists practice, Ebony is the CEO and Principal at Betty's Daughter Arts Collaborative, a culture consultancy and arts accelerator that devises systems, strategies, solutions globally.

Instagram: [@ebonynoellegolden](https://www.instagram.com/ebonynoellegolden) Web: bettysdaughterarts.com

Autumn Knight is an interdisciplinary artist working with performance, installation, video and text. Her performance work has been on view at various institutions including Krannert Art Museum (IL), The Institute for Contemporary Art (VCU), Human Resources Los Angeles (HRLA) and Akademie der Kunst, (Berlin).

Ni'Ja Whitson, NY/LA, is a Creative Capital and "Bessie" Award winning, Queer Nonbinary multidisciplinary artist, wound and word worker, who has been referred to as "majestic" by The New York Times and recognized by Brooklyn Magazine as a culture influencer. Whitson engages a critical intersection of a sacred and conceptual transdisciplinarity in Black, Queer, and Trans-embodiedness, architectures, science, and spirit. Whitson is an 18th St. Artist in Residence (Los Angeles), 2020 Center for Performance Research artist in residence, 2018 MAP Fund awardee, featured choreographer of the 2018 CCA Biennial, 2018-2020 Urban Bush Women Choreographic Center Fellow Candidate, and invited presenter at the 2019 Tanzkongress international festival. Other recent awards include a 2018 Tarpaulin Sky Book Prize Shortlist (The Unarrival Experiments), Jerome/Camargo Fellowship, Dance in Process (DiP) Residency, Hedgebrook Fellowship, LMCC Process Space Residency, Bogliasco Fellowship. Recent commissions include EMPAC, Danspace Project, BAM Next Wave Art, American Realness Festival, California African American Museum. They are an Assistant Professor of experimental choreography at UC Riverside and Artistic Director of The NWA Project. www.nijawhitson.com

CHAMELEON (THE LIVING INSTALLMENTS)

CREATIVE TEAM CREDITS

JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO / DIRECTOR AND HOST
MAYFIELD BROOKS, NILE HARRIS, & JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO /
PERFORMANCE COLLABORATORS
EVERETT SAUNDERS / SOUND DESIGN
JENNIFER KIDWELL / ASSISTANT DIRECTOR / ARTISTIC DOULA
EMILY REILLY / DRAMATURG
MEENA MURUGESAN / VIDEO PROJECTION DESIGN
IMA IDUOZEE & JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO / FILM CO-DIRECTORS
ALEXIS MCCRIMMON / FILM EDITOR
SAVONNE WHITFIELD / WARDROBE AND FABRICATION
PEIYI WONG & JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO / CO-SCENIC DESIGN
JOHN ALEXANDER / PRODUCTION MANAGER / LIGHTING DESIGN
TARA SHEENA / PROJECTS MANAGER
ALYSSA GERSONY / RESEARCH ASSISTANT

FILM CREDITS

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SAMUEL O'CONNOR / ASSISTANT PRODUCTION TECHNICIAN
MARIA SALMON / PRODUCTION TECHNICIAN
ALENA SAMORAY / 2ND FOCUS PULLER

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Additional development support for *Chameleon* was made possible, in part, with commissioning support from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, through the Movement Research Artist-in-Residence Program, as well as the Bates Dance Festival, Gibney DiP, pOndersoa, D.O.C.H., Within Practice (Stockholm), the Centre for the Less Good Idea (Johannesburg, South Africa), PassaPorta International House of Literature (Brussels), Studio 303 (Montreal), the National Center for Choreography (Akron, OH), and Red Bull Arts Detroit.

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PETER BELLAMY / SENIOR SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR
VIC BROOKS / SENIOR CURATOR, TIME-BASED VISUAL ART
ERIC BRUCKER / LEAD VIDEO ENGINEER
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