



**EMPAC**

DANCE, PERFORMANCE

TUE / APRIL 25 / 5:00 PM

*The*  
**RETURN**  
*of*  
**LA ARGENTINA**  
*Trajal Harrell*



## THE RETURN OF LA ARGENTINA TRAJAL HARRELL

Voguing is a dance style that mimics the angular arm movements, poses, and strut of runway models. This form entered the mainstream in 1990 when it was featured in the video for Madonna's "Vogue," but it was initially established during underground competitions in the Harlem ballroom scene. Meanwhile, in downtown NYC, a group of young artists were developing other postmodern dance styles at the radical art venue Judson Church. Trajal Harrell has developed a series of dances that address the question: What would have happened if someone from the voguing scene in Harlem had gone downtown to perform alongside Judson Church choreographers and performers? The result is a distinctive dancing style that highlights the very different race and gender characteristics of two parallel worlds.

In *The Return of La Argentina*, Harrell mixes postmodern/voguing styles with the Japanese dance/theater form "butoh," co-founded by Kazuo Ohno and Tatsumi Hijikata. Harrell identifies key sensibilities of voguing in Ohno's signature work, *Admiring La Argentina* (1977), which was directed by Hijikata. Where Harlem voguing is inspired by the movements of models, *Admiring La Argentina* was inspired by La Argentina, the stage name of the famous Spanish dancer Antonia Merce. In his interpretation, Harrell identifies Ohno as voguing La Argentina and Hijikata as voguing Antonia Merce. Producing his own take on the classic, Harrell adds another layer of complexity: Harrell vogues Ohno and Hijikata voguing La Argentina and Merce. He fictitiously and at times humorously remembers, stores, accounts for, forgets, registers, memorializes, and ultimately, ritualizes *Admiring La Argentina*. This web of danced relationships brings Harrell's audience on a journey of remembering, forgetting, memorializing, and ritualizing *Admiring La Argentina*.

Originally designed to inhabit museum spaces, Harrell brings *The Return of La Argentina* to EMPAC in a mezzanine performance that is free and open to the public.

—ASHLEY FERRO-MURRAY, ASSOCIATE CURATOR THEATER/DANCE



## THE RETURN OF LA ARGENTINA

CHOREOGRAPHED AND PERFORMED BY : *Trajal Harrell*

TECHNICAL MANAGER : *Jean Stephane Kiss*

COSTUMES : *Comme des Garçons, Dries van Noten, and the Performers' own,*

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THE RETURN OF LA ARGENTINA IS COMMISSIONED BY  
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK.

**Trajal Harrell** became well-known for the *Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at The Judson Church* series of works which theoretically juxtaposed the voguing dance tradition with the early postmodern dance tradition. He is now considered as one of the most important choreographers of the new generation.

Trajal Harrell's work has been presented in many American and international venues including The Kitchen (NYC), New York Live Arts, TBA Festival (Portland), Walker Arts Center (Minneapolis), American Realness Festival, ICA Boston, Philadelphia Fringe Festival, LA's RedCat Theater, Festival d'Automne (Paris), Holland Festival (Amsterdam), Festival d'Avignon, Impulstanz (Vienna), TanzimAugust (Berlin), and Panorama Festival (Rio de Janeiro) among others. He has also shown performance work in visual art contexts such as MoMA, MoMA PS1, Perfoma Biennial, Fondation Cartier (Paris), The New Museum (New York), The Margulies Art Warehouse (Miami), Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), Serralves Museum (Porto), The Barbican Centre (London), Centre Pompidou- Paris and Metz, ICA Boston and Art Basel-Miami Beach.

His work *Judson Church is Ringing in Harlem (Made-to-Measure)/Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at The Judson Church (M2M)*, has the distinction of being the first dance commission of MoMA PS1. He has been awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship; The Doris Duke Impact Award, a Bessie Award for *Antigone Sr./Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at The Judson Church (L)*; as well as fellowships from The Foundation for Contemporary Art, Art Matters, and the Saison Foundation, among others

Most recently he completed a two-year Annenberg Residency at MoMA, where he has turned his attention to the work of the Japanese founder of butoh dance, Tatsumi Hijikata. By looking at butoh through voguing's theoretical lens of "realness" and modern dance through the theoretical lens of butoh, Harrell is creating a number of works which combine a speculative view of history and the archive with contemporary dance practice and composition. He has created *Used Abused and Hung Out to Dry*, premiered and commissioned by MoMA in February 2013; *The Ghost of Montpellier Meets the Samurai* premiered in Montpellier Danse Festival in July 2015; *The Return of La Argentina* premiered in Paris' Centre National de la Danse and commissioned by MoMA; *In the Mood for Frankie* premiered in May 2016 at MoMA; and most recently *Caen Amour* premiered at Festival Avignon 2016. Next, he will have the first survey

(1999-2016) of his work at a major visual art museum, to take place at the Barbican Centre in London during July-August 2017.

**Jean-Stephan Kiss** is a French and British educated interior designer based in Vienna (Austria) working internationally between Europe, Russia, The Middle East, North and South America. In the world of contemporary dance, Kiss collaborates with choreographer Trajal Harrell for the past 3 years, designing stages and sets and accompanying the Artist's productions on tours as Company Manager and Set Supervisor. He recently accompanied the artist to source costumes in Japan and in India, and will second him in the creation of the set for his new solo in 2018, while supervising and company managing the review of Trajal Harrell's work in the Barbican Center in London (U.K.) in Summer 2017.

Kiss also works with global commercial clients for whom he creates exhibition booths, working spaces and events. He regularly produces work for the major trade shows, such as Maison&Objet and Equip'Hotel (Paris, France), Ambiente (Frankfurt, Germany), HO.RE.CA (Athens, Greece), Trade Design (Istanbul, Turkey), Household (Moscow, Russia).

## EMPAC SUMMER 2017

### MAY

26 / FRIDAY / 5:00 PM

TALK, WORKSHOP

**Prose and Poetry: Storytelling with Augmented Reality**

Amir Baradaran

### JULY

10-14 WORKSHOP

**Spatial Audio Summer Workshop**

10 / MONDAY / 8:00 PM

MUSIC / SOUND

**Markus Noisternig**

14 / THURSDAY / 7:00 PM

MUSIC / SOUND

**Hans Tutschku**

20 / THURSDAY / 5:00 PM

BOOK LAUNCH

**Low Relief Book Launch** / Lucy Raven

20 / THURSDAY / 8:00 PM

FILM / VIDEO, TALK

**Phil Tippett and Lucy Raven: *Starship Troopers***

### AUGUST

10 / THURSDAY / 8:00 PM

PERFORMANCE

**YOUARENOWHERE** / Andrew Schneider

17 / THURSDAY / 8:00 PM

MUSIC / SOUND

**Ambrose Akinmusire Quartet**



# STAFF

**Geoff Abbas** / Director for Stage Technologies  
**Aimeé R. Albright** / Artist Services Specialist  
**Eric Ameres** / Senior Research Engineer  
**Argeo Ascani** / Curator, Music  
**Eileen Baumgartner** / Graphic Designer  
**David Bebb** / Senior Network Administrator  
**Peter Bellamy** / Senior Systems Administrator  
**Michael Bello** / Video Engineer  
**Victoria Brooks** / Curator, Time-Based Visual Arts  
**Eric Brucker** / Lead Video Engineer  
**Michele Cassaro** / Guest Services Coordinator  
**John Cook** / Box Office Manager  
**David DeLaRosa** / Desktop Support Analyst  
**Zhenelle Falk** / Artist Services Administrator  
**Ashley Ferro-Murray** / Associate Curator, Theater & Dance  
**Kimberly Gardner** / Manager, Administrative Operations  
**Johannes Goebel** / Director  
**Ian Hamelin** / Project Manager  
**Ryan Jenkins** / Senior Event Technician  
**Shannon Johnson** / Design Director  
**Carl Lewandowski** / Production Technician  
**Robin Massey** / Business Coordinator  
**Stephen McLaughlin** / Senior Event Technician  
**Josh Potter** / Marketing and Communications Manager  
**Alena Samoray** / Interim Master Electrician  
**Candice Sherman** / Senior Business Administrator  
**Avery Stempel** / Front of House Manager  
**Kim Strosahl** / Production Coordinator  
**Jeffrey Svatek** / Audio Engineer  
**Todd Vos** / Lead Audio Engineer  
**Michael Wells** / Production Technician

