



FALL FACULTY DANCE CONCERT

The Perseverance Project

Saturday, October 31, 2020 | Streamed online

FEATURING WORKS BY

Milka Djordjevich

Doug Elkins

Maho Ishiguro

Shamel Pitts



Wesleyan University

Center for the Arts Middletown, Connecticut | www.wesleyan.edu/cfa

**Welcome to The Perseverance Project featuring the dance department's four visiting faculty:
Milka Djordjevich, Doug Elkins, Maho Ishiguro and Shamel Pitts
Thank you for joining us. Enjoy the show!**

MILKA DJORDJEVICH / *Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance*

In the form of a self-narrated pseudo video essay, in collaboration with filmmaker Justin Streichman, we visit Djordjevich's garage/studio in Los Angeles, where she currently resides. There she unpacks performance remnants as a lamentation of past work and reflects on the impossible return to live performance as we knew it. Djordjevich's last completed work, *Kinetic Augmentations* (2019)—a solo made in correspondence with Fluxus Artist Alison Knowles's *House of Dust* at the MAK Center/Schindler House in Los Angeles—reflects Djordjevich's practice, a going-between of a domestic/private environment to a performative/public reality. Djordjevich reflects on what was, what is and what can be.

Kinetic Augmentations (2019)

As a part of the Shelter of Playground Exhibition at the MAK Center/Schindler House, Los Angeles
Curated by FLAX and Art by Translation

Kinetic Makeover (2013)

Chocolate Factory Theater, NYC
Sound: Chris Peck
Lighting: Madeline Best
Costume: Reid Bartelme
Eyes: Rebecca Brooks

MASS (2015)

The Kitchen, NYC
Music: Chris Peck
Dancers: Jessica Cook, Kyli Kleven and Milka Djordjevich
Lighting Designer Madeline Best
Scenic Designer: Sara Walsh
Performance Advisor: Rebecca Brooks
Costumes: Naomi Luppescu

ANTHEM (2017)

Chocolate Factory Theater, NYC
Dancers: Laurel Atwell, Jessica Cook, Dorothy Dubrule and Devika Wickremesinghe
Music: Chris Peck
Lighting Designer: Madeline Best
Costumes: Naomi Luppescu

Corps (forthcoming)

New York Live Arts work-in-progress showing (January 2020)

MANCC residency (May 2019)

Dancers: Laurel Atwell, Dorothy Dubrule, Allie Hankins, Tiara Jackson, DaEun Jung and Devika Wickremesinghe

Music: Chris Peck

Dramaturg: Tim Reid

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Milka Djordjevich is a choreographer, performer, and teacher. Her work draws from a variety of compositional strategies to question preconceived notions of dance, examining self-identified moving female bodies in so-called “neutral” public spaces of theaters, galleries, and museums. Djordjevich’s works include *ANTHEM* (2017), commissioned by Los Angeles Performance Practice and The Chocolate Factory Theater. In 2013, Djordjevich created and performed *Kinetic Makeover*, a solo piece that confers power and autonomy on one body, which premiered at The Chocolate Factory Theater and toured nationally and internationally. Her long-standing collaborations with composer Chris Peck challenge conventional partnerships between choreographers and composers, rediscovering music as a practice of the body and dance as a mode of listening. Their work *MASS* (2015), premiered at The Kitchen, with additional performances at Show Box LA/Bootleg Theater and the American Realness Festival. Djordjevich’s works have also been presented at the REDCAT; LA Dance Platform; Danspace Project; Dance Theater Workshop; The Whitney Museum, The Philadelphia Thing; Portland Institute of Contemporary Art’s Time-Based Art Festival; Berkeley Art Museum; Santa Ana Sites; and internationally in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Macedonia, Poland, Serbia, and the UK. Her forthcoming work *CORPS*, commissioned by New York Live Arts, reveals the cyclical feminine labor through the lense of militaristic, ritualistic, and socialist movement forms. She has served as co-editor for Movement Research’s *Critical Correspondence* and initiated the Monday Class series at Pieter in Los Angeles. Djordjevich is a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Artist Grant recipient (2020) and was a Princeton University Hodder Fellow (2017-2018), a danceWEB Europe Scholar (2008/2010), and a Movement Research Artist-in-Residence (2006-2007). She has also held residencies at Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography; PACT Zollverien; Fabrik Potsdam; and Workspace Brussels. She has taught at CalArts, the American Musical and Dramatic Academy (AMDA), Pomona College, Pasadena City College, and University of California at Irvine, Riverside and Los Angeles, among others. Djordjevich received a B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles and an M.F.A. from Sarah Lawrence College. In 2016, she established STANA, an organization cultivating local, national and international dance connections.

DOUG ELKINS / *Visiting Associate Professor of Dance*

Scott Queen of Marys (excerpt)

Music: Mio Morales

Dancers: Donell Oakley, Josh Palmer, Cori Marquis, Kellie Lynch, Ephrat Asherie, Lex Dones, Kyle Marshall Javier
Ninja

Company Rehearsal New Work

Music: S.I.N.G. (C-pop)

Dancers: Carolyn Cryer, Lex Dones, Eric Parra, Cori Marquis, Elias Rosa, Donell Oakley

Fraulein Maria (Do, Re, Mi section)

Music: Rogers & Hammerstein

Dancers: John Sorensen-Jolink, Josh Palmer, Cori Marquis, Josh Palmer, Kellie Lynch, Krista Jansen, Megan Mullin,
Donell Oakley

ABOUT THE ARTIST

DOUG ELKINS is a two-time New York Dance and Performance (Bessie) Award-winning choreographer and 2012 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Creative Arts Fellow. He began his dance career as a B-Boy and House Dancer, touring the world with Break/House dance groups New York Dance Express, The Royal Rockers and Magnificent Force, among others. He has also performed with and collaborated with Rennie Harris and the legendary House of Ninja (Voguing). Elkins is a recipient of significant choreographic commissions and awards from the NEA, The Yard on Martha's Vineyard (Paul Taylor Fellowship 1991 and Resident Artist 2011-2013), Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, The Joyce Theater Foundation, Arnhold Foundation, Dianne & Daniel Vapnek Family Fund, National Performance Network, Jerome Foundation, Choo-San Goh & H. Robert Magee Foundation, and The Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts.

Elkins is artistic director of doug elkins choreography, etc. which has toured nationally and internationally with works including *Fräulein Maria* (2006), *Mo(or)town/Redux* (2012), and *O, round desire* (2017). Between his current and original companies (Doug Elkins Dance Company 1988 - 2003), he has created over forty works. He was among the first choreographers commissioned by the late Paul Taylor to make work on Paul Taylor American Modern Dance; *The Weight of Smoke* premiered at Lincoln Center in March 2016 and remains in their tour repertory.

A graduate of SUNY - Purchase, Elkins received his MFA in Dance from Hollins University/ADF in 2007. His tenure teaching at The Beacon School on the Upper West Side of Manhattan is the subject of *Where the Dance Is*, a short film by Marta Renzi.

MAHO ISHIGURO / *Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance*

Gambyong Retnokusumo

Dances from the Royal Court of Mangkunegaran, Surakarta, Indonesia

Performer: Maho Ishiguro

Gambyong Retnokusumo is one of the traditional dance repertoires from the royal court of Mangkunegaran, Surakarta, Indonesia. Among many other gambyong pieces that have been practiced in Solo and its vicinity, Gambyong Retnokusumo has bright, cheerful and vibrant tones which are articulated by lively drumming of kendhang ciblon. The dance depicts a young woman, coming of age, adorning herself by putting makeup and earrings, fixing hair, and drawing patterns on traditional batik textile, which are all expressed through descriptive movements within the piece. Gambyong as a genre has its origin in folk traditions, such as tayub, ronggeng and taledhek, in villages outside of the court walls; however, as there have been many movements of dancers and musicians between the courts and surrounding villages, the folk dance practice was taken into the courts, and further polished up with aesthetics appropriate to the courts. Today, Gambyong Retnokusumo is performed at courtly events as well as ceremonies, such as weddings and anniversaries, outside of the courts.

Excerpts from Srimpi Muncar

Dances from the Royal Court of Mangkunegaran, Surakarta, Indonesia

Performer: Maho Ishiguro

Choreographed in the late 19 century, Srimpi Muncar is originally danced by four female dancers. The dance depicts a rivalry between Javanese and Chinese princesses which appear in Serat Menak, a 17th century manuscript. Serat Menak compiles stories about Amir Hamza, the Prophet Muhammad's uncle, who is said to have traveled around the world to spread the teaching of Islam. This dance is the topic of Maho's ongoing research on topics of embodiment, expressions and sensations of Otherness through the lens of Javanese aesthetics.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

An ethnomusicologist whose research focuses on dance and music of Indonesia, Maho uses dance as a lens for studying and engaging with Indonesian people, cultural practices, and living traditions. Maho began her study of Javanese court dance at Wesleyan under former Artist in Residence, Urip Sri Maeny, and has since trained with renowned teachers at the Mangkunegaran court in Surakarta, Indonesia. A longtime student of Sumarsam, a prominent Indonesian ethnomusicologist, and I.M. Harjito, master of Central Javanese Gamelan, Maho regularly performs with gamelan ensembles throughout the Northeastern United States. Her doctoral research, conducted under the auspices of the Fulbright-Hays DDRA Fellowship, took her to Indonesia's westernmost Aceh province, which boasts its own performing arts practices that are distinct from the rest of the nation. Maho holds the Ph.D. and M.A. in Ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University (2018) and the M.M. in Historical Musicology from the University of Massachusetts Amherst (2010). Her publications include articles and reviews in *Asian Music Journal*, *Yearbook for Traditional Music* and *Asian Theatre Journal*. Maho is a strong exponent of pedagogical techniques that employ both scholarly engagement and praxis within the performing arts. Maho also teaches music at Smith College, Central Connecticut State University and Yale University.

SHAMEL PITTS / *Visiting Instructor of Dance*

“Touch Of RED” - Work in Progress Documentary Excerpt

Choreography: Shamel Pitts

Performers: Tushrik Fredericks, Shamel Pitts

Cinematographer: Taylor Antisdell

Composer: Sivan Jacobovitz

Touch Of RED work in process documentary will share excerpts of the beginning of the creation of a new work during this time of pandemic and social unrest.

It will share a glimpse into how the artist engages and takes on the responsibility through art to reflect the times. And lend hope towards the future.

Touch Of RED work-in-process was made possible by the support of YoungArts Foundation's 2020 Artist in residence award and in partnership with New York Live Arts.

The creation residency at New York Live Arts followed the most updated Covid-19 regulations and safety protocols for New York State.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

2020 Guggenheim Fellow Shamel Pitts is a performance artist, choreographer, conceptual artist, dancer, spoken word artist, and teacher. Born in Brooklyn New York, Shamel began his dance training at LaGuardia High School for Music & Art and the Performing Arts and, simultaneously, at The Ailey School. He is 2003 YoungArts Finalist and a first prize (level 1) winner of the YoungArts competition. Shamel then went on to receive his BFA in Dance from The Juilliard School and was awarded the Martha Hill Award for excellence in dance. He began his dance career in Mikhail Baryshnikov's Hell's Kitchen Dance and BJM_Danse Montreal. Shamel danced with Batsheva Dance Company for 7 years, under the artistic direction of Ohad Naharin and is a certified teacher of Gaga movement language. Shamel has created a triptych of award winning multidisciplinary performance art works known as his “BLACK series” which has been performed and toured extensively to many festivals around the world since 2016. He is an adjunct at The Juilliard School and has been an artist in residence at Harvard University. Shamel is the choreographer of the play “Help” by acclaimed poet and playwright Claudia Rankine, directed by Taibi Magar, and commissioned at The Shed in New York. He is the recipient of a 2018 Princess Grace Award in Choreography and a 2019 NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship Award winner in Choreography. Shamel is the artistic director/founder of TRIBE, a New York based multidisciplinary arts collective. TRIBE is a 92Y Harkness Dance Center's Artist In Residence for the 2020-2021 season. For more information, visit www.shamelpitts.com or www.itsatribe.org.

PROGRAM

Special acknowledgements:

During this unprecedented time the Dance Department reached out to our specialized colleagues in our own Faculty and Center for the Arts for support in digital streaming, videography and technical demands. We appreciate the dedicated efforts of Kyle Beaudette, John Elmore, Chelsie McPhilimy, Suzanne Sadler, Shirley Sullivan '21.

Chelsie McPhilimy (Dance Dept. Technical Director) is pleased to be working with such a talented group of individuals on *The Perseverance Project*. Chelsie is a freelance lighting and media designer based in NYC. Her work is an imaginative combination of color and sculpture. Most recently, her credits include: *Cartography* (New Vic), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Flint Repertory Theatre), and *The Brutes* (New Ohio). For more information, please see cmlightingdesign.com

Suzanne M. Sadler (CFA Theater Manager, Technical Director, & Master Electrician) is thrilled to welcome and work with the choreographers of the Perseverance Project. This is Suzanne's 20th season working with Dance, Theater and the CFA at Wesleyan. Some of her favorite projects at Wesleyan include Lighting Design and Technical Direction for Rinde Eckert's *An Idiot Divine*, Spalding Grey's *Morning, Noon, and Night*, Roger Guenveur Smith's *A Huey P. Newton Story*, and Eiko and Koma's *Raven*. Some highlights as Technical Director for Wesleyan are working with Streb, Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, Philadanco, Urban Bush Women, Bebe Miller, Dorrance Dance, Dan Hurlin's *Disfarmer*, and Anne Bogart's SITI Company. Previously, Suzanne worked at Sacramento Theatrical Lighting, designing and installing lighting and staging for concerts, trade shows, ballet, and opera. Other theaters include Santa Fe Opera, Goodspeed Musicals, Hartford Stage, Theaterworks, Western Stage, Sacramento Theater Company, B Street Theater, and The Show Below. When not working at Wesleyan, Suzanne loves designing sets and lights at Calvary Fellowship in West Hartford. Two of her designs have appeared in Churchstagedesignideas.com.

TECHNICAL CREW/PRODUCTION

Stream Manager: Maren Westgard

Chat Monitor: Annie Kidwell

Video Operator: Katerina Ramos-Jordan

Production Designer and Dance Dept. Technical Director: Chelsie McPhilimy

CFA Technical Director: Suzanne Sadler

CFA Technical Associate: Joseph Fonseca

Dance Production Coordinator: Shirley Sullivan

CFA Assistant Director for Programs: Hanna Oravec

DANCE DEPARTMENT FACULTY/STAFF

Pedro Alejandro, Associate Professor of Dance (on leave)

Patricia Beaman, Artist-in-Residence

Milka Djordjevich, Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance

Doug Elkins, Visiting Associate Professor of Dance

Maho Ishiguro, Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance

Katja Kolcio, Associate Professor of Dance/Director of the Allbritton Center

Hari Krishnan, Professor of Dance/*Chair*

Chelsie McPhilimy, Technical Director, Dance

Michele Olerud, Administrative Assistant

Eiko Otake, Visiting Artist-in-Residence

Marcela Oteíza, Associate Professor of Dance

Shamel Pitts, Visiting Instructor in Dance

PROGRAM

DANCE DEPARTMENT FACULTY/STAFF (Continued)

Joya Powell, Visiting Assistant Professor

Iddi Saaka, Assistant Professor of Dance

Nicole Stanton, Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs/Professor of Dance

CENTER FOR THE ARTS STAFF

Rani Arbo: Campus and Community Engagement Manager

Kyle Beaudette: Assistant Director of Events and Ticketing

Jennifer Calienes: Interim Director

Charles Carroll: Assistant Technical Director/ Scenery Specialist

Benjamin Chaffee: Associate Director, Visual Arts

Andrew Chatfield: Director, Arts Communication

Fiona Coffey: Associate Director for Programming and Performing Arts

Jennifer Diglio: Accounting Specialist

John Elmore: Art Director

Joseph Fonseca: Technical Associate

Drew Gray: General Manager

Tony Hernandez: Assistant Technical Director

Rosemary Lennox: Exhibitions Manager and ICPP Program Manager

Hanna Oravec: Assistant Director for Programs

Robert Russo: Assistant Technical Director/Sound and Video Specialist

Suzanne M. Sadler: Technical Director/CFA Theater Manager

UPCOMING CONCERTS:

The Worlds of Dance Concert, Sunday, November 22, 1:00 PM

The West African Drumming and Dance Concert, December 4, 7:00 PM