Civil War/Civil Rights: The Well-Being of a Nation

In honor of the 50th anniversary year of the March on Washington and the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, the Clarice Smith Center’s 2013–2014 Creative Dialogues explore the issues of civil rights in a modern-day context. The right to pursue freedom of all kinds is a founding principle of our nation, but in today’s complex and changing society, freedom can be elusive.

The Creative Dialogues series will address a range of ideas about liberty and justice in the United States — the imbalance of hunger and nutrition, gay rights and marriage, war and pacifism — all with an emphasis on the artists’ experience and interpretation. Sparking discussion and new thinking around all civil liberties, the series will explore such questions as “Are we really free and equal?” and “How far have we come?”

About Kojo Nnamdi

Kojo Nnamdi is host of The Kojo Nnamdi Show, a live talk show produced by WAMU 88.5 that airs weekdays at noon. Nnamdi welcomes a lineup of interesting and provocative guests who offer new perspectives about current events, political issues, social policy, art, science and other topics. The show encourages listener calls, creating a dynamic dialogue about issues that are important or interesting to the Washington DC region. Nnamdi is a native of Nigeria who immigrated to the United States in 1968 to attend college and explore the Civil Rights Movement.

BANED-SEX MARRIAGE AND THE FAITH COMMUNITY: A CONVERSATION ABOUT EQUAL RIGHTS

Thursday, November 14, 2013. 7:30PM. Gilderdale Recital Hall • FREE

Rev. Dr. Susan Newman, All Souls Church Unitarian Universalist, Washington DC
Dr. Lee Thornton, Professor Emerita, University of Maryland
Dr. Patrick O’Shea, Vice President for Research, University of Maryland

This conversation will feature writer and educator Colin McCann who will be joined by UMD Professor Ina Fried, Patrick O’Shea and Professor Emerita Lee Thornton as we explore the influence Douglass had on religious freedom, gender issues and slavery.

CREATING GLOBAL HUNGER

Wednesday, April 2, 2014. 7:30PM. Dance Theater • FREE

Dr. Orlando R. Serrano Jr., Department of American Studies & Ethnicity, University of Southern California
Dr. Perla M. Guerrero, Department of American Studies, University of Maryland
Dr. Psyche Williams-Forson, Department of American Studies, University of Maryland

This conversation will feature writer and educator Colum McCann who will be joined by UMD Professors Perla M. Guerrero, Luka Arsenjuk and Psyche Williams-Forson, along with USC’s Orlando R. Serrano Jr., as they discuss how food is at the heart of major policy laws and societal disparities in the United States and around the world.

FAST FOOD, SLOW FOOD AND FOOD JUSTICE: GLOBAL POLICIES

October 9 – 16, 2013. MFA dance thesis concert:

Stephanie Miracle, Choreographer
Alyssa Wyckoff, Assistant Director
Stephanie Brown, Chase Davison, Sherry Dieterich, Kelly Swanson, Colby Carlisle, Elizabeth Morc Slávka

CREATIVE DIALOGUES

Creative Dialogues is a free conversation series designed to spark cross-disciplinary conversations around issues that engage and excite artists, to create their work. Initiated by Kojo Nnamdi, these events are intended to aide community, while encouraging debate and exploration of the subject matter. Creative Dialogues are programmed both at the Center and at locations throughout the community. Parallel studio artists and UMD faculty as well as visitors from other academic disciplines and organizations.

claricesmithcenter.umd.edu
301.405.ARTS (2787)
Visible Seams is the result of a collective “yes.” It is a sensory play date with the architecture of this building. It is a celebration of the comings and goings, the creative risks and the whirring vacuums that co-mingle in this place every day. It is my deepest gratitude for the privilege of spending three years at home here.

The Making of Visible Seams

September 2011
As part of choreography class we are assigned to create a site-specific piece on students from Alvin Mayes’ technique class. I choose the side staircase beside the Gildenhorn. Curved staircase + lots of dancers = Busby Berkeley. I use the levels to choreograph a path for the audience much as Berkeley did for the camera — tracking shots, top shots, “close-ups.”

October 2011
I discover the cloister-like hallway on the second level. It is peaceful, elegant, full of natural light and occasionally the sounds of a Baroque violin. It becomes my sanctuary. I want to move in. I do the next best thing and start making a dance.

December 2011
Stephanie Miracle presents a duet on the main staircase of the Grand Pavilion as part of her research project on Pina Bausch. She wears a green evening gown. She spills up and down and over the stairs. It is stunning.

January 2012
While eating pancakes at Mark’s in Takoma Park I say to Stephanie, “You know, we should put our staircase pieces together.” She says, “Yeah, let’s do it!”

March 2012
While passing by Applause Café I see glass tubes mounted on the ceiling and hear haunting tones emanating from white boxes on the floor. This is the very sound I imagine “my hallway” would make. The installation is Transposed Resonance by PhD candidate Tomek Regulski. It takes me two weeks of getting lost in the School of Music to find him. I ask if he is willing to transpose his Transposed Resonance to the other side of the building for a dance. He happily agrees.

May 2012
Stephanie and I present our collaboration. It includes her opening duet, the staircase group piece, a new piece in the hallway and a coda of each section in the courtyard outside. I have continued to play with the idea of shifting perspective and leading the audience on a journey that threads together compartmentalized spaces. It still feels like just a beginning.
June 2012
On the train from NYC to DC. I have just seen the documentary PINA. I am obsessing about the fact that I have no idea what to do for my thesis project. I scribble this in response to the film and as a wish list:

I want to see sky and windows,
mud and trains.
I want to feel wind and sand,
stone and silk.
I want speed and space — raum für bewegung.
I want whispers and abut.
I want laughter and water.
I want to roll and spin and spiral.
I want wise bones, ticklish joints, curious skin.
I want to move like honey, like rivulets, like needles.
I want to explode and glitter down in a million pieces.
I want to land in a million places.
I want to come together again like a shiny black stone.

September 2012
Thesis proposals are due in three months. I am completely uninspired in the studio. All I can think of is dancing on staircases, in hallways, under arches, through windows, up walls. I want to continue the piece from the spring but I know it could be a logistical nightmare to schedule rehearsals in the lobby and contend with all the other activity in the building. I decide to embrace it. These logistics, these negotiations, these ARE the creative process. The dance faculty says, “go for it.” I tell Cary Gillett. She smiles, takes a deep breath and says, “yes.”

Fall 2012
I take a seminar called Sensing Architecture: Body and Place. It expands my ideas about site-specific performance and the sensual experience of architecture. I decide that before movement, I want sound to permeate the space. I ask Tomek to compose something, based on the dance’s soundtrack, to be installed in the lobby two weeks prior to the performance — a “sonic foreshadowing.” The bookend will be in the two weeks following the performance with video projections of the dance that seem to seep out of the lobby walls, providing a “visual echo” and completing a circle by returning the techniques I borrowed from Berkeley back to a recorded medium.

March 2013
After months of carefulness and revising, my proposal is taken to the Center Council. They take it into careful consideration, take what I can only imagine was a collective deep breath and graciously say, “yes.”
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ROBERT DENTON (lighting and projection designer), third-year MFA candidate in lighting design and member of USA-829, Lighting Designer: West Side Story (The Muny), You are Dead, You are Here (HERE Art Center), Madame Butterfly (The Minnesota Opera), La bohème (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis), Samson et Dalilah (Florida Grand Opera). Associate Lighting Designer: The Way, Meet Vera Stark (Geffen Playhouse). Assistant Lighting Designer: Sucker Punch (Studio Theatre, associate lighting designer), The Book of Mormon (1st National Tour).

KATHARINE GUNDLACH (performer), senior dietetics and dance major. Fall 2011 Maryland Dance Ensemble: I woke up dreaming; Spring 2011 Maryland Dance Ensemble: Stratum; Fall 2012 Maryland Dance Ensemble: Gravity.

COURTNEY HARRIS (performer), senior dance and sociology double major, performed in Spring Maryland Dance Ensemble’s Black Quartet. She is a singer and plans to become a successful musical artist using dance as a platform. She has danced for 14 years and is trained in a variety of styles including ballet, jazz, African, lyrical, hip-hop, tap, contemporary and modern.

MEGAN MORSE JANS (performer), second-year MFA candidate in dance, has taught and performed at colleges, studios and festivals across Maryland and beyond, and was the artistic director of DragonFly Dance Experiment. She now serves as the director of dance for Opera AACCC and is looking forward to directing Carmen in the summer of 2014. She would like to say thank you to her family for their continuous support.

JOANNA JONES (performer), fifth-year senior piano and vocal performance major. Kay Theatre: The Magic Flute (1st Knaben), La bohème (chorus).

CINDY KING (assistant stage manager), senior theatre and communications double major, is excitedly entering the dance management world with her first dance piece. Thank you to all the wonderful, creative people working on and performing in this incredible piece. Outside productions: The Pajama Game and Curtains (stage management).

NICOLE Y. MCCLAN (performer), second-year MFA candidate in dance, is a member of B3W and Human Landscape Dance, the Howard County Community Dance Festival Coordinator, and is thrilled and honored to be a part of Visible Seams.

STEPHANIE MIRACLE (co-choreographer/Buena), third-year MFA candidate in dance, is an independent choreographer, performer and teaching artist. As a performer, she has had the privilege of dancing for Degani Shemy, Shannon Gillen & Guests, Laura Peterson Choreography, alexan/the median movement, David Dorfman Dance, Susan Marshall and Company, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Graham Brown, PEARSONWIDRIG DANCETHEATER and Deborah Hay. She currently is completing her teaching certification in Klein Technique. When she isn’t dancing, she enjoys visiting the National Gallery with her husband, Jimmy.

CHRISTINE NWOSU (understudy), senior family science major. Outside productions: Montgomery College Dance Company, The Nutcracker (Olney Ballet Theatre: Mouse, Rat, Angel, Gingerbread), The Nutcracker (Jones and Haywood: party scene, Flower).

ANNE PONTON (performer), senior dance and English double major. At Maryland, Ponton is a member of Ballet Company M and Delta Chi Xi Honorary Dance Fraternity, Inc. Off campus, she teaches and performs with Kinetics Dance Theatre in Ellicott City, Maryland.

TOMEX REGULSKI (composer) is a composer of acoustic and electroacoustic music. His degrees include a DMA in music composition from the University of Maryland at College Park, a Master’s of Music in composition from Binghamton University and a bachelor degree in music composition from Hartwick College. Awards and fellowships include the Wylie Dissertation Fellowship for Amber Leaves (sitar and interactive electronics, 2012), as well as funding from the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center for the collaborative installation Transposed Resonance (2012), from which the music of the same title in Visible Seams was derived.

ALBERTO SEGARRA (performer), second-year MFA candidate in lighting design. Born in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. Kay Theatre: A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Kogod Theatre: MFA in Performance: Festival of New Works (assistant lighting designer). Dance Theatre: Seed, Way, Under the Mountain, and The Only Thing is Itself (lighting designer). Outside productions: Once on this Island; Hair; Cabaret; Boeing Boeing; Dangerous Liaisons; Glash Menagerie; Ballet Concierto de Puerto Rico’s Festival de Coreografía, and A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Resident lighting designer for Compàdia de Dansa 21, and Andanza. Mr. Segarra holds a BA from the University of Puerto Rico.


CELESTE WHITE (performer), junior dance major.