



BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music) announces 2023 Resident Artists

Seven selected artists—The Bessies, Black Diaspora, Christopher Myers, Pioneers Go East Collective, Postell Pringle, Michelle Rodriguez, and Christopher Rudd—span multiple genres and disciplines



(top left to right) Michelle Rodriguez, Black Diaspora, Postell Pringle, Heather Robles/The Bessies, Christopher Myers, Christopher Rudd, and Pioneers Go East Collective

March 7, 2023/Brooklyn, NY—BAM is proud to announce our newly selected 2023 Resident Artists who will bring new artistry, research, and experience to our community. For a third year, BAM welcomes a broad spectrum of artists from various disciplines and backgrounds to its artist residency program. Seven compelling artists/artistic teams will receive space, archival research resources, and/or unrestricted honorariums to develop their work. The artists are able to shape their residency to best serve their artistic development and professional growth.

Members of BAM's programming team chose the artists through a cross-collaborative and transparent process, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives and genres. Those selected for BAM's 2023 Resident Artist program are **Black Diaspora** (a three-year residency program for Black and Afro-Latinx-identified dance and performance artists); **The Bessies** (NYC's premier dance awards honoring outstanding creative work); **Christopher Myers** (visual artist); **Pioneers Go East Collective** (a collective of radical queer performance and visual artists); **Postell Pringle** (playwright, music producer/composer, emcee, actor); **Michelle J. Rodriguez** (vocalist, songwriter, musical theater artist, and actor); and **Christopher Rudd** (choreographer). Hi-res images of the artists can be accessed [HERE](#).

"BAM continues its commitment to nurturing a wide range of artists forefronting the resources, time, and space artists need to wrestle with their ideas and create a community around shared values," said **BAM Artistic Director David Binder**. "The 2023 cohort is an exciting and dynamic group with exceptionally strong artistic vision and voices. We're thrilled to collaborate with them and be a part of this much-needed support system for these artists to explore and develop work without the pressures of production."

These dynamic, New York-based artists will receive honorariums and/or the use of BAM's rehearsal rooms and theaters, including the Hillman Studio/the Fishman Space, and carte blanche access to The BAM Hamm Archives Center. Artists are encouraged to create freely with no obligation to present their work at BAM. The program, which began in 2020-21, represents BAM's largest artist residency initiative to date and underscores its interest in forging relationships and supporting artists as they create new work and develop their artistic practices. Alumni of the program include some of today's most significant and innovative artists, such as, Annie-B Parson, Marjani Forté-Saunders & Everett Saunders, Timothy DuWhite, Rena Anakwe, The Brooklyn Nomads, Fana Fraser, Smriti Keshari, Christopher "Unpezverde" Núñez, Sophia Brous, Jonathan González, Jerome & James, and Ashley Tata.

Read on to learn more about these valued artists and the intentions of their work.

Conceived by curator Eva Yaa Asantewaa during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter uprising, **Black Diaspora** launched its first activities in September 2020 as a Zoom-based peer support program serving up-and-coming, Black-identified dance and performance artists from various cultural backgrounds and aesthetic traditions. With support from Gibney, Black Diaspora has offered numerous peer group discussions, workshops led by notable guest artists, and conversations between artists. We celebrate the resourcefulness, accomplishments, and generous wisdom of Black creatives, educators, and activists.

www.gibneydance.org/programs/black-diaspora

"For the nine-member artists of Black Diaspora, and my colleague Monica Nyenkan, I send big thanks to BAM for believing in the power of the Black community and creativity. We're honored and excited to have been selected as a part of the 2023 Resident Artist cohort, especially in this time of transition and transformation for Black Diaspora," said **Eva Yaa Asantewaa, Founder and Curator of Black Diaspora**.

The NY Dance and Performance Awards, known as **The Bessies**, have saluted outstanding and groundbreaking creative work in the dance field in New York City since it was established in 1984. Currently led by Executive Director Heather Robles, they recognize outstanding work in choreography, performance, sound design/music composition, and visual design, legacy, and service to the field of dance. www.bessies.org

"We are thrilled to be housed at Brooklyn Academy of Music for this residency. Abundance is possible within community, and this partnership will support The Bessies serving the field into the future," said **Heather Robles, Executive Director of The Bessies**

Christopher Myers is an artist and writer who lives in New York. While he is widely acclaimed for his work with literature for young people, he is also an accomplished fine artist who has lectured and exhibited internationally. He is interested in the aesthetic bridges built organically across cultures, classes, and geographies and has been creating work in those in-between spaces for years. Myers has curated shows in Vietnam; worked with traditional shadow puppet makers in Jogjakarta, young musicians in New Orleans, and weavers in Luxor; and designed theater that has traveled from PS122 in New York City to the Genocide Memorial Theater in Kigali, Rwanda. His piece about Pina Bausch, titled “Like a Cigarette,” is part of a series of fabric and glass works in relation to long histories of dance and visual arts from earliest cave paintings to Degas until today. The piece will be on display in the lobby of BAM’s Howard Gilman Opera House, March 3–May 15. www.kalyban.com

“The first time I walked across a stage at BAM, as a designer and a theater maker, I was struck with the idea that I was walking across years of history. All the performances, all the performers, all the applause, all the rehearsals, all the audiences gathered together in this space to share in one long ritual of sharing ourselves with each other; of talking about what it means to be artists and storytellers and humans,” said **visual artist Christopher Myers**. “All great art is born of this kind of generations-long conversation that talks to countless yesterdays and tomorrows. This opportunity, to access the archives of this institution, and to be in dialogue with all those communities is a gift, a way to concretize the essence of theater, that it is always done with an eye toward memory, and a projection toward the future.”

Pioneers Go East Collective is a radical Queer laboratory collective dedicated to dance-theater and video art that empower the LGBTQ experience. Based in NYC since 2015, they are led by BIPOC/immigrant artists Daniel Diaz, Philip Treviño, and Gian Marco Riccardo Lo Forte. They portray same-gender-loving experiences, memory, and marginalization that resonate with contemporary lives, combining stories of vulnerability and courage with popular culture to facilitate communal meaning and advocate for cultural integrity. Their work has been widely presented in NYC at La MaMa, Judson Church, BAAD, Chez Bushwick, St Ann's Warehouse, Exponential Festival, LMCC Process Space at Governors Island, Incubator Arts Project, Triskelion Arts, New Dance Alliance, Chashama, and Goethe Institut. They received a 2021-22 BRIC residency. Current collaborators include syd island, Vanessa Rappa, Symara Johnson, Darrin Wright, Mark Tambella, Azmi Mert Erdem, Maria Eisen, and Bryan Baira.

www.pioneersgoeast.org

“*My name'sound*, is an original dance-theater inspired by James Baldwin's *Artist Manifesto*. This project supports and amplifies contemporary stories of resilience and otherness amidst censorship. Merging live performance and film, with the support of BAM’s residency, Pioneers Go East Collective investigates the nexus of Queer intimacy, physical embodiment, and media to reflect on the legacy of LGBTQ icons and literary geniuses James Baldwin and Audre Lorde,” said **grass-roots arts collective Pioneers Go East Collective**. “By reflecting on identity and self-preservation to celebrate Queer art and collective legacy, our creative practice seeks to unfold this individual social experience from this emergence and invite more community members to share our practice and build more inclusive support structures.”

Postell Pringle (aka POS) is a Brooklyn-based multi-disciplined performance artist, playwright, beatmaker/composer, emcee, and director. He's adapted classics of the great literary canon into original musicals and toured the globe as a stage artist. "He has performed on Broadway and worked with Bill T. Jones, John Guare, George C. Wolfe, Will Power, Jo Bonney, William Pope L., Mabou Mines and Ruth Maleczech, and his award-winning company, Q Brothers Collective. POS works as a collaborator with director Lucie Tiberghien and Moliere In The Park - bringing top-notch live theater to the borough of Brooklyn in Prospect Park. As a producer, emcee, and founding member of The Rap Pack, he has a catalog of more than a dozen albums and numerous video content online. www.postellpringle.com

"Having had the privilege of calling the beautiful borough of Brooklyn my home, since landing here over two decades ago, I am pinching myself at the opportunity —and honor —of being selected for BAM's third cohort of artists. To put it simply, no other institution in the world produces the level of work and supports the quality of groundbreaking artists that BAM does every single darn season. There's a palpable sense of magic and wonder that fills up every nook, cranny, corner and paints every wall in the place. I can't wait for some of that good juju to fall over me," said **performing artist and creator Postell Pringle**.

Michelle J. Rodriguez writes and performs in music and theater, exploring kids-of-immigrant stories, divinity, queerness, intuition, joy-as-resistance, healing, and spaces in between. Her music project *MICHA* was a finalist for NPR's 2018 Tiny Desk Contest with her song "Nena Nena Nena." Rodriguez is the winner of the 2022 Helen Merrill Award for playwriting and was commissioned by Portland Center Stage, Baltimore Center Stage, and Black Cap Productions. She received a 2022 grant from NYC Women's Fund for Media, Music, and Theater. www.michamusica.com

"Bringing the music of my musical *Presencia* outside of myself is a living process. I channel the music, I sing the music out loud to myself, I work up and often co-orchestrate the music with musicians, and then, only then, I figure out what the music is trying to say through me. I learn exponentially about stories by singing the songs, juxtaposing them, with the previously unseen pathways between ideas that emerge when improvising with musicians. My gratitude goes to the Bushwick Starr and BAM for this grant of space to draft and weave this music together in real space and real time together, to continue the process, and to keep listening deeply to what this music has to say," said **vocalist, songwriter, musical theater artist, and actor Michelle J. Rodriguez**.

Christopher Rudd is a Jamaican-born Guggenheim Choreography Fellow, the inaugural New Victory LabWorks Launch Artist, and the creator of the groundbreaking TOUCHÉ and LIFTED for American Ballet Theatre, the first work for the company featuring an all-Black cast. In hopes of bettering the world through dance, his works blend contemporary dance, contemporary circus, and theatricality to speak to relevant issues. As founder of RudduR Dance, he is a two-time Exchange Alumni through the US State Department, having presented his works in the United States, Canada, France, Trinidad and Tobago, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, and Italy. He credits the Armour Dance Theater, Dance Theater of Harlem's Summer Intensives, and New

World School of the Arts for his professional career, which includes Carolina Ballet, Les Grands Ballet Canadiens de Montréal, and Cirque Du Soleil. Rudd has created works for the Alvin Ailey School, Duke University, and UNC School of the Arts and received residencies from CUNY Dance Initiative, Vendetta Mathea's La Manufacture, Tofte Lake Center, Kaatsbaan, and STREB.

"I know firsthand the healing power of the arts, dance in particular. This knowledge has given me a deep and unwavering desire to increase the accessibility of dance. I established RudduR Dance in 2015 as not only a platform to create works of high artistic merit but to better the world through dance. At RudduR Dance, we are committed to using dance to reflect, transform, and repair society. Its mission is to use contemporary ballet and theatricality to create performances reflective of society," said **dancer and choreographer Christopher Rudd**. "As well, RudduR Dance endeavors to enhance the role of concert dance in society generally, and within the African American communities particularly. Artistic pursuits, next generation development, and community engagements are the three areas of the Company's focus. I sincerely hope that audiences see the merit in my works. Moreover, I hope they see the bigger picture of what I hope RudduR Dance could be."

For information, contact Cynthia Tate, ctate@BAM.org

Credits

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General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. Harvey Theater at BAM Strong is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place, houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St. for Harvey Theater at BAM Strong) D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue

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