



French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF) Announces Lineup of 12 Groundbreaking Shows for 2019 *Crossing the Line* Festival

In the First Season Curated by New FIAF Artistic Director Courtney Geraghty, the Festival Engages Artists Linked by Their Fearlessness in Confronting and Defying Artistic and Social Boundaries

2019 *Crossing the Line* Festival Includes:

- Two Performances Reconsidering Iconic Films: Cyril Teste’s Adaptation of John Cassavetes’ *Opening Night*, Starring Acclaimed French Actress Isabelle Adjani (September 12–14); and Choreographer Stefanie Batten Bland’s Modernized Take on *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (October 3–6)
- The US Premiere of *Why?*, a Poignant Reflection From 94-Year-Old Iconoclast Peter Brook (September 21–October 6)
- New Works from Mother of Contemporary African Dance Germaine Acogny (September 26–28); Choreographer Jérôme Bel, Honoring Modern Dance Pioneer Isadora Duncan (September 25); and Musician/Dancer/Choreographer Olivier Tarpaga (October 10)
- Theatrical Convention-Breaking Performances from 600 HIGHWAYMEN (September 13–15), Fanny de Chaillé (September 17–18), and François Chaignaud (October 11–12)
- *The Sun Too Close to the Earth*, a *Crossing the Line* Commission From Composer and Multi-Instrumentalist Rhys Chatham (October 4–5)
- Pierre Huyghe’s *The Host and the Cloud* to Be Presented in FIAF Gallery (September 12–October 12)
- A Radio-Performance with Journalists Aurélie Charon, Caroline Gillet, and Youth Activists from Around the World (October 2);
- Workshops with Cyril Teste and Germaine Acogny, the Focus of the 4th Annual BRIDGING: An International Dialogue on Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts, in Collaboration with the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations

New York, NY (June 19, 2019) — The French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF), New York’s premier French cultural and language center, today announced the 2019 *Crossing the Line Festival*, featuring 11 performances and a gallery exhibition from a geographically, generationally, and artistically diverse group of artists whose work transcends genres and boundaries. All performances are world, US, or New York premieres; they are united by their

convention-breaking fearlessness as they confront topics from social injustice to personal demons. Many of the performances pay homage to legendary artists of our time and previous eras, while the theme of migration and its transformational effects on identity informs several others. The festival runs from **September 12 to October 12**. Ticket are available at crossingtheline.org.

This edition of *Crossing the Line* also marks the first season overseen by **FIAF Artistic Director Courtney Geraghty**, who joined FIAF in August 2018. As she takes over the reins of this trademark festival, Geraghty is rededicating FIAF's mission to furthering the exchange of ideas and dialogue among the US, France, and Francophone countries.

"Since it was founded, *Crossing the Line Festival* has fearlessly broken down borders between genres, location, and language. As I set about programming the 13th edition, I also thought about transcending barriers between generations and audiences," explained Geraghty. "At the same time that we are honoring celebrated figures such as Peter Brook, Isabelle Adjani, and Germaine Acogny, welcoming back favorite artists such as Jérôme Bel and Fanny de Chaillé, we also made it a priority to engage with artists of the current generation—artists who are rethinking performance in fascinating and inspiring ways in order to authentically interact with their audiences."

Crossing the Line kicks off with the apropos ***Opening Night***, a theatrical adaptation of the eponymous John Cassavetes film, starring French icon **Isabelle Adjani** on September 12 at Florence Gould Hall. The production also marks the anticipated North American debut of rising French director **Cyril Teste**, who merges Adjani's own experiences and ghosts of previous roles with Cassavetes' original screenplay.

Additional world-renowned artists participating in *Crossing the Line* include **Peter Brook**, who at 94 years old presents the US premiere of ***Why?***, a poignant reflection created by a master theatrical mind as his career comes to a close. Acclaimed choreographer and festival favorite **Jérôme Bel** returns with a commissioned portrait of a pioneer of modern dance, **Isadora Duncan**. The Mother of African Contemporary Dance, **Germaine Acogny**, presents ***SOMEWHERE AT THE BEGINNING***, a powerful retelling of her personal history intertwined with that of her native Senegal. A seminal speech by the eminent philosopher **Michel Foucault** inspires the experimental performance ***The Disorder of Discourse*** directed by **Fanny de Chaillé**. Jerome Robbins Award–winner **Stefanie Batten Bland** honors film director Stanley Kramer's 1967 classic *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* in her modernized examination of acceptance in ***Look Who's Coming to Dinner***. And on view throughout the festival, ***The Host and the Cloud*** by esteemed French artist **Pierre Huyghe** will be shown on a loop in the FIAF Gallery.

The themes of migration and identity weave through this year's festival as artists consider their native and adopted homelands. Award-winning musician/dancer/choreographer **Olivier Tarpaga** contrasts the jubilation of independence movements across Sub-Saharan Africa with the painful fight for Civil Rights in the US in ***When Birds Refused to Fly***. The Obie award–winning **600 HIGHWAYMEN** collaborate with eight teenagers from around the world to create a poetic and intrepid theater performance, ***Manmade Earth***. French radio journalists **Aurélie Charon** and **Caroline Gillet** bring together activists from around the world for a unique

presentation of *Radio Live*. And coming off an acclaimed performance at the 2018 Festival d'Avignon, **François Chaignaud** breaks down conventions of Western theater in a dazzling work, *Думи мої - Dumy Moyi*.

Continuing its tradition of commissioning today's most innovative artists, *Crossing the Line* is proud to present the world premiere of *The Sun Too Close to the Earth* by electronic guitar legend **Rhys Chatham**, co-commissioned and co-presented with ISSUE Project Room.

For the fourth straight year, FIAF is presenting **BRIDGING: An International Dialogue on Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts**, in collaboration with the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations, focusing on Germaine Acogny. As part of this initiative exploring equity across cultures, Acogny will lead public conversations following select shows and at the 92nd Street Y, as well as teach a workshop with dance students at Tisch NYU.

"I am delighted to see the fresh perspective that Courtney has brought to *Crossing the Line*," said **FIAF President Marie-Monique Steckel**. "This year's edition will surely delight, inspire, challenge, and expand conceptions of French cultures."

Additionally, FIAF will be screening several of Isabelle Adjani's films as part of its CinéSalon series, running on Tuesdays throughout September and October.

A full chronological list of events follows.

***Opening Night* (US Premiere)**

Adapted from John Cassavetes' screenplay

Directed by Cyril Teste

Starring Isabelle Adjani, Morgan Lloyd Sicard, and Frédéric Pierrot

with the participation of Zoé Adjani

Thursday, September 12, Friday, September 13, and Saturday, September 14 at 7:30pm

FIAF Florence Gould Hall

Two-time Academy Award nominee **Isabelle Adjani** makes her New York theatrical debut in this electrifying production blurring the lines of theater and film. Inspired by John Cassavetes' titular 1977 film about an aging actress whose life spirals out of control, the performance is directed by **Cyril Teste**, one of France's most exciting young directors. Teste collaborated with Cassavetes' longtime director of photography, Al Ruban, who provided him with the unpublished text of the original ***Opening Night*** screenplay. This text was then merged with elements from Adjani's own life and previous roles she has portrayed. Using his signature *performance-filmique* style, Teste creates a unique environment each night, altering stage directions and forcing his actors to delve deeper into the screenplay. The result is a psychologically gripping and meticulously rendered portrait of an actress who values her art above all else, even her own well-being.

Isabelle Yasmine Adjani is one of France's greatest actresses and enjoys international recognition. Born in Paris to an Algerian father and a German mother, she started performing at an early age. At 17, she was asked to join the Comédie-Française—making her the youngest actress ever to attend the prestigious institution. Adjani is the only French actress who has been awarded five Césars (France's version of the Oscars), winning best actress for her performances in *Possession* (Andrzej Zulawski, 1981), *One Deadly Summer* (Jean Becker, 1983), *Camille Claudel* (Bruno Nuytten, 1988), *Queen Margot* (Patrice Chéreau, 1994), *La journée de la jupe* (Jean-Paul Lilienfeld, 2009). She received two Oscar nominations for her performances in *The story of Adele H.* (François Truffaut, 1975) and *Camille Claudel*, and has won two best actress awards at the Cannes Film Festival for her remarkable performances in *Possession* and *Quartet* (James Ivory, 1981). Her most recent movie, *The World Is Yours* (Romain Gavras, 2018), was shown as part of the Directors' Fortnight 2018 in Cannes. Adjani is a brand ambassador for L'Oréal Monde.

Cyril Teste first developed an interest in visual arts before turning to theater and attending the Cannes Regional School of Acting, then the Paris National Drama Academy. He co-founded Collectif MxM, a creative and changeable core of artists and technicians, with light designer Julien Boizard and composer Nihil Bordures in 2000, eventually becoming its artistic director. As a director, he has worked with authors focused on the concept of immediacy, whose works break theatrical codes and give way to images, including Patrick Bouvet and Falk Richter, who had a decisive influence on his work. Since 2011, Teste and Collectif MxM have been working on the concept of filmic performance (shooting, editing, calibrating, and mixing in real time, before the very eyes of the audience). Teste has produced four such works: *Patio* (2011), based

on *On n'est pas là pour disparaître* by Olivia Rosenthal; *Park* (2012); *Nobody* (2015); and *Festen* (2017).

The presentation of Opening Night is supported by the Hermès Foundation within the framework of the New Settings program.

The Host and the Cloud

By Pierre Huyghe

Thursday, September 12–Saturday, October 12

Mondays–Fridays: 8:30am–9:30pm; Saturdays: 8:30am–5pm

FIAF Gallery

A former ethnographic museum outside of Paris provides the setting for French artist **Pierre Huyghe**'s investigation into the nature of ritual. Centering on three separate days—the Day of the Dead, Valentine's Day, and May Day—over the course of a year, Huyghe captures a group of people circulating in the museum and being exposed to external influences, that they repeat and modify. In navigating through the galleries, as well as history, various proceedings come into focus: a legal trial, a dance, a hypnosis session, and a coronation, among others. These situations are presented by professionals or reinterpreted by people wearing masks of light. ***The Host and the Cloud***, will play on a continuous loop in the FIAF Gallery throughout *Crossing the Line*.

Born in Paris in 1962 and based in New York, **Pierre Huyghe** works on situations that are often based on speculative models. The environments he creates are complex systems in which interdependent agents, biotic and abiotic, real and symbolic, are self-organizing, co-evolving in a dynamic and unstable mesh. Selected solo exhibitions include *Umwelt* at the Serpentine Galleries (London, 2018), *Orphan Patterns* at the Sprengel Museum (Hanover, Germany, 2016), *The Roof Garden Commission: Pierre Huyghe*, at Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 2015), and *Pierre Huyghe* at the Ludwig Museum (Cologne, Germany, 2014) and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2014). He was featured in group exhibitions including *After Alife Ahead* at Skulptur Projekte Münster (Germany, 2017), *Tino Sehgal* at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris, 2016), *Saltwater: A Theory of Thought Forms* at the 14th Istanbul Biennial (2015). In 2017, Huyghe was awarded the Nasher Prize for Sculpture. He was also the recipient of the Kurt Schwitters Prize at the Sprengel Museum (2015), Roswitha Haftmann Prize in Zurich (2013), the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Contemporary Artist Award (2010), the Hugo Boss Prize (2002), the Special Jury Prize awarded by the 49th Venice Biennale (2001), and received the DAAD Artist in Residence grant in Berlin (1999–2000).

Manmade Earth (World Premiere)

Created by 600 HIGHWAYMEN

Friday, September 13 at 7:30pm; Saturday, September 14 at 2pm, 7:30pm, and 9:30pm;

and Sunday, September 15 at 2pm

The Invisible Dog Art Center

Co-presented with the Invisible Dog Art Center

In ***Manmade Earth***, eight teenagers from the Congo, Egypt, Malaysia, Somalia, Syria, Tanzania, and the United States—each with a unique path into this country—come together to create a new landscape on stage. With an abundance of materials, including cardboard, rope, buckets, and wood, *Manmade Earth* binds the audience and performers for a celebration of communal construction. An investigation of permanence, stability, guts, and endurance, this new work from Obie Award–winning **600 HIGHWAYMEN** asks what can we build from here and where will we go next?

600 HIGHWAYMEN, under the direction of Abigail Browde and Michael Silverstone, makes performances that offer a new way of seeing for today. They explore a radical approach to making live art, constructing events that create intimacy among a group of strangers. Developed using creative methods ranging from the mainstream to the peculiar, their work is a rigorously tuned investigation of presence and humanity, not only in performance, but in process and aftermath. Since 2009 their performances have included *The Fever*, *Employee of the Year*, *The Record*, *This Great Country*, *Everyone Was Chanting Your Name*, *Empire City*, and *This Time Tomorrow*. 600 HWM received an Obie Award in 2014, Zurich's ZKB Patronage Prize in 2015, and a Bessie Nomination for Outstanding Production of 2015. In 2016, Browde and Silverstone were named artist fellows by the New York Foundation for the Arts.

The Disorder of Discourse (US Premiere)

Based on the work of Michel Foucault

By Fanny de Chaillé

Tuesday, September 17 and Wednesday, September 18 at 7pm

**Frederick P. Rose Auditorium at The Cooper Union for the
Advancement of Science and Art**

Co-presented with the Invisible Dog Art Center and The Cooper Union

On December 2, 1970, the French philosopher **Michel Foucault** presented the seminal lecture *L'Ordre du discours (The Order of Discourse)* in which he publically investigated the power inherent in words at the prestigious Collège de France. Artist **Fanny de Chaillé** uses theater as a means to restage Foucault's speech, which was not recorded at the time, to continue the examination of the potency of speech, questioning both its materiality and ephemerality. In her return to the *Crossing the Line Festival*, de Chaillé presents this performative experiment within a college auditorium and simultaneously within the context of contemporary American politics.

After studying aesthetics at the Sorbonne, **Fanny de Chaillé** worked with Daniel Larrieu at the Centre Chorégraphique National in Tours, France. There she collaborated with Rachid Ouramdane and worked under the direction of Gwenaël Morin. She also participated in projects by the artists Thomas Hirschhorn and Pierre Huyghe. Since 1995, she has presented both installations and performances, including *Karaokurt* (1996), *La Pierre de causette* (1997), *Le Robert* (2000), *Le Voyage d'hiver* (2001), and *Wake up* (2003). Beginning in 2003, she developed works for the theater including *Underwear, pour une politique du défilé* (2003), *Ta ta ta* (2005), *AMÉRIQUE* (2006), *Gonzo Conférence* (2007), and *À nous deux* (2007). With Grégoire Monsaingeon, she founded the musical duo "Les velourses," and together they

presented *Mmeellooddy Nneellssoonn* at the Théâtre de la Cité in Paris. In 2013, she created the project *La Clairiere* for the Nouveau Festival du Centre Pompidou. Her most recent work includes *Le Groupe* (2014), based on the writings of Hugo von Hoffmannsthal; *Chut* (2015), an homage to Buster Keaton; and expanding her collaboration with Pierre Alferi in *Les Grands* (2017).

The Disorder of Discourse is based on the work of Michel Foucault, L'Ordre du discours © Éditions Gallimard.

Why? (US Premiere)

By Peter Brook & Marie-Hélène Estienne

September 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, and October 1–4 at 7:30pm; Saturdays, September 28 and October 5 at 2pm and 7:30pm; and Sundays, September 29 and October 6 at 2pm

Theatre for a New Audience

Presented with Theatre for a New Audience

Legendary director **Peter Brook** makes his *Crossing the Line* debut at 94 years old alongside his longtime theatrical partner **Marie-Hélène Estienne** with the new play *Why?* In this piece written for a cast of three actors, he asks the essential questions: “Why theater? What’s it for? What is it about?” At once introspective and universal, this poignant reflection created by Brook, who directed his first play in 1943, arrives in New York after a run at Paris’s Bouffes du Nord Theater.

Throughout his career, **Peter Brook** (b. 1925, London) has distinguished himself in theater, opera, cinema, and writing. He directed his first play in London in 1943 and has since directed more than 70 productions in London, Paris, and New York. His work with the Royal Shakespeare Company includes *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (1946), *Measure for Measure* (1950), *Titus Andronicus* (1955), *King Lear* (1962), *Marat/Sade* (1964), *US* (1966), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1970), and *Antony and Cleopatra* (1978). In 1971, he founded with Micheline Rozan the International Centre for Theatre Research in Paris and opened its permanent base in the Bouffes du Nord Theater in 1974, where he has enjoyed great success, most recently directing *The Suit* (2012), *The Valley of Astonishment* (2014), and *Battlefield* (2015)—many of these in both French and English. He has directed operas at Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera, the Bouffes du Nord, and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. Brook’s autobiography, *Threads of Time*, was published in 1998 and joins his other titles including *The Empty Space* (1968), *The Shifting Point* (1987), *There Are No Secrets* (1993), *Evoking (and Forgetting) Shakespeare* (1999), and *The Quality of Mercy* (2014). His films include *Moderato Cantabile* (1959), *Lord of the Flies* (1963), *Marat/Sade* (1967), *Tell me Lies* (1967), *King Lear* (1969), *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (1976), *The Mahabharata* (1989), and *The Tragedy of Hamlet* (2002, TV).

Writer and director **Marie-Hélène Estienne** first worked with Peter Brook in casting the 1974 production of *Timon of Athens* at the Bouffes du Nord. She subsequently joined the Centre International de Créations Théâtrales (CICT) for the creation of *Ubu aux Bouffes* (1977). She

was Brook's assistant on *La tragédie de Carmen* (1983), *Le Mahabharata* (1985), and collaborated on stagings of *The Tempest* (1957), *Impressions de Pelléas* (1992), *Woza Albert!* (1989), and *La tragédie d'Hamlet* (2000). With Brook, she co-authored *L'homme qui* and *Je suis un phénomène* at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord (1998). She wrote the French adaptation of Can Themba's play *Le costume* and *Sizwe Bansi est mort* by Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona. In 2003 she wrote the French and English adaptations of *Le Grand Inquisiteur* (*The Grand Inquisitor*) based on Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*. She authored *Tierno Bokar* (2005) and the English adaptation of *Eleven and Twelve* by Amadou Hampâté Bâ (2009). With Brook, she co-directed *Fragments, five short pieces by Beckett* (2006), and adapted Mozart and Schikaneder's *Die Zauberflöte* (2011) for the acclaimed *Une flûte enchantée*. She is a co-creator of *The Suit* (2012) and *The Valley of Astonishment* (2013).

***Isadora Duncan* (US Premiere, CTL Commission)**
Choreographed by Jérôme Bel with Catherine Gallant
Wednesday, September 25 at 7:30pm
FIAF Florence Gould Hall

Trailblazing choreographer **Jérôme Bel** returns to FIAF with a new piece commissioned by *Crossing the Line* that also marks the culmination of his series of portraits of dancers. Inspired by **Isadora Duncan** and her autobiography *My Life*, Bel discovers, beneath this romantic figure, a visionary choreographer who was a feminist, Darwinist, communist, and advocate of free love. Through her great freedom of expression, favoring spontaneity and naturalness, she pioneered the origins of modern dance which in turn lie at the root of contemporary dance. This solo was created for **Catherine Gallant**, a New York-based dancer, historian, and teacher, whose own explorations of Duncan's work will inform this homage by one of contemporary dance's leading choreographers. For ecological reasons, R.B./ Jérôme Bel company does not travel by plane. This piece will be rehearsed by Skype.

Jérôme Bel was born in 1964 and currently lives in Paris. An experimental choreographer, Bel provokes his audiences with witty, cerebral presentations that often break down the traditional barrier between performer and audience, and pose questions about virtuosity and the nature of dance. His performances include *Pichet Klunchun and Myself* (2005); *Véronique Doisneau* (2004); *The last performance* (1998); *The show must go on* (2001), a riot of 20 performers, 19 pop songs, and one DJ, which was awarded a Bessie in 2005; and *Gala* (2015). In 2016 he created *MoMA Dance Company*, performed by some of the staff members of the Museum of Modern Art. His book, *Emails 2009–2010*, written with the French choreographer Boris Charmatz, was published by Les Presses du Réel and is available online.

Catherine Gallant has been dancing, choreographing, and teaching for more than 30 years, in both traditional and alternative venues. Gallant has received funding for her work from the Harkness Foundation for Dance, LMCC/Creative Engagement, the Bossak/Heilbron Charitable Trust, City Parks Foundation, Jody and John Arnhold, and NYFA. She has taught college dance courses at Boston Conservatory, Curry College, and MIT. She has been creating new works as Catherine Gallant/DANCE since 1999. Catherine is also the director and co-founder (with

Patricia Adams in 1989) of Dances by Isadora, which performs, teaches, and collaborates with Duncan dancers throughout the world. She began her study of the technique of Isadora Duncan with Julia Levien, a student of Anna and Irma Duncan, in 1982. She is currently on the Duncan Archive Committee and is a regular contributor to duncanarchive.org. Catherine is currently a fulltime dance educator at PS 89 in Lower Manhattan. She and her students were featured in the Emmy-nominated PBS documentary, *PS DANCE!* She was on the writing committee for NYC Blueprint for the Arts in dance and is on the faculty of the Dance Education Laboratory (DEL). Ms. Gallant is a graduate of Boston Conservatory and holds an MFA in dance from Temple University.

Isadora Duncan was developed as part of Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Arts Center Residency program.

***SOMEWHERE AT THE BEGINNING* (US Premiere)**
Presented as part of **BRIDGING, An International Dialogue on
Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts**
Created by **Germaine Acogny & Mikaël Serre**
Featuring **Germaine Acogny**
Thursday, September 26–Saturday, September 28 at 7pm
Co-presented with **La MaMa**
La MaMa Ellen Stewart Theatre

BRIDGING, An International Dialogue on Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts, an initiative co-developed and supported by the **Edmond de Rothschild Foundations** in collaboration with FIAF, returns to *Crossing the Line* for a fourth edition.

This year's artist focus is **Germaine Acogny**, the Mother of Contemporary African Dance, who presents the US premiere of her powerhouse solo, ***SOMEWHERE AT THE BEGINNING***. Co-created and directed by **Mikaël Serre**, this unflinching and brave work traces African history interwoven with her own life narrative. Now in her seventies, Acogny uses the framework of Greek tragedy to convey her personal journey from her upbringing in Senegal through her "exile" in Europe to her eventual return to Africa. Serre writes: "Germaine represents what almost all of us have become—human beings in transit, exiles, the converted and the recon-verted, people who lose themselves and find themselves again."

Founder and director of the renowned *École des Sables*, Acogny has shaped a new generation of dancers and choreographers in Africa. As part of BRIDGING, she will teach a workshop with dance students at Tisch NYU and give a talk at the Fridays at Noon series, presented by the 92nd Street Y, on September 27.

Senegalese and French, **Germaine Acogny** has developed her own Modern African Dance technique and is widely considered the Mother of Contemporary African Dance. For more than five decades she has been an emissary of African dance and culture, performing, choreographing, and teaching all over the world. From 1977 to 1982, she was artistic director of

Mudra Afrique, created by Maurice Béjart and the Senegalese President L.S. Senghor in Dakar. In 1997, Acogny was appointed artistic director of the Dance of Africa in Creation section in Paris. With her husband Helmut Vogt, she founded in 1996 the École des Sables, the International Center for Traditional and Contemporary Dances of Africa, based in Senegal. She has received two Bessie Awards: Japanese choreographer Kota Yamazaki and Acogny won for their joint creation *Fagaala* (2004), and in 2018 she was recognized for the performance of her solo *Mon Élué Noire - Sacre #2* (2014). Acogny is a Knight of the Ordre du Mérite, Officer and Commander of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, and Officer of the Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur of the French Republic. She is also a Knight of the National Order of the Lion and Officer and Commander of Arts and Letters of the Senegalese Republic.

SOMEWHERE AT THE BEGINNING Concept & Direction: Mikaël Serre; Choreography: Germaine Acogny; Assistant, Choreography: Patrick Acogny; Set Design: Maciej Fiszer; Costumes: Johanna Diakhate-Rittmeyer; Music composed and performed live: Fabrice Bouillon "LaForest"; Video: Sébastien Dupouey; Lighting Design: Sébastien Michaud; Technical Director: Marco Wehrspann

SOMEWHERE AT THE BEGINNING is supported by the Edmond de Rothchild Foundations and FUSED (French US Exchange in Dance), a program developed by FACE Foundation and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States with the support of the Florence Gould Foundation, The Ford Foundation, Institut français-Paris, The French Ministry of Culture, and private donors.

Radio Live (NY Premiere)
Aurélie Charon, Caroline Gillet, and Amélie Bonnin
Wednesday, October 2 at 7:30pm
FIAF Florence Gould Hall

Since 2011 **Aurélie Charon** and **Caroline Gillet**, both French radio journalists in their 30s, have been interviewing young activists from Algiers, Moscow, Tehran, Istanbul, Sarajevo, Tel Aviv, and many other locales about their hopes for the future and the means by which they are fomenting change. Created in 2013, ***Radio Live*** brings these voices together on stage where they share personal stories and revelations. Accompanied by **Amélie Bonnin's** contemporaneous illustrations and videos, as well as live music, these elements combine for a unique radio-performance that frames compelling conversations about harnessing the power of social change within a lively and experimental setting.

At FIAF, Charon and Gillet will bring together a panel of their contemporaries in an attempt to paint a portrait of a new generation of change makers. **Ines Tanovic-Sijercic**, a Bosnian War survivor who is fighting against ethnic division in Sarajevo and **Sumeet Samos**, who overcame his "untouchable" social status in India to advocate for education of lower castes, will be joined by two NYC-based activists.

Aurélie Charon (b. 1985) has spent seven years directing a radio documentary series on youth,

the first three with Caroline Gillet. Over the past years, she has continued to conduct research around activism in undemocratic places: *Underground Democracy* (France Inter in Tehran, Gaza, Moscow, and Algeria, 2014). She has followed the work of French youth through the radio programs *Une série française* (France Inter, 2015) and *Jeunesse 2016* (France Culture, 2016), as well as the film *La Bande des Français* (France 2, 2017), directed with Amélie Bonnin. She regularly collaborates with *Libération*. For the past seven years, she has presented the hour-long France Culture radio program *Une vie d'artiste*, about contemporary creation featuring in-studio performances.

Caroline Gillet is a journalist and producer for Radio France. Born in 1984, she studied contemporary history in Brussels and journalism at Sciences Po, Paris. Her work involves questions of communication between generations and cultures. For France Inter, she created *I Like Europe*, chronicling the words of a generation from Porto to Riga. In 2014, she launched *Tea Time Club*, followed by a series of portraits called *À ton âge*. Since 2017, she has presented the chronicle *Babelophone* on France Inter, featuring interviews of youth from around the world every Saturday night. She has collaborated on the podcast *Transfert* from Slate. She currently presents *Foule Continentale*, also documenting the lives of young Europeans, every Sunday on France Inter.

Artistic director, screenwriter, and director **Amélie Bonnin** works at the intersection of many disciplines including writing, animation, and drawing. For four years, she did live drawing of guests at France Culture's *L'Atelier intérieur*, as well as at rehearsals of the play *Actrice* at the Bouffes du Nord. She directed *La mélodie du boucher* (Arte, 2013), a 52-minute documentary about her uncle, a small village butcher and charcutier on the verge of retirement; and she co-directed with Aurélie Charon *La bande des Français* (France 3, 2017). Bonnin attended the Atelier Scénario de la Fémis. She is working on her first short fiction film.

***Look Who's Coming to Dinner* (World Premiere)**

By Stefanie Batten Bland

Thursday, October 3–Saturday, October 5 at 7pm, and Sunday, October 6 at 3pm

Co-presented with La MaMa

La MaMa Ellen Stewart Theatre

Jerome Robbins Award–winning choreographer **Stefanie Batten Bland** makes her CTL debut with the world premiere of *Look Who's Coming to Dinner*. Inspired by the 1967 Stanley Kramer film in which a black fiancé meets his white soon-to-be wife's family, the work pays tribute to those who paved the way toward acceptance in love and life. Set around a dinner table, seven dance-theater artists explore questions of who we choose to break bread with, and whether long-held biases still shock. The choreography is set to a new composition by Paul Damien Hogan and was originally commissioned by Juilliard New Dances 2018.

Stefanie Batten Bland is a Jerome Robbins Award winner whose interdisciplinary creative practice is embedded in human relationships. She interrogates the preconceived notions embedded within contemporary and historical culture, and situates her work at the intersection

of installation and dance-theater in live performance settings. Based in New York since 2011, Company SBB was founded in France in 2008, while Batten Bland was head choreographer at the Opéra Comique (Paris). The company is in permanent residence at University Settlement in Manhattan's Lower East Side and is regularly produced by La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club of New York City. Batten Bland has received commissions from Mona Bismarck American Center in Paris, Ailey II, Spoleto Festival (Italy), The Yard, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Singapore Frontier Danceland, TU Dance, Zenon Dance Company, Harlem Stage, Brooklyn Museum, and venues throughout Europe and Asia. She has created 12 dance cinema films. Recent credits include movement director for *Eve's Song* at The Public Theater and choreographer for American Ballet Theater's Women's Movement Initiative (2019–2021). She is a 2019 fellow at New York University's Center for the Ballet Arts. Batten Bland has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Dance Magazine*, *Dance Europe*, and *Marie Claire*. In July 2019, she will complete her MFA in interdisciplinary arts with a concentration in performance creation at Goddard College. Currently, Batten Bland is completing a dance-theater guidebook manuscript and lives in SoHo with her family.

***The Sun Too Close to the Earth* (World Premiere, CTL Commission)**

Created and performed by Rhys Chatham

Friday, October 4 and Saturday, October 5 at 8pm

ISSUE Project Room

Co-presented and co-commissioned by ISSUE Project Room

In this *Crossing the Line* commission, **Rhys Chatham** draws on his 30 years of composing for electric guitar ensembles, recent experiences in playing wind instruments, as well as minimalism and free jazz that grew out of New York City's downtown music scene in the 1970s. Written for a nine-person ensemble with guitars, horns, keyboard, and percussion, ***The Sun Too Close to the Earth*** is a departure from Chatham's compositions for hundreds of electric guitars, for which he is known. The title reflects the artist's concern for the ravages of climate change and the senseless destruction of our planet. Additionally, Chatham will perform his solo for bass flute, *Le Possédé*, and experimental musicians Zeena Parkins (harp) and Jonathan Kane (drums) will open the evening with their first collaboration together, the duet *On, Suzanne*, which is inspired by a Holly Anderson poem that was dedicated to ISSUE Project Room founder Suzanne Fiol.

Rhys Chatham is a composer and multi-instrumentalist from Manhattan, currently living in Paris, who fused avant-garde minimalism with the electric crunch of punk rock. Chatham's instrumentation ranges from the seminal composition composed in 1977 entitled *Guitar Trio* for three electric guitars, electric bass, and drums, to the epoch evening-length work for 100 electric guitars, *An Angel Moves Too Fast to See*, composed in 1989. Chatham's composition for 200 electric guitars, *A Crimson Grail* (2005), was last performed at the Town Hall in Birmingham (UK) in 2014. A new piece for 100 electric guitars, *A Secret Rose* (2006), premiered at the Sydney Festival in 2018. Chatham is currently touring as a solo performer, playing versions of his recently released LP, *Pythagorean Dream* (2016), from Foom Records.

When Birds Refused to Fly (NY Premiere)

By Olivier Tarpaga

Thursday, October 10 at 7:30pm

FIAF Florence Gould Hall

Award-winning musician, dancer, and choreographer **Olivier Tarpaga** makes his highly-anticipated CTL debut with the New York premiere of his joyful and deeply personal work ***When Birds Refused to Fly***. Set to a powerful soundtrack by Tarpaga's father's band, Super Volta—combining traditional sounds from Burkina Faso and driving contemporary rhythms—the piece compares the hope of independence movements across Sub-Saharan Africa in the 60s to the painful fight for Civil Rights in the United States. Tarpaga has invited four visiting Burkinabe dancers from Ouagadougou to perform *When Birds Refused to Fly* at FIAF.

Olivier Tarpaga is a Lester Horton Award-winning dancer-choreographer and musician, a dance guest lecturer at the Lewis Center for the Arts, and a music lecturer and the director of the African music ensemble for Princeton University's Department of Music. Tarpaga's major works include *When Birds Refused to Fly* (2019), *Declassified Memory Fragment* (2015), *Not Because You're African* (2010), *Disorder Inside Order* (2008), *Sira Kan* (2007) with Esther Baker-Tarpaga and Wilfried Souly, *Duna* (2006) with Lacina Coulibaly, and *Tin Suka* (2001) with Companie Ta. Tarpaga is the founder and artistic director of Dafra Drum and Dafra Kura Band, and co-founder of the Baker & Tarpaga Dance Project. He danced with David Rousseve/REALITY from 2006 to 2010, when he was also a State Department Art Envoy in South Africa, Botswana, Burkina Faso, and Sri Lanka. He has been commissioned by Malaysia's HANDS percussion, MAYA dance theater of Singapore, and the Temple of Fine Arts in Perth, Australia. Tarpaga has performed and recorded with celebrity rock star POE at Capitol Records in Hollywood. In 2008, he was invited to re-interpret Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with West African instruments for a sold-out concert with Billy Bragg in Santa Monica. Tarpaga is the artistic director of the Nomad Express International Festival in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and has performed and taught dance and music in 50 countries throughout Africa, Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Oceania.

The presentation of When Birds Refused to Fly was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts's National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Думи мої - Dumy Moyi (US Premiere)

Created and Performed by François Chaignaud

Friday, October 11 at 7:30pm and Saturday, October 12 at 7:30pm and 9:30pm

The Invisible Dog Art Center

Co-presented with the Invisible Dog Art Center

Straddling genres, genders, boundaries, and eras, ***Думи мої - Dumy Moyi*** is an astonishing and intimate solo performance that breaks down the rituals of Western theater. **François Chaignaud** blends ritualistic and mystical songs and dances that at once suggest styles from

India, the Ukraine, the Philippines, or Sephardic cultures without explicitly referencing them. Known for his body of work that weaves together high and low culture, as well as his versatility in disciplines of dance spanning traditional ballet to hip hop and Jamaican dub, Chaignaud brings his signature approach to *Думи moi - Dumy Moyi*. Using monumental costumes, he merges the divine with the burlesque in a sinuous mix of dance and song.

Born in Rennes, France, **François Chaignaud** studied dance from the age of six. He earned a diploma in 2003 from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Danse de Paris and has worked with choreographers such as Boris Charmatz and Emmanuelle Huynh. In his performances, dance and singing intersect in a wide variety of environments and at the meeting points of many inspirations. Also a historian, Chaignaud published in 2009 *L’Affaire Berger-Levrault: le féminisme à l’épreuve (1898–1905)*. He collaborated with legendary drag queen Rumi Missabu of the Cockettes, cabaret performer Jérôme Marin (*Sous l’ombrelle*, 2011), artist Marie-Caroline Hominal (*Duchesses*, 2009), visual artist Théo Mercier (*Radio Vinci Park*, 2016), photographer Donatien Veismann, and artist César Vayssié. His piece *Romances inciertos: un autre Orlando* (2017), created with artist Nino Laisné, was presented at the 2018 Festival d’Avignon. His research into Christian song repertoire as well as the work of Hildegard von Bingen came to fruition with the premiere of *Symphonia Harmoniæ Cælesitum Revelationum*, in May 2019 at the Kunstenfestivaldesarts in Brussels. Along with his close collaborator Cecilia Bengolea, Chaignaud is an associate artist at Bonlieu scène nationale Annecy.

About *Crossing the Line*

“Adventurous programming that makes you think as much about your place in the world as about art itself” (*The New York Times*), *Crossing the Line* is an annual international arts festival for New York City produced by the French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF) in partnership with leading cultural institutions. France has a long history of supporting national and international cultural practices, welcoming and nurturing new ideas and influential perspectives from around the world. FIAF, as the leading French cultural institution in the US, critically maintains that practice through the *Crossing the Line Festival*, presenting trailblazing artists from France and the US alongside their peers from around the world. Since its inauguration in 2007, *Crossing the Line* has cultivated an increasingly large and diverse following, and received numerous accolades in the press including *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The New Yorker*, *Time Out New York*, *Artforum*, and *Frieze*. Festival performances have earned multiple Obie and Bessie awards. More information is at crossingthelinefestival.org.

About FIAF

The French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF) is New York’s premier French cultural and language center. FIAF’s mission is to create and offer New Yorkers innovative and unique programs in education and the arts that explore the evolving diversity and richness of French cultures. FIAF seeks to generate new ideas and promote cross cultural dialogue through partnerships and new platforms of expression. More information is at fiaf.org.

Merci!

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