



FISHER CENTER Bard

Bard College, PO Box 5000, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504-5000

YEAR 5 | 2016-17



# Thank You

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# About Live Arts Bard

**Live Arts Bard (LAB)** is the interdisciplinary residency and commissioning program of the Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College. LAB creates a community of professional artists and students who develop work side by side, inspiring one another to create and experiment. LAB provides commissioning and residency fees, studio and stage time, research resources and dramaturgy, and production support to a wide range of professional artists and ensembles.

During LAB's fifth year of operation in 2016-17, 20 professional artists and ensembles received residency and commissioning support, representing a wide range of practices across theater, dance, performance, and the visual arts.

Though their projects and working methodologies vary widely, LAB artists share a common commitment to rigorous inquiry and innovation. At a time when developmental resources and commissioning funds for contemporary performing artists are increasingly scarce both nationally and internationally, LAB provides much needed support for artists who are creating groundbreaking and unconventional projects.

LAB provides important benefits for the wider communities of Bard and the region. Students are mentored and taught by a roster of master artists from across the performing arts, and audiences enjoy a full season of performances and works-in-progress at the Fisher Center. The program's impact is also felt far beyond Bard and the Mid-Hudson Valley. Projects developed during LAB's first five years have been performed in more than 70 communities worldwide.

# Bard College and The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts

Bard College has distinguished itself as a leader in the field of liberal arts and sciences for more than 150 years by providing a first-rate undergraduate education for its students. The College is known for its pioneering ideas in education, its passionate commitment to the highest standards of artistic inquiry and practice, and for its vigorous advocacy of liberty, citizenship, individual dignity and tolerance of differences.

The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, designed by architect Frank Gehry, is the most ambitious capital project in Bard's history, and illustrates the commitment of the College to bringing performing artists of the first rank to perform and work with its students, faculty, staff and the public. The Center's programs in opera, dance, theater, music, film and cabaret, along with its world-class facilities, provide an outstanding venue in which to create and learn. Together these institutions provide an exceptional environment for resident artists to create original pieces, work in close collaboration with faculty and staff, and inspire students' thinking and practice.

## The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts

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# WE'RE WATCHING

The principal activity of LAB's fifth season was the 2017 Live Arts Bard Biennial, *We're Watching*, a performance exhibition about surveillance. Over the course of one weekend, *We're Watching* brought together seven performances and installations by contemporary American artists, all exploring aspects of the surveillance state. *We're Watching* was the culmination of a two-year program that comprised artist residencies and commissions, academic conferences, and related undergraduate courses at Bard College.

Further information, including interviews with the artists of *We're Watching*, critical writing, and other resources may be found at [blogs.bard.edu/wearewatching](https://blogs.bard.edu/wearewatching).

"Black bodies have always been under surveillance in this country—the form of police control, video surveillance, or racist legal policy that has the tireless capacity to reinvent itself from era to era. *What Remains* experiments with the possibility of performance as a place of discovery and self-determination while addressing these kinds of forces." WILL RAWLS

# WHAT REMAINS

## CLAUDIA RANKINE, WILL RAWLS, AND JOHN LUCAS

"While 'surveillance' might conjure images of security cameras, cellphones and other machines, *What Remains* considers less concrete, more culturally ingrained kinds of surveillance that shape and have shaped the black American experience." NEW YORK TIMES

"That's one thing about being black in America, you have to curtail your movements, to live in such a way that what the white gaze projects upon blackness will not end your life. So you're always thinking, can I walk at night? Can I hold Skittles in my hand? Can I have my cell phone out? If it glitters, will someone think it's a gun? At what point can I just be?" CLAUDIA RANKINE

*What Remains* united the poet and MacArthur Fellow Claudia Rankine, choreographer Will Rawls (recipient of the 2017 Bessie Award for Outstanding Emerging Choreographer), and filmmaker John Lucas to create a new collaborative performance in residence at the Fisher Center. *What Remains* will travel to New York City, Chicago, New Haven, CT, and Cambridge, MA in the 2018-2019 season.

*What Remains* was developed in part during a BRIClab Residency at BRIC, with additional commissioning support from French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF)'s Crossing the Line Festival, Yale Repertory Theater, and the American Repertory Theater. Additional rehearsal space support provided by Gibney Dance.



“When I started working with Michelle, I had no idea what I would be getting into. She’s pushing the boundaries of dance and theater into something entirely new, and it’s like no other process I’ve experienced. It made me want to test what I can do in my own practice.”

GIDEON BERGER '18, THEATER & PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

# WE'RE WATCHING THE REHEARSAL ARTIST MICHELLE ELLSWORTH

Doris Duke Artist Award-winning choreographer Michelle Ellsworth developed and premiered this new interactive work, set in a rehearsal studio-turned-laboratory. A small group of audience members peep through a one-way mirror at a performer responding to choreographic instructions, derived from the canon of social science experiments. A supporting cast of over a dozen Bard students joined Michelle and her team for the premiere.

*The Rehearsal Artist* is a National Performance Network Creation/Forth Fund Project co-commissioned by Live Arts Bard, in partnership with Performance Space 122, On The Boards, Women and Their Work, The Center for Humanities and the Arts at the University of Colorado Boulder and NPN. The Creation Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). The Forth Fund is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. For more information: [www.npnweb.org](http://www.npnweb.org). The *Rehearsal Artist* also is supported by the MAP Fund, a project of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The development of *The Rehearsal Artist* was made possible, in part, by the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography at Florida State University as well as the Center for Humanities in the Arts at the University of Colorado Boulder.

“When I was a student at Bard, I was drawn to the Fisher Center because of Live Arts Bard: LAB is pushing the frontiers of these art forms, all of which are becoming more open and fluid. I think it’s great that students now have access to this kind of work.”

SAM MILLER '15

# WE'RE WATCHING FOUNDATION FOR HEALING SAMUEL MILLER '15

Bard alum Samuel Miller '15 returned to the Fisher Center with his LAB-commissioned virtual reality project, *Foundation for Healing*, a new form of virtual reality therapy that focuses on exorcising the trauma and hypervigilance that can be caused by life under mass surveillance. The project was accessible to audience members via their smart phones, using a downloadable app and cardboard virtual reality headsets.






“We often think of surveillance as a tool of state or corporate control, but it’s also a way of watching – that slightly detached, but somehow still purposeful scanning of lots of material. I’m hoping it will feel like sitting around a digital campfire.” ANNIE DORSEN

# WE’RE WATCHING THE GREAT OUTDOORS ANNIE DORSEN

LAB artist and Alpert Award-winning theater director Annie Dorsen invited audiences into the darkness of an inflatable planetarium, where a performer guided them on a journey through inner space, stitching together the thoughts of countless individuals using text culled from Internet comments. The piece was developed in part through two residencies and preview performances at LAB, and had its world premiere at the Noorderzon Festival in the Netherlands in August 2017 with subsequent performances in New York City as part of the Crossing the Line Festival.

*The Great Outdoors* was supported by the Hermès Foundation within the framework of the New Settings Program, is a co-production of French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF)’s Crossing the Line Festival and Noorderzon/Grand Theatre Groningen, and was developed with additional commissioning support from *KING’S FOUNDATION*.



“What started as a script about two people trying to connect online slowly becomes inflected by the language of freedom and surveillance.” CADEN MANSON AND JEMMA NELSON, BIG ART GROUP

# WE’RE WATCHING OPACITY BIG ART GROUP

Multi-media contemporary performance company Big Art Group (led by co-directors Caden Manson and Jemma Nelson) developed and previewed their new performance, *Opacity*, in two residencies at LAB. *Opacity* is built around the seemingly innocent though likely ominous framework of the “interface,” specifically the threat of increasingly opaque intermediation between the digital and the physical.



"Speculative fiction is always a commentary on the current moment. It feels futuristic, but actually it's about the time we're living in."

ALEXANDRO SEGADE

# WE'RE WATCHING FUTURE ST. ALEXANDRO SEGADE



Foundation for Contemporary Art fellow and co-chair of the Bard MFA program in Film and Video, interdisciplinary artist Alexandro Segade developed and premiered a multimedia sci-fi saga set in a dystopian American city. *Future St.* explores desire, surveillance, and the sinister forces of normalization. The work was subsequently presented at the Broad Museum in Los Angeles in June 2017.

"I was interested in the dichotomy of the Fisher Center's gorgeous, stainless steel organic form on the outside juxtaposed to super-sharp white interior spaces. It's an incredible piece of architecture and an iconic work." HASAN ELAHI

# WE'RE WATCHING RETINA HASAN ELAHI



Winner of the 2017 Hugh M. Hefner Foundation First Amendment Award, interdisciplinary artist Hasan Elahi created a site-specific commission for the Fisher Center, part of his new series entitled *Retina*. Using Google Street View imagery to interrogate and disorientate our relationship with natural and built environments, Elahi alludes to the camera *obscura*, one of the oldest types of surveillance technology. His installation on a massive lobby wall in the Weis Atrium interrogated the state's increasing reliance on public-private partnerships for purposes of surveillance.



“The goal in bringing *Catacomb* to Bard was to increase its lifespan so it could play at other sites. Having the opportunity to re-think the work and how the dancers would embody the material made it feel like an entirely new experience. I really love the students at Bard. They’re curious. They think deeply. They’re intellectually engaged, and they express themselves with originality.” BETH GILL



# CATACOMB

## BETH GILL

Bessie Award-winning choreographer Beth Gill used her LAB residency to adapt her new work, *Catacomb*, for a proscenium space in service of its future life. Gill also guest-taught composition and technique classes in the Dance Program. *Catacomb* was subsequently presented at the Fusebox Festival in Austin and by the River to River Festival in New York City.

*Catacomb* was co-commissioned by The Chocolate Factory and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and developed as part of Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Extended Life Dance Development program made possible in part by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. *Catacomb* was made possible by the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

“We gather stories from our community and tell them back to the community. These stories help give us meaning in unique, personal and powerful ways. This binds us to the people whose stories we tell, and through them to one another.”

JEREMY DAVIDSON, STORY HORSE DOCUMENTARY THEATER



# STORY HORSE DOCUMENTARY THEATER GOOD DIRT

PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY PICNIC

Written by Jeremy Davidson

Directed by Mary Stuart Masterson

Copresented by the National Young Farmers Coalition and  
Bard Center for Environmental Policy

Noted actors, filmmakers, entrepreneurs, and Hudson Valley residents Mary Stuart Masterson and Jeremy Davidson documented the lives of Hudson Valley farmers in their latest play, produced by their Tivoli-based Story Horse Documentary Theater. *Good Dirt* was a multimedia performance based on interviews with six farm families, illustrating the fragility of our agricultural heritage and the need for engagement and investment in its present and future. The performance was followed by a community picnic with offerings from many local businesses whose products celebrate the bounty of Hudson Valley farms.



## Developmental Residencies

### **Sarah Michelson** **Residency Year 3**

“Working with a small group of people over four years is very unusual. As we approach the last part of our time together, we find ourselves in such a privileged space. I can’t imagine another circumstance where this could happen.” SARAH MICHELSON

Every spring and summer since 2014, choreographer Sarah Michelson has been working with a group of Bard students to develop a new work over the course of their college career, along with an ensemble of long-time Michelson dancers. The LAB-commissioned work, *September17A*, will premiere at the Fisher Center in September 2017.

### **Maria Hassabi** ***Staged***

Choreographer Maria Hassabi used her LAB residency to finalize her new piece, *Staged*, which premiered in September 2016 at The Kitchen as part of the Crossing the Line Festival, and was subsequently seen in Brussels, Athens, and Boston.

### **New Saloon** **Milo Cramer ’12, Morgan Greene ’12, and Madeline Wise ’12** ***Minor Character***

New Saloon is a professional theater company founded by Bard alumni/ae, now making a considerable mark on New York City’s performance scene. They returned to the Fisher Center to work with a group of students to further develop their play *Minor Character: Six Translations of Uncle Vanya at the Same Time*. The version developed at LAB premiered at the 2017 Under the Radar Festival in New York City and was subsequently presented at the Sharon Playhouse in Connecticut.

### **PWR BTM** **Liv Bruce ’15 and Benjamin Hopkins ’14** ***Pageant***

Founded while they were students at Bard, the queer punk band PWR BTM returned for a summer 2016 writing residency to begin work on their second album, *Pageant*, which was released in the spring of 2017.

## LAB Project & Artist Updates: 2016-17

**Dan Hurlin’s** *Demolishing Everything with Amazing Speed* (LAB Commission 2015-16, SummerScape 2016) was presented by the Holland Festival in Amsterdam in June 2017.

**Ralph Lemon’s** *Scaffold Room* (LAB Commission 2014-15) received a 2016 Bessie Award for Outstanding Production.

**Daniel Fish** (*Oklahoma!*, LAB 2014-15, SummerScape 2015) received the 2017 Herb Alpert Award in the Arts for Theater.

**Annie Dorsen** (LAB 2012-13, 2016-17) received a 2017 Artist Award from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and **Jack Ferver** (LAB 2014-15) received the award in 2016.

**Aaron Landsman** (LAB 2014-15) and **Will Rawls** (LAB 2016-17) each received 2017 Fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

## LAB Year 6 Preview: 2017-18

### **Commissions**

Sarah Michelson: *September17A*  
Tere O’Connor: *Long Run*  
Justin Vivian Bond: *Dark Eyes*  
Pam Tanowitz/Kaija Saariaho/Brice Marden: T.S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets* (Bard SummerScape 2018)  
Christopher Alden: Leonard Bernstein’s *Peter Pan* (Bard SummerScape 2018)

### **Residencies**

Anna Deavere Smith & Lisa Fischer  
Jennifer Kidwell & Thomas Graves  
Abby Zbikowski/Abby Z and the New Utility