

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

'New York Live Arts Announces Additional Programming Details for Kyle Abraham's Suite of World Premiere Works' *Broadway World*, July 15, 2014

New York Live Arts today announced further programming details for the suite of all-new world premiere works created by 2012-2014 Resident Commissioned Artist(RCA) Kyle Abraham, including a fourth, previously unannounced ensemble work. Known for creating "voluptuous movement phrases with touches of dance-theater" (The New York Times) Abraham and his company, Abraham.In.Motion, will present four works-one evening-length, two ensemble works and one trio-over two programs titled *The Watershed* and *When the Wolves Came In* at New York Live Arts from September 23 through 27 and September 30 through October 4, 2014. Exploring two totemic triumphs in the international history of the civil rights, the 150 year anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 20 year anniversary of the abolishment of apartheid in South Africa, the works feature visual design by acclaimed conceptual artist Glenn Ligon and original music performed live by world renowned jazz artist Robert Glasper, accompanied by two musicians and a vocalist.

Both programs take inspiration from Max Roach's protest album "We Insist: Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite" that celebrated the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation and shined a light on the growing Civil Rights Movement of that period in South Africa and the U.S. The powerful themes inherent in these historical milestones, in tandem with Abraham's choreography and Roach's music, connect ideas postured in a cross-cultural exploration of freedom and its progression from the 1960s to present day.

"Max Roach and Abbey Lincoln's tenacious album brought necessary attention to the burgeoning African independence movement of the 1950s," said Abraham. "Received as controversial, the album was a classic example of jazz being used as a vehicle to address racial and political issues of the time. As an artist who frequently creates works that probe socially relevant and timely events, I've been grateful to have the resources made available by Live Arts' RCA program to collaborate with Ligon and Glasper, two artists whom I greatly admire. Collectively reflecting on the impact and message of Roach's art and using that energy to fuel the creation of these new works has been a rewarding and challenging experience. I look forward to presenting the amalgamation of all these elements to the New York City community in September."

The first of the two programs, *The Watershed*, is an evening-length work for nine dancers with costumes designed by Karen Young. Sharing a musical likeness to Abraham's 2010 New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award-winning work *The Radio Show*, *The Watershed* blends an eclectic sound score of 1960s R&B with contemporary classical and hip hop to create a historically referential work rooted in our current cultural, historical and political milieu. A dialogue on the universal aspiration toward freedom, the work references the emancipation following the Civil War, the political tumult of the 1960s and civil rights challenges of our present day, ultimately expanding upon the question: "Are we yet free?" Recognizing the role that societal labels surrounding race, gender and culture-among others-have on our individual and collective understanding of American history and its attendant tropes, *The Watershed* explores the freedom and camaraderie inherent to social dance, juxtaposing it with the circumscription traditionally found in choreographed movement.

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The second program, *When the Wolves Came In*, is a stand-alone repertory-based program consisting of three works. The newest of these works, also titled *When the Wolves Came In*, is an ensemble work for six dancers set to the music of The Los Angeles Master Chorale's *A Good Understanding* (composed by the acclaimed American contemporary classical music composer Nico Muhly). With the dancers elegantly bedecked in beehives, the work posits a duality between freedom and the perception of prosecution. Through abstraction, *When the Wolves Came In* attempts to untether civil rights from issues of race, examining them more pointedly within the politics of power. Boasting highly articulated movement and elevated dress (by costume designer Karen Young), this generous and emotional abstraction seeks to not only neutralize the racialization of human rights, but also exaggerate the universally human impact that the loss of freedom entails.

All repertory works will feature visual design by acclaimed conceptual artist Glenn Ligon. Marking Ligon's first collaboration with a dance company, the sets take visual cues culled from an array of images and points in American history including the civil rights era, doo-wop and other cultural phenomena, as well as slavery and its history and iconography. "The process of collaboration is often a tricky one, however Kyle brings to our collaboration-and to the dance world-a deep understanding of the visual arts; he understands the continuities between the two art forms," said Ligon. "It has been inspiring to watch the dancers move and see Kyle's ideas transposed onto their bodies, and it has been a challenging and refreshing experience to expand my comfort zones into set design and see how ideas from Kyle's choreography spill over into my work."

Created in collaboration with Glasper, *The Gettin'*, another work within the *When the Wolves Came In* program, is a five-section group work comprised of duets in conversation with a seven-dancer ensemble and features costumes by Karen Young. For each performance, Glasper's original compositions will be performed live by Glasper, with Otis Brown III (drums), Vicente Archer (bass) and Charenee Wade (vocals). Incorporating movement influenced by kinetic references taken from Abraham's love of social dancing and integrated with his signature style of mellifluous fluidity juxtaposed with sharp accents, the movement exploration is rooted in the themes of freedom and civil rights. Musically, the score draws inspiration from Roach's opus, enabling a dialogue across artistic disciplines on the struggle for freedom and its ongoing evolution.

"We are standing on the shoulders of our ancestors, and the art that they created is part of the bloodline between us and them," said Glasper. "A great deal of profound art comes from adversity and struggle, and that art is the jewel, the diamond that came from our ancestors. Working with Kyle and his company on this project has been an enriching experience. It's been interesting to see the evolution of the symbiotic relationship between the music and the movement-it's a give and take-they are both feeding off each other. It is magic."

In addition to set compositional elements, *The Gettin'* will feature a number of improvisational components. Sprinkled throughout the work will be phrases of either improvised music, movement or both, making for a truly spontaneous live performance experience in which no two performances will be the same.

The third work, *Hallowed*, rounds out the *When the Wolves Came In* program and is a trio that explores queer urban dance aesthetics and uses movement ranging from whacking to voguing to popping and locking, interspersed with traditional modern dance forms. The musical score is

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comprised of various church sermons as well as music specifically referenced throughout the Civil Rights Movement during the years 1963-1967. Costumes for Hallowed (as well as the ensemble work When the Wolves Came In) will be created by Reid Bartelme, the New York City based designer known for fashioning "smart yet unobtrusive costume designs" (The New York Times).

Funding Support for The Watershed and When the Wolves Came In

The Watershed and When the Wolves Came In are commissioned and produced by New York Live Arts through its Resident Commissioned Artist Program, with lead support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Support for the presentation at New York Live Arts is provided, in part, by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Watershed and When the Wolves Came In is supported, in part, by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The works were developed, in part, through a production residency at On the Boards with support from the National Dance Project, with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Listing info:

Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion

Resident Commissioned Artist

The Watershed (Program A); When the Wolves Came In (Mixed Repertory Evening Program B)
(World Premiere - produced by New York Live Arts)

September 23 - 27; September 30 - October 4

Program A: September 23, 24, 26, October 1, 3 at 7:30pm

Program B: September 25, 27, 30, October 2, 4 at 7:30pm

New York Live Arts Theater, New York Live Arts

Tickets start at \$35 with select \$15 seats available

T: 212-924-0077 | newyorklivearts.org

219 W 19th Street, New York, NY 10011

Box Office hours:

Monday-Friday 1 - 9pm | Saturday-Sunday 12 - 8pm

Schedule of Related Events:

Sept 25 at 6:00pm Come Early Conversation: Artist Talk with Visual Artist Glenn Ligon: Visual Design in Dance Performance

Sept 26 at 6:30pm Come Early Video Screening and Talk: Visual Artist and Videographer Carrie Schneider discusses her dance on camera collaboration with Kyle Abraham/A.I.M.

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Oct 2 Stay Late Discussion: Creating When the Wolves Come In: Thomas Lax, Associate Curator, Media and Performance Art at MoMA in conversation with Kyle Abraham and Grammy® Award Winning Jazz Musician Robert Glasper

<http://www.broadwayworld.com/bwwdance/article/-New-York-Live-Arts-Announces-Additional-Programming-Details-for-Kyle-Abrahams-Suite-of-World-Premiere-Works-20140715#>