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**JACOB'S PILLOW AND MASS MoCA CO-PRESENT
OKWUI OKPOKWASILI'S *POOR PEOPLE'S TV ROOM***

&

EPHRAT ASHERIE DANCE'S WORK-IN-PROGRESS *ODEON*

January 25, 2018 – (North Adams, MA) Cultural partners Jacob's Pillow and MASS MoCA announce two new co-presentations as part of the museum's upcoming performance season. Brooklyn-based performer and writer Okwui Okpokwasili pulls audiences through an ancestral dream shared between four women surrounding two historic Nigerian incidents in *Poor People's TV Room* on Saturday, April 7. B-girl-led Ephrat Asherie Dance presents an exclusive sneak peek into hybrid, hip-hop work-in-progress *Odeon* on Saturday, April 28. The two presentations represent a longstanding collaboration between Jacob's Pillow and MASS MoCA, made possible through the Irene Hunter Fund for Dance.

"Coming up this spring, we have two exciting co-presentations with our long-time partner MASS MoCA," says Jacob's Pillow Director Pamela Tatge. "Following her stunning solo in the Nick Cave exhibition, we invite audiences to experience Okpokwasili's gripping *Poor People's TV Room*, as well as enter into Ephrat Asherie Dance's *Odeon*, as a work-in-progress right before it premieres as part of Festival 2018."

Okwui Okpokwasili is praised as a "standout in New York's crowded performance scene" (*The New Yorker*). Created in collaboration with director and visual artist Peter Born, Okpokwasili's *Poor People's TV Room* looks at the intersection of history and women's bodies, drawing from two incidents in Nigeria—the Women's War of 1929 and the Boko Haram kidnappings, which sparked the Bring Back Our Girls movement. Looking backward and forward simultaneously, *Poor People's TV Room* pulls audiences through an ancestral fever dream shared between four women, linked through time and fractured memories by a harrowing combination of text, movement, and sound.

The presentation of *Poor People's TV Room* by Okwui Okpokwasili was made possible 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.

Ephrat Asherie Dance presents a special sneak peek of the work-in-progress *Odeon*, two months before its highly anticipated world premiere at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival 2018 (June 27–July 1). In this new work, *The Boston Globe's* "bona fide b-girl" and New York Dance and Performance ("Bessie") Award winner Ephrat

“Bounce” Asherie layers breaking, hip-hop, house, and vogue to the buoyant Afro-Brazilian rhythms of 20th century composer Ernesto Nazareth, played live by acclaimed pianist and Asherie’s brother, Ehud Asherie.

Odeon was created in part through two residencies at Jacob’s Pillow.

CONNECTIONS

Jacob’s Pillow and MASS MoCA co-presented Okpokwasili in April 2017 in a site-specific dance that responded to Nick Cave’s major Building 5 exhibition, *Until*.

Ephrat Asherie Dance performed at Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival as part of the Inside/Out performance Series in 2013. In 2014, Asherie was part of an exclusive production *Unreal Hip-Hop*.

Related video on Jacob’s Pillow Dance Interactive:

Ephrat Asherie Dance in Step 4.2 in 2014: <https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/ephrat-asherie-dance/step-4-2/>

ABOUT OKWUI OKPOKWASILI

Okwui Okpokwasili is a New York-based writer, performer, and choreographer. In partnership with collaborator Peter Born, Okpokwasili creates multidisciplinary projects that are raw, intimate experiences. Their first New York production, *Pent-Up: A Revenge Dance*, premiered at Performance Space 122 and received a 2010 New York Dance and Performance (“Bessie”) Award for Outstanding Production, and an immersive installation version was featured in the 2008 Prelude Festival. Their second collaboration, *Bronx Gothic*, won a 2014 New York Dance and Performance (“Bessie”) Award for Outstanding Production and continues to tour nationally and internationally. In June of 2014, they presented an installation version entitled *Bronx Gothic: The Oval* as part of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council’s River to River Festival.

Okpokwasili’s residencies and awards include The French American Cultural Exchange (2006-2007); Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography Choreographic Fellowship (2012); Baryshnikov Arts Center Artist-in-Residence (2013); New York Live Arts Studio Series (2013); Under Construction at the Park Avenue Armory (2013); New York Foundation for the Arts’ Fellowship in Choreography (2013); Lower Manhattan Cultural Council’s Extended Life Program (2014-15); The Foundation for Contemporary Arts’ artist grant in dance (2014); BRIClab (2015); Columbia University (2015); and the Rauschenberg Residency (2015).

ABOUT EPHRAT “BOUNCE” ASHERIE

Ephrat “Bounce” Asherie, a 2016 Bessie Award Winner for Innovative Achievement in Dance, is a New York City based B-girl, dancer, and choreographer. As artistic director of Ephrat Asherie Dance (EAD) she has presented work at the Apollo Theater, FiraTarrega, Jacob’s Pillow, New York Live Arts, Summerstage, and the Yard, among others. Asherie has received numerous awards to support her work including a Mondo Cane! commission from Dixon Place, a creative development residency at the Pillow Lab from Jacob’s Pillow, Workspace and Extended Life Residencies from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, a Travel and Study Grant from the Jerome Foundation and two residencies through the CUNY Dance Initiative. Her first evening length work, *A Single Ride*, received two Bessie nominations in 2012 for Outstanding Emerging Choreographer and Outstanding Sound Design by Marty Beller. Most recently Asherie received a National Dance Project award to support the development and touring of her newest work, *Odeon*. Asherie is a regular guest artist with Dorrance Dance and has worked and collaborated with Doug Elkins, Rennie Harris, Bill Irwin, David Parsons, Gus Solomons Jr., and Buddha Stretch, among others.

THE IRENE HUNTER FUND FOR DANCE

Through the financial support of the Irene Hunter Fund for Dance, Jacob's Pillow and MASS MoCA continue to co-present performing arts programming, a partnership established before the museum was opened in 1999. The Pillow played a pivotal role in establishing MASS MoCA as a performing arts presenter, and sponsored events at the museum site as early as 1995. In the spirit of deep collaboration, this partnership creates opportunities for visual and performing artists by encouraging cross-disciplinary experimentation; cultivates new dance audiences in the Berkshires by presenting innovative, high-quality performances; and expands the public's understanding of the creative process. Past co-presentations include Kyle Abraham/Abraham.in.Motion., Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, STREB, MOMIX, DanceBrazil, Stephen Petronio Company, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, Armitage Gone! Dance, Cuba's Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, Chunky Move, Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal, Shen Wei Dance Arts, KEIGWIN + COMPANY, Kimberly Bartosik, Katie Workum, ZviDance, Richard Move, Big Dance Theater, and Lee Serle.

Performance & Ticket Information
Okwui Okpokwasili at MASS MoCA
Poor People's TV Room

Hunter Center, Saturday, April 7, 8pm
\$20 Students, \$30 Advance, \$40 Day Of, \$50 Preferred

Ephrat Asherie Dance at MASS MoCA
Work-in-progress showing of *Odeon*

Club B10, Saturday, April 28, 8pm
\$5 Students + Members, \$14 Advance, \$20 Day of, \$30 Preferred

To order tickets: 413.662.2111 x1 or massmoca.org
MASS MoCA is located at 1040 MASS MoCA Way, North Adams, MA 01247.

ABOUT JACOB'S PILLOW: Jacob's Pillow is a National Historic Landmark, recipient of the National Medal of Arts, and home to America's longest-running international dance festival. While celebrating its 85th Festival in 2017, the Pillow announced its transition to becoming a year-round center for dance through a five-year strategic plan titled Vision '22. Each Festival includes more than 50 national and international dance companies and over 350 free and ticketed performances, talks, tours, classes, exhibits, events, and community programs. The School at Jacob's Pillow, one of the most prestigious professional dance training centers in the U.S., encompasses the diverse disciplines of Ballet, Contemporary, Musical Theatre Dance, Choreography, and an annual rotating program (Gaga in 2018). The Pillow also provides professional advancement opportunities across disciplines of arts administration, design, video, and production through seasonal internships and a year-round Administrative Fellows program. With growing community engagement programs, the Pillow serves as a partner and active citizen in its local community. The Pillow's extensive Archives, open year-round to the public and online at danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org, chronicle more than a century of dance in photographs, programs, books, costumes, audiotapes, and videos. Notable artists who have created or premiered dances at the Pillow include choreographers Antony Tudor, Agnes de Mille, Alvin Ailey, Donald McKayle, Kevin McKenzie, Twyla Tharp, Ralph Lemon, Susan Marshall, Trisha Brown, Ronald K. Brown, Wally Cardona, Andrea Miller, and Trey McIntyre; performed by artists such as Mikhail Baryshnikov, Carmen de Lavallade, Mark Morris, Dame Margot Fonteyn, Edward Villella, Rasta Thomas, and hundreds of others. On March 2, 2011, President Barack Obama honored Jacob's Pillow with a National Medal of Arts, the highest arts award given by the United States Government, making the Pillow the first dance presenting organization to receive this prestigious award. For more information, visit www.jacobspillow.org.

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest) centers for making, displaying, and enjoying today's most important art, music, dance, theater, film, and video. MASS MoCA's 250,000 sq. ft. of gallery space includes partnerships with Laurie Anderson, the Louise Bourgeois Trust, Jenny Holzer, Anselm Kiefer with the Hall Art Foundation, Sol LeWitt, and James Turrell.

Gallery admission is \$20 for adults, \$18 for veterans and seniors, \$12 for students, \$8 for children 6 to 16, and free for children 5 and under. Members are admitted free year-round. The Hall Art Foundation's Anselm Kiefer exhibition is seasonal and will reopen in May 2018. For additional information: 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.

Hours

MASS MoCA is open from 11am to 5pm, closed Tuesdays through June 22. From June 23 through September 3, MASS MoCA galleries are open seven days a week — from 10am to 6pm Sundays through Wednesdays and from 10am to 7pm Thursdays through Saturdays.

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