2022 Season
International Highlights
PRESENTED IN PS21’S OPEN-AIR PAVILION THEATER, CHATHAM, NY

- World and North American Premieres
- International Collaborations
- Development Residencies
- PS21 Pathways

“This supercool avant-garde hothouse in Columbia County”
— New York Times, December, 2021

“A beautiful, reconfigurable indoor-outdoor space that appears to have landed like an exotic bird in the midst of a 100-acre former apple orchard in this tiny Hudson Valley town. It’s not the first place you would expect to encounter cutting-edge performance, yet PS21 offers little else.”
— Jesse Green, New York Times, June, 2021
Re:INCARNATION by Qudus Onikeku and the QDance Company (Nigeria): U.S. Premiere

An ode to the richness of Nigerian culture—Re:Incarnation celebrates the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth and Africa's powers of reinvention in a show that draws on Afrobeats, Afro dances, and Black aesthetics. June 3–4

Re:INCARNATION launches PS21’s 2022 season of international contemporary dance, opera, theater, and music with performances on opening night June 3 and 4, and a week-long residency dedicated to the community (May 30–June 6).

All of Lagos is out in the streets, where a fight breaks out and one person dies. A breach in reality opens, exposing a world where a bird-woman holds court, along with keepers of the kingdom of the dead and other mythical figures. Here death is not terminal, it is merely a thread that connects the living to their ancestors. Drawing on Qudus Onikeku’s roots of Yoruba cultural traditions, Re:INCARNATION revives body memory and celebrates Africa’s ability to reinvent itself in a collective rebirth.

A passionate journey of initiation and catharsis. Ten young dancers and two musicians enact this cycle of life with explosive energy. Steeped in local Nigerian Afrobeats as well as dancehall, hip-hop, and funky house, they trace life’s passages with exuberance and elan.

Re:INCARNATION is an epic, an ode to the expressive bounty of Nigeria, to which the performers contribute their individual signatures.

While in residency at PS21, dancers of QDance and Qudus Onikeku will hold Middle Ground, a guided conversation, open to all, where participants share something about their lives and hear from others. Middle Ground is an invitation to creative placemaking in which community members of all backgrounds meet and contribute their voices, with each taking a spotlight in turn. Conceived and led by world-renowned Nigerian choreographer Qudus Onikeku, it is a shout, a circle for sharing, guided by the ethos of the African sensorium, aesthetics, and practices. An afterwork hangout with food and drinks, Middle Ground creates a space of audacity, inspiration, and respect, where new connections are made.
Credits
Produced by The QDance Company
Executive Producer YK Projects
Created and directed by Qudus Onikeku
Created with and performed by Wisdom Bethel + Addy Daniel + Patience Ebute + Esther Essien + Joshua Gabriel + Faith Okoh + Angela Okolo + Busayo Olowu + Adila Omotosho + Obiajulu Sunday Ozegbe
Live Music Victor Ademofe + Olatunde Obajeun
Lighting Design Mathew Yusuf
Costume Design Wack NG
Video Technician Isaac Lartey
Production Manager Temitayo Mobolaji Oke
Production and Touring Alli Hajarat – The QDance Company.
Co-produced by Biennale de la danse (Lyon) + Les Spectacles vivants – Centre Pompidou (Paris) + Les Halles de Schaerbeek (Brussels) Théâtre Paul-Éluard (Bezons) + Escales danse en Val-d’Oise + Théâtre national de Bretagne (Rennes)
With the support of ONDA (Paris)

Presented by PS21 with the support of FUSED: FRENCH U.S. EXCHANGE IN DANCE, a program of French American Cultural Exchange
Premiered at Centre Georges-Pompidou, Paris, on January 14, 2021
A US Premiere

One. One & One by Vertigo Dance Company (Israel)

Israel’s highly regarded Vertigo Dance Company brings its vision of sustain
100-acre campus with One. One & One, choreographed by Noa Wertheim and set to an original score for strings and vocals by Avi Belleli. Performed by ten dancers on a soil-covered floor,
One. One & One reflects individuals’ desire for wholeness and spiritual connection to the natural
world. The number “one” suggests solitude but also unity, and the work expresses the human tension between the competing desires for independence and connection—“the individual and his or her tribe” (Financial Times).

Earth not only ultimately covers the stage during One. One & One, creating a visual record of the dancers’ steps and skids, it also forms the ground of the company’s Eco-Art Village in Kibbutz Netiv Halamed-Heh, where Vertigo relocated in 2007 (the company also maintains its original studio at the Gerard Behar Center in Jerusalem). The village’s land serves as both a vehicle for arts education and a durable artifact in their substantial body of work. Watching the dancers toss buckets of soil around the stage, the audience is reminded of Pina Bausch’s similar device in The Rite of Spring and Walter de Maria’s iconic Earth Room.

"In the last few decades, some wonderful dance artists have established an important place in Israel’s cultural landscape, and Vertigo Dance Company is among them. Vertigo’s excellent dancers express a distinctive voice through an impressive movement quality—visceral and raw, but with a surprising, acute sensitivity.” — Mikhail Baryshnikov

About Vertigo Dance Company

Founded in 1992 and based in the Vertigo Eco-Art Village located within Kibbutz Netiv Halamed-Heh in the Elah Valley, Vertigo Dance Company is rooted in the principles of promoting sustainable living and social consciousness through art and education. The Eco-Village is not only a beautiful earthly setting; it is also a model of ecologically sustainable living and working. Having performed in festivals in Israel and around the world, Vertigo has earned recognition and fame for their community-centered style and ecological focus.

In the Eco-Art Village, company members shower outdoors with “grey water” collected from the roof and recycle it to feed the plants in their garden. It’s here this collective of fierce yet gentle dancers create new work in the partly improvised approach guided by the company’s prolific artistic director, Noa Wertheim. Employing a distinct movement-based language that arises from the connection between Art and Earth, Vertigo’s dances challenge and intensify awareness of the limits and potential of the human body.
Read Wendy Perron’s Dance Magazine interview with Noa Wertheim, the company’s prolific artistic director, who discusses her work and how it’s been shaped by the Eco-Art Village she runs with her extended family.

One. One & One Looks at Oneness and Separation
“This is very intimate, about feelings. To put feeling into movement is an interesting task. In Hebrew, the title One. One & One, describes oneness but also a separation between people. We are always defining ourselves. It seems like more and more the separation is also happening inside of ourselves”

How The Village Affects The Dance
“I love nature and am influenced by nature. The Eco-Art Village is trying to behave ecologically—saving water in the desert, collecting it from the roof in big buckets. We have a compost center for the kitchen and toilet, and after a few months, we get plenty of black earth, rich earth, from it. I felt that material, earth at its most condensed, should be in the piece.”

Why She Uses Dirt Onstage
“Two years ago, I got an image of a man walking with a bucket in a line, delineating, putting limits, separating. We are not endless. Maybe our soul is endless but the body is not. We are moving beyond the edges even though we are stuck inside of it. The first time I used earth onstage, 14 years ago, it was outdoors and I got really connected to ecology. I understood how we are behaving to the planet, raping our own land, the poison we put in. Then we started with the Eco-Art Village. It’s all connected. The choreography I’m creating always has conflict or dilemma. Even in nature, the lion eats the sheep or deer. One is taking from another in order to survive. Human beings always have strong feelings, willpower, and conflicts.”

The Extended Family Runs The Village
“My mom passed away 17 years ago. We are four sisters, four husbands and babies—altogether a tribe of 13. After one year, Adi, my husband and the father of our three children, said, “When you four sisters are together, something is complete.” Then we started thinking about it. We came to this Kibbutz. Every night for a few years, like pioneers in the
beginning of the country, we sat, asking what will be the essence of the place. We started putting these ideas into action, like turning the chicken coop into a dance studio. Now it’s growing. This year we are building a third studio.”

How She Shapes Her Ensemble
“The dancers train in contact improvisation and release technique, with ballet once or twice a week. We do a little bit of centering, using the energy of martial arts. Our studio in Jerusalem is the school for studying the Vertigo language. It’s very versatile, what we give them. It takes some time for the dancers to go deep. You have to fall in love with your dancers. I mostly have Israeli dancers, but I like sometimes two or three from different countries. Israelis understand their roots, but it’s beautiful to have more flavors. Sometimes Europeans are more patient. Of our nine dancers, one is from Hungary, one from Portugal and one from France.”

Her Feelings On Israel
“I don’t bring the music that came to Israel 50 years ago. The togetherness of a nation can be joyful, but it can also be stepping on the other. Somebody is celebrating and somebody else is being stepped on. It’s an endless story.

Credits
Choreographer: Noa Wertheim
Co-Choreographer: Rina Wertheim-Koren
Dancers: Tamar Barlev, Yotam baruch
Jeremy Alberge, Liel Fibak, Sándor Petrovics
Nitzan Moshe, Shani Licht, Etai Peri
Daniel Costa, Hagar Shachal

Music: Avi Belleli
Musicians: Viola and Vocals Galia Hai, Oud
Eliahu Dagmi,
Vocals: Ilai Belleli
Costume Design: Sasson Kedem
Stage Design: Roy Vatury
Lighting Design: Dani Fishof – Magenta
Farm Fatale by Philippe Quesne (France)

Unfolding dramaturgies of the Anthropocene and beyond. September 2–3, PS21
Residency and Performances August 30–September 5

Philippe Quesne describes Farm Fatale as "a theater of post-apocalyptic deceleration." In a world laid waste by environmental collapse, human life has ceased. The sole survivors are five scarecrows, who embrace the roles of dreamers, poets, and activists in a quest for a kinder, less harmful future for the planet. The centerpiece of Pathways 2022 programming, Farm Fatale introduces audiences and participants to new European theater in a rural, pristine setting. The work and the environment are of specific and poignant relevance to the most pressing issues of today's world. As a comedic, dystopian pastorale exploring and commenting on the fragility and beauty of the earth's ecosystem, Quesne's Farm Fatale is a natural choice for Pathways 2022: Blazing Trails to a Sustainable Future, PS21's multi-disciplinary public initiative that features free performances, arts and environmental education workshops, circus and processional arts, participatory events, and installations.
In this eco-futurist fable, birds have gone extinct, and the five scarecrows find themselves out of work. Taking up the challenge of restoring life on earth, they archive, investigate, make music, and seek ways to save what can be saved. A scarecrow has, by nature, all the time in the world, but what happens when the “future” has been reduced to a chimera, when crops, insects, and birds are only vaguely remembered vestiges of a vanished past? The scarecrows flap idly in the wind, waiting for something that will no longer return. They find themselves in a pristine, clinical and plastic space, where even the bales of straw have something false and purely artificial about them.

Despite the grim prospects, there is something in scarecrow being that rejects entropy. Refusing to be discouraged, they forage for what remains of nature, listening to the ideas of a bee—bereaved by the disappearance of flowers, they set up a pirate radio to broadcast bird songs—worry about the denuding of the earth, talk to any creature they can find, and against all odds, begin to form plans. No matter how beaten down they are, they’re ready to defend any life forms that survive. Philippe Quesne’s plastic and musical universe has grown even bolder since it was originally produced at Munich’s Kammerspiele. He has composed a dystopian comedy where non-humans inherit the mantle of humanity and struggle to resist ecological disaster as best they can. Funny and optimistic—or absurd and anxious, depending on where you stand—this game of swapped identities invites us to imagine other ways of living together.

About The Artist

Founder of the aptly named Vivarium Studio, French director and visual artist Philippe Quesne conceives of the theater as a place of temporary habitation within an artificial ecosystem, reimagined to observe a small slice of humanity with reinvented logic. Often developed in collaboration with his actors, Quesne’s works call upon the marvelous and the microscopic, the everyday and the unexpected, theatrical deception and the truth of nature. His other inventions include La Mélancolie des dragons; L’Après-midi des taupes; La Nuit des moles, and Crash park, the life of an island, presented at Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne in Switzerland.
Philippe Quesne’s *Moles*

In *Moles*, a companion piece to *Farm Fatale*, Quesne invites audiences into a parallel universe where there are no humans and no words. In this mysterious underground world, larger-than-life moles are the architects of something between a processional utopian spectacle and a punk rock band. One of Quesne’s signature creations, the moles are a flexible art form, becoming whatever you want them to become, from cute selfie opportunities to staunch political agit-prop. Have fun, or dig deeper for the truth, whatever you like. The moles interrogate possible realities with the brusque movements of their paws and leave you to draw your own conclusions.

When they’re not on stage, the moles venture into the streets for a Mole Parade. Each of the seven creatures has a different personality, and they enjoy interacting with their surroundings and the passing humans, for instance, the biggest one likes to sneak up on people and caress them with his paws, while the small gray one is naughty and very agile. Some moles can do sophisticated acrobatics, and others are chronic sleepwalkers.

The moles will appear as part of the Hudson Eye Labor Day Festival and perform at the PS21 End of Summer Celebration on September 4.

**Credits**

Concept, scenography, direction: Philippe Quesne
Scenography: Nicole Marianna Wytyczak
Costumes: Nora Stocker
Masks: Brigitte Frank
Lighting: Pit Schultheiss
Sound: Robert Göing, Anthony Hughes
Directing assistants: Jonny-Bix Bongers, Dennis Metaxas

Dramaturgy: Martin Valdés-Stauber, Camille Louis
With: Sebastien Jacobs, Léo Gobin, Nuno Lucas, Michèle Gurtner, Gaëtan Vourc’h
Production: Münchner Kammerspiele
Touring production: Nanterre-Amandiers, Vivarium-Studio

Photos by Martin Argyroglo
Anopas by Compagnie Art Move Concept (France)
July 15–16

Through its fusion of hip-hop and contemporary dance with elements of silent comedy, mime, and circus arts, the twelve dancers of Art Move Concept, founded by Soria Rem and Mehdi Ouachek, blend and blur established genres to create movement that expands and enriches our sense of the range of physical and emotional possibility. Inspired by the great silent comedians—Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times* is a seminal influence, as are Buster Keaton and the contemporary mime, clown, and performance artist Slava Polunin—*Anopas* is as humorous as it is melancholic, exploring the difficulties and the joys of the artistic process.

The work invites the viewer into the intimate recesses of the artistic journey, sown with doubts and fears, but also budding with hope. Like the creators’ recent *Exit* and *Fli*, *Anopas* explores the realm of dreams and inner conflict, but this time the choreographers fashion their characters and narrative arc from the dancers’ personal journeys. In work that heightens appreciation of the physical and emotional range of movement-based performance, Art Move Concept unifies three art forms PS21 champions: dance, music, and theater, with an undercurrent of contemporary circus.
"C'est pas là, c'est par là (It's Not That Way, It's This Way!) by Compagnie Galmae (France)

Participatory Installation, September 3–4

Street artist Juhyung Lee transforms a crowd of spectators into a problem-solving collective on the hill overlooking PS21’s Pavilion Theater. A string installation resembling a freshly woven spider's web reconfigures the public space. One spectator picks up a stone and starts to roll up the string bound to it, another walks into the middle of the labyrinth and contemplates the unraveling tangle. Passing over and under the threads, the spectators, transformed into actors in the performance, help each other. The neutral space becomes a meeting place, the individuals form a community.

After touring the world, Compagnie Galmae’s collective performance C'est pas là, C'est par là will engage audiences with the PS21 landscape, as participants negotiate their relationships to space, place, and one another through a designed environment built specifically for the performance. This playful, political, participatory work will be a highlight of Pathways programming.

Political Interpretation and Tribute to Civil Society

"When I created this show," Juhyung Lee told an interviewer, “my question was: to what extent can one say that a performance is political? A "committed" show wasn’t the answer for me. I wanted to imagine a situation where the spectators look at themselves instead of at the artists. I wanted to avoid being in the position of teaching the audience a lesson."

"During the demonstrations I took part in in South Korea, the police blocked the avenues with buses to prevent the protesters from marching. We tied ropes to the wheels of the buses and pulled together to create a gap so that we could pass. I wanted to do something with this rope, but initially I had no idea what...And then, as I touched it, I saw that the rope was made of many strands." Juhyung Lee reproduces the experience of gathering and gives meaning to the "we" that is often lost in our individualistic world. The artist guides the collective body, the movement, and the interplay between light and shadow, while the music introduces an element of poetry to the universal theme of the social link. While individuals lose a part of themselves in the crowd, Juhyung Lee shows that the group experience is first an intimate reflection on oneself and then a way of defining a part of one's identity in relation to the community to which one belongs."
And so you see . . . our honorable blue sky and ever enduring sun. . . can only be consumed slice by slice. . . 
by Robyn Orlin (South Africa), Performed by Albert Khoza

Political Cabaret, September 16

Exuberant, baroque, and entertaining, And So You See . . . is both scathing and enthralling. A jubilant purge, a reinvention of Africa’s relationship with the West. The art of South Africa-born Robyn Orlin is a loaded machine gun, firing fusillades that shatter our political preconceptions with humor, irony, and inventiveness and upend our ideas about the borders between performance art and dance. Combining text, stills and video images, movement, music, and artistic intervention, Orlin’s work often resembles a kaleidoscopic medley of colors, forms and references that collide and coalesce with dream-like logic. In And So You See . . . and other pieces, Albert Khoza is the ideal embodiment of Orlin’s vision of South Africa’s difficult, complex reality. Living and working at the intersection of multiple identities, Khoza is a performer, a healer, gay, black, obese, university educated, masculine and feminine, traditional and arrestingly contemporary.

Described as a “permanent irritation” in her native South Africa because of her unblinking focus on her country’s—and the world’s—inequities, France has conferred on Orlin its highest award for merit in the arts. She regards And So You See . . . , which takes Mozart’s Requiem as its point of departure, as “a requiem for humanity.” The title, she says, alludes to greed. “I look at Trump and the way that white America is thinking right now and I see sheer greed, no compassion whatsoever, survival of the fittest. Capitalism has made us such ugly people. How are we going to overcome this greed? That is the question I am asking in this piece.”
Global Music: Vox Sambou (Montreal/Haiti)
June 17

Vox Sambou, spearhead of the Montreal hip-hop collective Nomadic Massive, lifts music lovers’ spirits with an original blend of his native Haitian Compas mixed with elements of Afrobeat, jazz, reggae, and hip-hop. He has appeared across North and South America, Europe, and Africa, in concert and at festivals including the Montreal International Jazz Festival, Festival International Nuits d’Afrique, Festival du Monde Arabe, Blackitude Vozes Negras da Bahia, Brazil, among many others. Vox immigrated to Canada from Limbé, Haiti, in 1995 and three years later made Montreal his home and musical base. Beginning with his first album, Lakay (2008), he has interwoven issues of social and racial justice in lyrics that range across Haitian-Creole, French, English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

In his music, Vox instills pride among Haitians everywhere by highlighting their rich cultural heritage. Offstage, he marries music and social activism through SOLID’AYITI, artists and activists promoting solidarity between Canadians and the struggle for social justice, education, and environmental stewardship in Haiti and the youth community center he directs in the Montreal borough of Côte-des-Neiges–Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

Photos by Luz Vermelha and Éric Berteau
Grounded in the fundamental elements of sound and soul, Ukrainian “ethno-chaos” band DakhaBrakha (“give/take” in Old Ukrainian—a play on the group’s philosophy and resilience) create distinctive, unexpected new music. August 11

Rooted in Ukrainian folk music, culture, and ethos, the band added rhythms of the surrounding world to create a unique and original style. Accompanied by Indian, Arabic, and African traditional instrumentation, the quartet evolved a powerful and uncompromising vocal and musical range, intimate and riotous, that plumbs the depths of traditional and contemporary modes and rhythms to inspire cultural and artistic liberation. At PS21 in addition to their own performances, DakhaBrakha will present their original live soundtrack along with screening of the classic 1930 film, a Ukrainian masterpiece Earth, by Aleksandr Dovzhenko, considered to be one of the most important films of the Soviet era. Dovzhenko is a master of composition, and the film—with its intense close-ups and the impressive expanses of the landscape—is a passionate tribute to the countryside, to nature, and to the people that work on it. Earth was banned 9 days after its original release, and was glorified in Ukraine only after Dovzhenko’s death in 1956. Full of lyrical pantheism and utopian exaltation, it demonstrated the ambiguity of Ukrainian geopolitical choice in the 1920s. In 1958, a film critics’ forum in Brussels named Earth one of the 12 best films in the history of world cinema.

The group has this to say about the creation of their soundtrack for Earth: “Making music for Alexander Dovzhenko’s Earth was a great honor for us and a difficult creative challenge. Frame by frame, this Ukrainian masterpiece of world cinema impressed us every time we worked on it. No matter how we tried to work on the film as a self-contained artistic endeavor, avoiding ideological evaluation, we could not. Of course, we voiced the film in the human terms of the 21st Century, even while being aware that after 1930, when the film was completed, came the years of the Communist famine of 1932-1933, the years of repression, and we know about the difficult fate of the Dovzhenko socialist empire. Together, we tried to convey the authenticity, and also the naivety, of those feelings and messages brought to us from that time and that era, to us today and our Earth.” Photos by Olga Zakrevska and Andy Petryna.