

PS21 : Center for Contemporary Performance in Chatham, New York, Announces Artistic & Executive Director Vallejo Gantner + 2025 Spring and Summer Highlights



Left: PS21. Photo: Steven Taylor
Right: Vallejo Gantner: Photo: Ashley Gilbertson

PS21 is thrilled to announce **Vallejo Gantner** as its new Artistic & Executive Director in tandem with a preview of its upcoming programming for the spring and summer seasons of 2025.

Over the past twenty-five years Gantner has led innovative arts organizations in the United States, Australia and Ireland. He has curated and programmed live performances for many institutions and festivals during this time, including iterations of theater, performance art, contemporary dance, chamber opera, live music, circus and cabaret. Always thinking about the performance arts in an interdisciplinary way, he has championed a diverse array of artists, experimental works and cutting-edge ideas. A consistent emphasis in his curatorial practice has been the creation of new and unexpected experiences and forms of communication for audiences. As a long-time home-owner and part-time resident of upstate NY, he is passionate about the role the arts can play in the region's economies and evolution.

Gantner began programming live outdoor events for the Melbourne Festival in 1999 for a period of three years before joining the Dublin Fringe Festival as its Director. In 2005 Gantner became Artistic Director at Performance Space New York. Over his twelve-year tenure he led the effort to reenergize its organizational profile through new curatorial approaches alongside constant local, national and international collaboration. During this time Performance Space New York created the COIL

Festival, which became a crucible for exploring the vitality of live performance in New York City through contemporary artists working across diverse genres, cultures and perspectives. Most recently, Gantner served as the Artistic Executive Director for the Onassis Foundation USA and then the Director, Creative Partnerships for the ONX Studio—a center for artists from many disciplines working with extended reality and interactive technology.

As the Artistic & Executive Director, Gantner will bring his decades of curatorial and leadership experience to oversee the continued growth of PS21's interdisciplinary programming throughout the year and across its entire 100 acre campus. Gantner will also see that PS21 continues to support innovative and experimental forms of programming, from music and dance, to circus and theatre. Gantner will work closely on furthering PS21's ties to other arts and cultural organizations in the Hudson Valley with the goal of seeing the region develop into an artistic hub unto itself.

"I'm honoured to be entrusted with the stewardship of PS21's artistic vision and the remarkable theatre and campus in which the pathfinding visions of Judy Grunberg and Elena Siyanko have been made manifest," said Vallejo Gantner. "I extend my gratitude to them for their leadership of an organization poised to create enormous impact on the field and the region. As Artistic & Executive Director, I intend to see that PS21 and the upper Hudson Valley become a new center of gravity for both the region and the country at large. In challenging political, economic and cultural times such as these, the voice of a proudly inclusive arts organization that reaches across aisles and fields is more important than ever."

"We are excited to welcome Vallejo Gantner into this new chapter at PS21," said Alice Kocis and Louis Hedgecock, co-presidents of PS21's Board of Directors. "Vallejo brings a vision that goes far beyond enriching our stage. His experience in contemporary performing arts, paired with his passion for strengthening relationships and pushing the boundaries of our institution's role within greater Columbia County, promises a future where art and community grow together."

PS21 2025 Spring and Summer Programming Highlights



PS21 is excited to announce highlights of its 2025 spring and summer programming, originally conceived by Elena Siyanko and the current PS21 team. Including a broad range of performances and events, the upcoming season will continue PS21's history of producing challenging and joyful works by contemporary artists.

The season will begin on **May 30-31** with performances of **Hatched Ensemble** by South African choreographer Mamela Nyamza. Known for unapologetically subverting norms and standards, Nyamza addresses dance as a classical genre by deconstructing the traditional methods and logic of ballet and contemporary dance. Ten dancers juxtapose movement vocabulary from their diverse cultures, conveying deeply personal stories challenging race and gender norms. Following this will be **The Next Festival of Emerging Artists featuring Kronos Quartet**, an immersive residency experience running from **June 6-12**. The Festival brings together outstanding early-career string players and leading composers from around the world to workshop and bring new works to life. 2025 highlights include the world premiere of Jungyoon Wie's *Starlings*, for String Quartet and String Orchestra and a celebration of Terry Riley's 90th birthday with his work *The Sands*, both performed by Kronos Quartet and Next Festival artists. The residency will include open rehearsals, pop-up performances and a collaboration between local school students, Next Festival fellows and the Kronos Quartet.

On **June 22** the **Brooklyn Youth Chorus** will perform **PORT(AL)**, an innovative choral theater experience that delves into the history of the Brooklyn Navy Yard by exploring its past as a bustling port and its evolution within the ever-changing tides of the city. The project is led by Paola Prestini, Jad Abumrad, Jessica Grindstaff and Dianne Berkun Menaker, all of whom spent a week in residency at PS21 this winter. On **June 28**, the all-female salsa sextet **Las Guaracheras** will come to PS21 from Cali, Colombia. The ensemble's cultural and artistic objective is to uplift a female voice within Afro-Latin music and build a more inclusive, diverse and respectful cultural space for all. With vibraphone, percussion, bass, piano and vocals, Las Guaracheras will present an explosive show that provokes dancing and singing while creating moments for reflection as well.

From **July 11-12**, Kyle Marshall Choreography will perform **Femenine // Julius Eastman Trilogy**, a work partially developed at PS21 and which embodies the visionary music, life and legacy of composer Julius Eastman (1940-1990). The minimalist 67-minute composition "Femenine" (1974) includes woodwinds, marimba, voice, vibraphone, piano, bass and an ocean of bells. Dressed in non-binary, airy expressions, the cast of six Black and Brown performers will create a community onstage through touch, lifts and close connections. PS21's adventurous summer series of immersive concerts, discussions and workshops will return from **July 18-20** in a new, three-day festival format. Curated by PS21 Director of Music Programs Matthew Gold and featuring a multi-generational roster of visionary artists, the festival will span genre-defying new music and bold works of the past, creating new contexts in which even the familiar becomes surprising. Taking place over Upstate Art Weekend, musicians and visual artists alike will invite audiences to explore PS21 with free viewings, hands-on workshops, participatory music-making, unexpected collaborations and dazzling performances throughout the campus and the community.

The full season will be announced in April 2025, with tickets on sale shortly thereafter.

About Vallejo Gantner

Vallejo Gantner has led and curated for innovative arts organizations in Australia, Ireland and the US for over 25 years. He served as Director of the Dublin Fringe Festival from 2002-2004 before becoming the Artistic Director of Performance Space New York from 2005-2017. He served as a consulting curator for the Brooklyn Academy of Music from 2017-19 and Theater der Welt, Dusseldorf from 2019-20. From 2019-2021 he was the Artistic Executive Director of the Onassis Foundation USA, an innovative programming foundation based in Athens with satellites in New York and Los Angeles. From 2021-23 he was Director, Creative Partnerships for the ONX Studio, a hybrid production and exhibition space for immersive and extended reality artists based in New York.

He also serves on the boards of Playking Foundation, Melbourne, Australia; First Nations Performing Arts, New York; Chocolate Factory Theater, Long Island City, New York; and In Between Time, Bristol, UK. Gantner holds a BA and LIB from Monash University, Melbourne and an MBA from New York University, the London School of Economics and HEC, Paris.

About PS21

A vibrant center for contemporary performance in the Hudson Valley, PS21 presents adventurous productions by leading and emerging American and international artists, showcasing what is new and thought-provoking in music, contemporary circus, dance, theater and in entirely new genres.