Ellen Stewart Theatre
66 East 4th Street, NYC, 10003
December 1 - 5, 2021

presents

John Sims Residency — 2020: (Di)Visions of America
2020: (Di)Visions of America

“Sims’ exhibition...provides many evocative examples of the artist’s masterful manipulation of Confederate symbology, some visual and some audio.”
— Tom Mack, FreeTimes, Columbia, SC

John Sims’ Residency explores themes of white power and symbols, the Coronavirus, and police brutality, and Recoloration Proclamation – a 20-year project that confronts, and confiscates Confederacy iconography and symbols and spaces of American slavery – is a cry for help, hope and healing. This series of three workshopped-for-stage multimedia performances of works never before seen in New York City melds performative letter writing, installation art, film, music, dance, and video gaming.
2020: (Di)Visions of America

This main multimedia performance, first created by the artist as a part of his residence at Ringling Museum of Art is shaped by the fear, protest and division caused by the central events of 2020: COVID 19 pandemic, police murder of George Floyd and the pushback on Confederate iconography, memorial and monument spaces. Inspired by Sims’ responding Op-Eds and an evolving self-portrait, this show confronts main themes of 2020 with KoronaKilla video game, Dear Police audio/visual piece, and a re-imagined animation of the Gamble Plantation in Florida as a Slave Memorial along with a letters by Dr. Lisa Merritt, Chandra Carty and John Sims. Also John Sims will perform his Dear Police along with a re-enactment of his recent police detainment at art residency in Columbia South Carolina.

Recoloration Proclamation

This experimental animation film tells the story of Recoloration Proclamation by collaging space and time, art and activism and text and visuals to redress one of the most controversial and problematic American symbols – the Confederate flag. This film spans a period of 20 years from Harlem to Gettysburg to gallery to streets to a fantasy post-Civil War slave plantation in search of redemption, healing, and justice.

The AfroDixieRemixies

This audio-visual event presents a giant red, black and green (colors of black liberation) Confederate flag (20’x20’), along with the listening session of The AfroDixieRemixes – a collection of 14 tracks of Dixie in the many genres of Black music: spiritual, blues, gospel, jazz, funk calypso, samba, soul, R&B, house, and hip-hop. The recordings feature musicians from Sarasota, Florida, and surrounding areas. To critically engage this project with both historical and current social-political-cultural themes, the artist has listening sessions all over America, inviting poets, artists, scholars, activists, and community members to respond to the music.
Recently, this sound work was installed at a Confederate Chapel as a part of the recent exhibition Dirty South at the Virginia Museum Fine Arts. Art critic Holland Cotter in his recent New York Times review of the Dirty South exhibition had this to say about Sims work:

“Entirely sonic, the Sims piece is based on a single familiar song, “Dixie,” composed for pre-Civil War minstrel shows and meant to mock clichés of “happy” Black slave life. (It’s possible that its lyricists were Black.) Later, with altered verses, it became the national anthem of the Confederacy, and then the canonical expression of Lost Cause nostalgia in the Jim Crow era. Sims doesn’t rewrite the song; he simply records it being performed by Black musicians in a range of Black music styles — gospel, blues, soul, hip-hop — undercutting, through genius appropriation, its white supremacist punch.”

This series, based on the themes of the Covid-19 pandemic, American policing:

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday, December 1 at 7PM:
Installation Viewing and Artist Talk - Featuring the AfroDixieRemixes Listening Session

Thursday, December 2 at 7PM:
Film Screening - Recoloration Proclamation

Friday, December 3 at 7PM:
Live Performance - 2020: (Di)Visions of America

Saturday, December 4 at 7PM:
Live Performance - 2020: (Di)Visions of America

Sunday, December 5 at 2PM:
Film Screening - Recoloration Proclamation

Sunday, December 5 at 7pm:
Live Performance- 2020: (Di)Visions of America
John Sims, a Detroit native, is a Sarasota-based conceptual/multimedia artist, writer, and activist who creates art and curatorial projects spanning the areas of installation, performance, text, music, film, and large-scale activism, informed by mathematics, design, the politics of white supremacy, sacred symbols/anniversaries, and poetic/political text. For 20 years, he has been working on the forefront of contemporary mathematical art and leading the national pushback on Confederate iconography. His performance work has been featured across the country at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Museum of African American Culture, Ringling Museum of Art and the Detroit Institute of Arts. Currently, he is Artist in Residency at La Mama Experimental Theater Club.

Currently, he is completing his two-decade national art-activism project, Recoloration Proclamation, which features recolored Confederate flags; a hanging installation in Gettysburg; a 13 southern states Confederate flag funeral; videos; site-specific performances; a play; a collection of experimental films; the music project, “AfroDixieRemixes,” the annual “Burn and Bury Confederate Flag Memorial”; and the outside performance and Kennedy Museum exhibition of “The Proper Way to Hang to a Confederate Flag” at Ohio University. Over the years, this work has incorporated more than 150 collaborators, including poets, musicians, and artists throughout the country.


Festival’s Best Actress Award. Miller serves on the board of Ithaca’s Civic Ensemble. Founder/artistic director of A Laboratory for Actor Training Experimental Theater Company, ALATetc.org.

Joy-Marie Thompson (Dancer) is a dancer, choreographer, creative director, and certified ANIMAL FLOW®* instructor from Pittsburgh, PA who is making work that is rooted in the curiosity, spirit, and advocacy of our bodies. Thompson is currently based in New York, NY where she is primarily a resident at Punchdrunk/Emursive’s McKittrick Hotel. When she is not conjuring the dance gods, Joy-Marie spends time teaching dance, modeling, writing, consulting, and/or enjoying nature. You can find her at joymariethompson.com or on Instagram @joymarie.thompson

Ashleigh Awusie (Assistant Director) is a Ghanaian-Panamanian actress, writer from Harlem and recent graduate of the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama in the UK. Former producer for Dr.Oz’s HealthCorps and alumni of the Marketing Apprentice Program at Roundabout Theatre, Ashleigh is excited to make her debut as Assistant Director to John Sims at La MaMa. Acting credits include: UK: Kasimir & Karoline at The Gate Theatre in London, Machinal at the Richard Burton Theatre and the solo play, ANANSI at the Caird Studio Theatre in Wales. Stage: Danai Gurira’s, Eclipsed, Dreamprints: A Conversation with Harriet Tubman at Syracuse Stage, Ain’t Never Been Easy at Castillo Theatre, and Shakespeare in the Boroughs with the Public Theater. Film: host of online children's show with BrainPOP, the indie feature, Naz & Maalik (Netflix, Hulu) and upcoming short, Coyote In Inglewood.

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La MaMa
Ringling Museum Of Art
Kenkeleba House
DFN Projects
Brooklyn Rail
Phong Bui
Karen Finley
Bob Holman
Kristin Prevallet
Mia Yoo
A full program with information on this production can be found on the 2020: (Di)Visions of America page of the La MaMa website.

In addition you can scan the QR code Poster located in the lobby for program as well.
La MaMa’s historic, landmark building at 74 East 4th Street is undergoing an urgently needed complete renovation and restoration to preserve the historic façade, create building-wide ADA accessibility, and provide much needed performance, exhibition and community space for decades to come.

La MaMa, founded by Ellen Stewart in 1961, has been on east 4th Street since 1967. La MaMa embraces every person in its community and is legendary as the place where new artists of all nations, cultures, races, and identities are given opportunities. It is the place where art begins.

To learn more about the renovation, or to make a donation please visit www.lamama.org/remakeaworld
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December 3, 2021
Online Happening

HISTORY/OURSTORY:
The Trail to Tulsa
December 9 - 12, 2021
Ellen Stewart Theatre

November 26 - December 12, 2021
La Galleria

COMING SOON

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The Naughty ‘n’ Nice List
December 13, 2021
The Downstairs

La MaMa Kids
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December 18 - 19, 2021
The Downstairs

Coffeehouse Chronicles
Barbara Montgomery
December 19, 2021 at 2pm
Ellen Stewart Theatre

Experiments 21’
Tarrare; The Hungriest Man
December 20, 2021
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