

The Kitchen

For Immediate Release

September 23, 2014

THE KITCHEN PRESENTS WORLD PREMIERE OF DEAN MOSS'S *JOHNBROWN*, OCTOBER 16-25

Wry Meditation on the Legacy of White Abolitionist John Brown Coincides With 155th Anniversary of Brown's Raid on Harpers Ferry

johnbrown

Conception Direction and Choreography: **Dean Moss**

Performers: **Kacie Chang, Julia Cumming, Cassie Mey, Sari Nordman, Asher Woodworth, and Dean Moss**

Lighting Design: **Vincent Vigilante**

Sound Score: **Stephen Vitiello**

The Kitchen (512 W. 19th Street, Manhattan)

October 16–18, 23–25 at 8pm; \$15 (\$12 students, seniors)

thekitchen.org; 212.255.5793 x11

Since 1999, multidisciplinary artist Dean Moss has been at the vanguard of contemporary dance making. More formal than personal, his choreographic experiments are often driven by a strong conceptual inquiry. In *johnbrown*, Moss draws upon his own personal history as the son of civil rights activists to create a dark, wry meditation on the legacy of the white 19th Century abolitionist John Brown. Moss, a 2014 Guggenheim Choreography Fellow and Doris Duke Impact Award recipient, premieres *johnbrown* on the 155th anniversary of Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry (October 16–18, 1859).

Presented in seven semi-autonomous segments titled after individual articles of John Brown's Provisional Constitution of 1858, *johnbrown* melds an immersive audio/visual design and rigorous physicality with a disruptive impressionistic performance structure. It excavates contentious birthrights born of "our peculiar institution," while simultaneously exploring the gendered and generational processes at play in their perception.

The result of three years of research, *johnbrown* features live performances by **Kacie Chang, Julia Cumming** (from the bands Sunflower Bean and Supercute!), **Cassie Mey, Sari Nordman, Asher Woodworth**, and Moss, with video performances of an original script commissioned from **Thomas Bradshaw** by **Tymberly Canale, Aaron Hodges, Okwui Okpokwasili**, and **Pete Simpson**. It also includes sound and music by **Stephen Vitiello** and an original song a **Julia Cumming**, Lighting Design by **Vincent Vigilante**, costumes by Roxana Ramseur and integrates a number of teenaged production assistants.

Performances of *johnbrown* will take place October 16–18 and 23–25 at 8pm at The Kitchen, 512 West 19th Street (between 10th and 11th Avenue). Tickets are \$15 (\$12 students, seniors) and can be purchased at thekitchen.org or by phone at 212.255.5793 x11.

Dean Moss is a dance based multidisciplinary theater and media artist, curator and lecturer. His current research investigates perceptions of self and other through transcultural, multimedia performance collaborations often incorporating audience participation. He is the recipient of a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Artists Grant Award; two New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowships; two Asian Cultural Council Fellowships; a Brooklyn Arts Exchange Artist Award, and a New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award for his work Spooky action at a distance. Moss is a 2014 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow and a Doris Duke Impact Award recipient.

Moss came to New York from Tacoma, Washington on a Dance Theater of Harlem scholarship in 1979. He danced with

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David Gordon for ten years and has had a long relationship with The Kitchen - serving as the Curator of Dance and Performance from 1999-2004, then as a Curatorial Advisor through 2009. As a curator he conceived and organized programs such as "Talking Dance" hosted by Lucy Sexton and Anne Iobst featuring performances by Bill T. Jones, Ann Carlson, Foofwa d'Imobilité, and works by Yvonne Rainer, David Gordon and Elevator Repair Service. Additionally he showcased rigorously innovative artists very early in their careers including: Miranda July, Sarah Michelson, Xavier LeRoy, Miguel Gutierrez, Yasmeen Godder, and Akram Khan. In 2012 Moss curated "Black Dance" with Pedro Jiménez, Young Jean Lee and Ann Liv Young as part of the Parallels 2012 at the Danspace Project.

Deeply committed to facilitating artists, Moss has long ongoing collaborative relationships to Young Jean Lee and Yasuko Yokoshi. In 2002 he conceived an emerging choreographers composition workshop, which was presented at The Kitchen where it was facilitated in conjunction with Levi Gonzalez under the title *Form & Practice*. Additionally Moss taught for a year as a Guest Professor at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music and two years as a Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University for which he received a Certificate of Distinction in Teaching from the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning. In 2014 he conceived developed and announced with Kimberly Bartosik and Joshua Lubin-Levy THE AWARD: a non-monetary mentoring initiative for experimental dance artists. It's inaugural year recipients: Rebecca Patek and Jen Rosenblit.

In his work Moss employs collaboration and audience participation as a means to disrupt and enrich both his life and his practice. His most recent premiere, *Nameless forest* (2011), was a collaboration with Korean sculptor and installation artist Sungmyung Chun. Referencing Chun's imagery the performance investigated existential narratives while engaging the audience in experiential rites of passage. Other past collaborations include: *Kisaeng becomes you* (2009), with Korean traditional and modern dance choreographer Yoon Jin Kim - where audience members were invited to embody the discipline and poetry of kisaeng - artist/courtesans of Korea's Joseon Dynasty, and *figures on a field* (2005) with the visual artist Laylah Ali - incorporating a docent led tour of the work during the performance.

Funding Credits

Dean Moss's *johnbrown* was made possible in part by a 2014 John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, Doris Duke Impact Award, and MAP Fund Production Grant, and a 2013-14 NEFA National Dance Project Production Grant and Touring Award funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation with additional support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. *johnbrown* has received residency support from 651 Arts, the Martha Duffy Residency at the Baryshnikov Art Center, the Gina Gibney Dance Center DiP Residency Program, the BRIC Arts Media Artist in Residence Program, the Kelly Strayhorn Theater, and The Kitchen. A segment of *johnbrown*, under the title *Voluntaries*, was commissioned as part of *Some Sweet Day* at the Museum of Modern Art. The work was additionally made possible, in part, by the Danspace Project 2011-12 Commissioning Initiative with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; The Creative Explorations Fund of the Multi-Arts Production Fund supported by Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. *johnbrown* was rehearsed at the Mark Morris Dance Center. It is the recipient of a Production Grant from The Rolex Institute.

Dean Moss's *johnbrown* is made possible with support from Mertz Gilmore Foundation, The Jerome Robbins Foundation, and The Harkness Foundation for Dance, and in part by public funds from New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

About The Kitchen

The Kitchen is one of New York City's most forward-looking nonprofit spaces, showing innovative work by emerging and established artists across disciplines. Our programs range from dance, music, performance, and theater to video, film, and art, in addition to literary events, artists' talks, and lecture series. Since its inception in 1971, The Kitchen has been a powerful force in shaping the cultural landscape of this country, and has helped launch the careers of many artists who have gone on to worldwide prominence.

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