

THE KITCHEN NEW YORK CITY'S *CENTER FOR EXPERIMENTAL*
ART *AND THE AVANT-GARDE SINCE 1971*

Fall 2023 Season

The Kitchen's Fall 2023 programming amplifies the experimental and future-building possibilities of archival activations within varied modes of performance, film, and visual art. This season features the first program resulting from The Kitchen's and Dia Art Foundation's recently-announced long-term institutional partnership, and demonstrates the immeasurable possibilities cross-organizational collaboration generates. As renovations continue on The Kitchen's Chelsea building, the organization remains in its temporary home at Westbeth Artists Housing (163B Bank Street, 4th Floor Loft) while continuing to explore the notion of a Kitchen "without walls," with programming extending to other physical and virtual sites.

Upcoming:

Leslie Cuyjet: *With Marion*
November 29 –December 2, 7pm EDT
The Kitchen at Westbeth

Amirtha Kidambi: *Angels & Demons*
December 9, 7pm EDT
The Kitchen at Westbeth
Tickets on sale now

Past:

Matthew Lutz-Kinoy: *Filling Station*
September 14 – November 3, 2023
Exhibition at The Kitchen at Westbeth & three offsite performances (Horatio Street Gas Station, September 14 and 15, 5:30pm EDT; Dia Beacon, September 23, 2pm EDT)

Kitchen L.A.B. Research Residency x Simons Foundation x School for Poetic Computation Programming:

***Instruments of the Black Gooley Universe On Air* — radio series in partnership with Montez Press Radio**

Lillian-Yvonne Bertram and Jessica Hagedorn In Conversation
Live Broadcast from Montez Press Radio (46 Canal Street, New York, NY 10014)
September 25, 7pm EDT

American Artist, Zainab Aliyu, Taylor Levy, and Che-Wei Wang Explore The Black Gooley Universe
Airing on Montez Press Radio September 26, 7pm EDT

Roundtable Discussion and Performance: Romi Ron Morrison with Kumi James, Mendi + Keith Obadike, and Oxana Chi and Layla Zami
In-person Event at Collapsible Hole (155 Bank St, New York, NY 10014)
September 27, 7pm EDT
Airing on Montez Press Radio September 28, 6pm EDT

Roundtable Discussion with Sharmi Basu, Budhaditya Chattopadhyay, Amirtha Kidambi, Rajna Swaminathan, and Asha Tamirisa
Airing on Montez Press Radio September 27, 7pm EDT

Additional Programs

Asha Tamirisa: *Counter-Archiving the Avant-Garde*
Web Project Launched in September 2023

Lillian-Yvonne Bertram: *Archival Gestures*
Technology Prototypes Launched in September 2023

Romi Ron Morrison: *Songbook: The Quotient of Desire*
Publication Launched September 2023

Leslie Cuyjet: *With Marion*

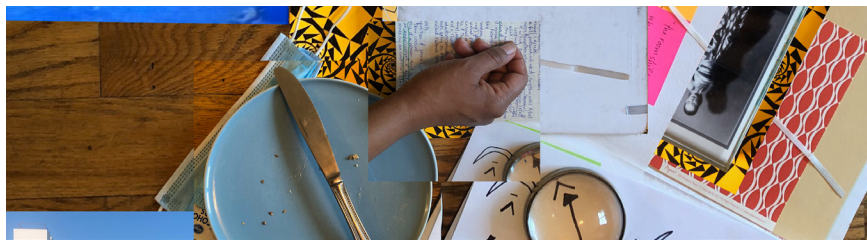
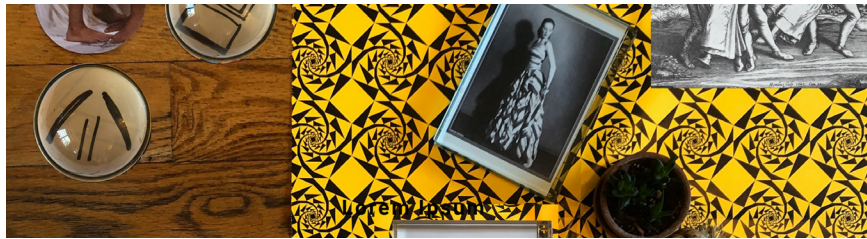
November 29–December 2, 2023
The Kitchen at Westbeth

Leslie Cuyjet: *With Marion* is organized by Matthew Lyons, Curator, with Angelique Rosales Salgado, Curatorial Assistant, The Kitchen. Production by David Riley, Production & Exhibitions Manager, and Tassja Walker, Production Supervisor, The Kitchen.

With Marion, created and performed by Leslie Cuyjet, sound design by Johann Diedrick, lighting design by Amanda K. Ringger, video design by Matthew Dienhart, and production stage management by Randi Rivera.

The Kitchen's programs are made possible in part with support from The Kitchen's Board of Directors, The Kitchen Leadership Fund, and the Director's Council, as well as through generous support from The Amphion Foundation, Inc., Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, The Cowles Charitable Trust, Joseph and Joan Cullman Foundation for the Arts, Inc., Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, The Harkness Foundation for Dance, Marta Heflin Foundation, Lambent Foundation Fund, a fund of Tides Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Open Society Foundation, The Jerome Robbins Foundation, Ruth Foundation For The Arts, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Simons Foundation, and Teiger Foundation; 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 the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

With Marion was developed and supported, in part, by a Technical Residency at CPR – Center for Performance Research. Additional support was provided through an Extended Life Dance Development residency at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.



Leslie Cuyjet, *With Marion*, 2020. Detail 1-5. Courtesy of the artist.

The following writings were generated as part of The Kitchen's 2020-21 Dance and Process program. In monthly installments on The Kitchen's online programming platform On Screen, the DAP cohort of artists Leslie Cuyjet, Kennis Hawkins and Alex Rodabaugh each shared texts beginning in January 2021 related to their research within the DAP residency, which culminated in live performances in May 2021.

January 2021 - Reorientation

Our first meeting under the fluorescent work lights of the black box theatre, we arrange stacked chairs in a circle like it is another kind of meeting, late on a Sunday past the elevated tracks on the west side of the city. These kinds of circles are a summoning driven by those who are its make up. Circles that are familiar and instinctual even outside of a church basement or assembly hall. Coats draped on the back of metal frames, steam rises from a thermos of tea, a snack opens, the tick tack of the pen cap hits the floor, nervous chatter. This imperfect orientation is a preparation, a confession. A cell phone with a timer set to 45 minutes is slid into the center of the circle. Your turn, go.

Ok, this dance is private. It forms new pathways to allow the unexpected to emerge. It is also a constant practice of letting them all disappear quietly into nothing. I say it out loud for the first time. Everyone's attention is at once thrilling and menacing, like a hunk of rock teetering on the edge of a cliff. I am woefully unprepared for what falls out of my mouth and into my ears. Grasping at identifiers that say who I am, that prove I'm an artist deserving of being here. The lighting grid above us is black and silent as I squirm in the illusive spotlight. With each turn we create a loop that mimics my practice: show up, invest, interrogate, write, let go. Here we are, committing to these solos, speaking on our own behalf, intimately defending our work to a room of our peers. During his rant Kris explains, there's "no solo in Blackness," quoting Thomas DeFrantz. How hearing that fucked up his work in productive ways. Within this orientation I feel our social

duet emerge as it does with other Black artists I share rooms with. These rooms. And the proximity to which I hold varying degrees of insecurity.

Rooms with good and bad floors, littered stranger's hair knotted with my own, or settled dust that used to snow in the theater lights. Rooms with chairs like these that are used for butts in talk backs and shows, and to reach a stack of gels in the storage closet. In March of 2020 these rooms shuttered and collapsed into one, an apartment in Brooklyn, in one fell swoop. My life, my work and my foreseeable future are all within a single tight periphery, simultaneously. With each email cancellation my inbox is a deadly weapon. This Tonya Harding blow lays me out and creativity doubles over to a crawl. I can still write. Mostly a series of lists: to-dos, how many times I cried. Then short musings on the evolution of ambulance sirens to fireworks, or smells coming from my neighbors' culinary exploits. Facing this new solo, the orientation to my home grows into focus like the first time. I have never used my own toilet as much as I do now.

—

With Marion comprises materials kept at my newly formed and adolescent home studio. The virtual Dance and Process sessions took place at the same location and influenced a shift in format from dancing to writing, drawing and video. Marion Cuyjet, my great aunt, was a pioneer of dance education for students of color in the 1950s. Her portrait sits on my desk. Next month, *Objects*.

February 2021 - Objects

“I was a lousy pianist.”¹ —Marion Cuyjet

Had she not been from Philadelphia, not asked for bus fare, not defied her mother, not been lousy at piano I wonder if she would

¹ Melanye White-Dixon, “Marion Cuyjet: Visionary in dance education in Black Philadelphia,” (doctoral dissertation, Temple University, 1987).

have danced anyway. If Essie Marie Dosey didn't take a shine to her, didn't pass her off as white to join the corps, didn't arrange private lessons for her I wonder if she would have found her way to teach dance. Had she not bore a daughter named Judy and not left her father I wonder if she would have lovingly named her dance school “Judimar,” after their bond anyway. Had she not been a Black tenant (they called them Negroes then), I wonder if she would have been forced to rent on the second floor, taught her dancers to land the softest jumps and moved her studio three times in five years due to noise complaints anyway.

Marion's goal was “to make the first Black ballerina on pointe, in New York performing in a meaningful situation.” She continued, “Janet Collins got there first at the age 38, dancing with the New York Metropolitan Opera. I was happy that she got there. Then I had to make as many ballerinas as possible, but they had to be brown-skinned. They had to look Negro. We were not calling ourselves ‘Black’ back then. If she could pass for white, forget it. That would not give me anything. Her picture had to tell the whole story. I never worried about light-skinned girls. It was the brown-skinned girls I had to open doors for.”²

A few years ago I visited 1310 Walnut Street, one of the former sites of the Judimar School of Dance. The building was from another time. I was glad for this. Not everything was erased. I looked up at the 3-story building, bisected by the updated vinyl siding of the ground floor and the peeling paint off the bricks of the top two. The sign for “Mr. Peter” the tailor remained fastened to the building but all the tenants were long gone. It was shadowed by the sleek steel and glass of modern day City Center Philly, directly across the narrow street. I imagined what I saw on the exterior was bleak in comparison to the scholarship that happened within. I couldn't get inside. And the weekday lunch rush clipping my shoulders signaled for me to take the goddamn picture and “move.”

When you're brought up and everyone tells you that you're pret-

² Ibid.

ty, you learn very quickly that knowing you're pretty is not desirable. Don't be vain. Carry your beauty with humility. Or else they will resent you for it. You do not want this because after all the years of people telling you that you're beautiful you learn it's all you have.

I have a lot of dances and a lot of processes under my belt because I have experience. I have experience because I have been in many rooms. I was invited to those rooms because I am fluent in my technical and performative ability. I gained those abilities through study and training and practice. And I have been studying, training and practicing since college. Which I was able to afford because my parents helped to pay for college, even though they strongly recommended that I not major in Dance. Still, they helped to pay for college because their parents helped them—they went to college too. Four generations of college-educated folks were not about to stop here, young lady. Recognizing the correlation between education and liberty, they became professionals and owned land. They could be property-owning professionals because their grandparents weren't slaves anymore and carried a very valuable piece of paper saying so. Sometimes, at first glance, they didn't need those papers because of their light skin. They had light complexion because further up the line, there was a man named Cuyjet who left Europe and went abroad. This same skin allowed them to enter rooms otherwise forbidden to them, Black people (they called them Negroes back then). Rooms that garnered experience, education and liberties that were previously disguised as out of reach. Eventually, with this came security and health and more equity and the aspiration of "mobility."

This follows me into every room I enter. Other times, it precedes everything I do. A reckoning I've come to acknowledge and lack the language to express. And so, back to my lists. Nina Simone lists the things she's got, "my arms, I got my hands, I got my fingers, got my legs..." and so on. Lists that are an assurance that her body replaces the tangible things (like "shoes") and concep-

tual things (like "class"), that she ain't got. I look at my hands, not a scratch on them.

March 2021 - Choreography

Mother would pick me up from school on Thursdays. On the way to dance "practice" (we didn't call it rehearsal back then), we would stop at Roy Rogers for a bacon cheeseburger. I ate it in the car while she carefully ashed her Winston Light out of the crack of the car window. A quiet moment we shared each week.

I'm sure the teachers at the studio were highschoolers. But to me they were thirty-looking and skinny, like women I saw in the Cosmopolitan magazines I flipped through when I babysat my neighbor. As tall, bigger boned, and black-bodied I often wondered if I'm placed in the back row of our dances because I'm neither tall nor muscular. But I don't dare ask. I should work on my switch-leaps and turn my doubles into triples. These are the things, I'm told, that will get me to the front row. But there is no time for these considerations and I push it to the back of my mind again. The competition is coming up this Saturday and we gotta make it to regionals. At least I can do the splits on both sides.

At home, my mom puts cold cream on my face, as I fondle my trophies.

Entrance of the Shades

April 2021 - Process

There is a bind to this performance I do not know. And this is the search for its source. A spring overflowing, perhaps, and the incessant buzz of a stereo without a groundwire. I know the words. They fall on my ears like a good beat and make my head

nod. They cut quick little murders in my heart. They create an entire picture of the past or perhaps a future, complete with smells, taste and weather. She has a name. I am almost ready to meet her.

I sit between her legs, hairless and like two twigs. My nightgown is paper thin from my sister having worn it until she grew too tall. A handmedown. She takes a comb and tilts my head slightly to the left, draws a long part on the side of my crown and presses her hands down on my stubborn wiry curls. It never went where either of us wanted. I wanted long, straight, and down. She wanted back and off my face. Frizzy, thick, coarse. These were things that were definitely a problem. A mistake to be corrected with heat, pressure and efficiency. An heirloom to manipulate into my character and good fortune. To weave and churn until an alchemical shift presented me as the version I was expected to be. Because her mother expected this from her too. And this is love. This transference of transformation of what was into what can be, starting with a comb to my scalp. She tilts my head from one side to the other, and down and back. One side to the other, down and back. Taking cues from the tip of her fingers. Our first collaboration. Choreographies of many.

This performance is expansive. This is not a rehearsal. I'm unsure if I can stop. I'm asking myself "how long will this go on?" I'm asking myself "do you have to?" I'm asking myself "please stop."

May 2021 - Show

My proximity to her changes each day I approach my desk. With, Marion. I measure how it feels to be so close to a history, a pride and guilt. With it, of it. Locating center in relation to everyone else, I eliminate the need to explicitly say what 'it' is. (It being me, and you—our dynamic—my desires and wants outside of influence and hearsay.) I absorb cues in a flash, riffing off the surroundings. Quietly taking it all in. The silence settles me and ensures I never

say anything out loud.

I tuck this practice in a hidden place. (Well, not so hidden now.) It's warm here. And dark. Its own energy, built up by the compression of time and space. And this black is certain. This black has no nuance. No conditional. No exceptions. It devours any lie I can dream up. That I'm safe. That I'm sound. That I have everything I need at my fingertips. That my anxiety is a cloak I can rid myself of if I simply had the will to disrobe. And wouldn't it be a show to do it right in front of you? Right out in the open so we can rubberneck at the reveal of this deep, dark, pulsating pit of rage and nothingness. Because it is alive. It is hunting. It is always testing, poking at my skin from underneath looking for a soft spot. Sometimes the only way to soothe it is to feed it with rot. Let a little air out with a touch of destruction. It comes out in chain smoking. It comes out in three fingers of bourbon at noon. It comes out in my voice, hoarse from screaming into my pillow. It comes out in my refusal to "hang out" with you or be generous with my time in any way. Nope, I don't owe you shit. What would I do if I didn't have to meet your expectations? Would I light up the room with warmth and grace? With all of the panache and personality that's been constructed for me? A thick coat of this concoction before the last one even has time to dry. A new cage for this rage.

Nah, I've got her down. Even as I birth her into life. She's been right under my nose the whole time. She is my mom's particular laugh at the grocery store clerk who says, "your children are soooo well behaved!" She is the hesitated acceptance for a free cut with the stylist who is "really good at curly hair." She is like, really pretty and smells nice. Her music is not loud and tastefully obscure. Her patterns are tame, and her colors are muted. She makes herself small by binding that unruly hair back in a tight bun. She is tastefully grey. Perfectly beige. She ends her emails with "warmly" and believes it disarms its recipient because she knows she is armed upon arrival with her skin, her lips, her thiccness. She orients herself to front. She is ready. She is familiar with every detail in the room before she makes herself known.

She is the lack of her own personal space. She is the “no, no, you go ahead.” She changes the words in jokes depending on who she might offend. She’s always joking. A nervous laugh perfected to sound so natural. She is from a good home and knows how to keep one. She knows how important it is to maintain legibility. So as not to confuse and cost her good name, popularity, her street cred. And on the other side, she smokes and drinks to get drunk. She screams.

These tactics. Hasty, messy, and necessary. The veil is thin, certainly now. But at least, I tell myself, as long as I am with something, I am not so alone.

ARTIST BIOS

Leslie Cuyjet is an award-winning choreographer and performer whose work aims to conjure life-long questions of identity, confuse and disrupt traditional narratives, and demonstrate the angsty, explosive, sensitive, pioneering excellence of the Black woman. Since 2004, her tenure in the New York dance world is decorated with performances and collaborations, both formal and informal; with contemporaries, legends, and counterparts; on rooftops, good and bad floors, and alleyways; on stage, in film, art, on tour, and on the fly. “A strong, subtle presence unassumingly ground the stage,” says The New York Times. Recent honors include Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grants for Artists (Dance), Princeton Hodder Fellowship, and an Outstanding Choreographer/Creator “Bessie” Award for her 2021 work, *Blur*. Cuyjet was a Dance and Process participant at The Kitchen (2020-2021).

Andrya Ambro is a musician, sound engineer and narrator who has dedicated most of the last 14 years to music, both as a performer in bands such as Talk Normal as well as engineering live sound in music venues and performance art spaces. She currently lives and maintains a studio practice in Brooklyn, NY, and creates music as Gold Dime.

Matthew Deinhart is New York based multidisciplinary designer. Recent design credits include the scenic design for *The Lesser Magoo* (Brooklyn College) and *Sweat* (Brooklyn College), the lighting design for *La Folie* (Premiere - Brooklyn College), *Dark Star of Harlem* (La Mama), *The Sandwich Program* (Premiere - The Public), and *Tongue Depressor* (Premiere -The Public), and the projection design for *This is a Cave* (Premiere – Brooklyn College) and *ANIMUS ANIMA//ANIMA ANIMUS* (Premiere - The Public). Matthew is 2021 graduate of Brooklyn College with an M.F.A in design and technical theater.

Johann Diedrick (he/him) is an artist, engineer, and educator who makes listening rooms for encountering new sonic possibilities off the grid. Through his installations, performances, and sculptures, audiences are able to experience the world through sonic encounter. He surfaces resonant histories of past interactions inscribed in material and embedded in space, peeling back vibratory layers to reveal hidden memories and untold stories. He shares his tools and techniques through listening tours, workshops, and open-source hardware/software. He is the founder of *A Quiet Life*, a sonic engineering and research studio that designs and builds audio-related software and hardware products. He is a 2023-2025 Just Tech fellow and a 2023 Performance AIRspace Resident at Abrons Art Center. He was the Director of Engineering at Somewhere Good, a 2022 Future Imagination Collaboratory Fellow at the Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, a 2022 Wave Farm artist-in-residence, a 2021 Mozilla Creative Media Award recipient, a 2020 Pioneer Works Technology resident, a community member of NEW INC, and an adjunct professor at NYU’s ITP program. His work has been featured in Wire Magazine, Musicworks Magazine, and presented internationally at the Smithsonian’s Hirsh-

horn Museum, MoMA PS1, Dia Art Foundation, NYC Parks Department, the New Museum, Ars Electronica, Science Gallery Dublin, Somerset House, and multiple NIME conferences, among others.

Simon Harding is an award-winning set and video designer for live performance, interested in modalities of performance that create a living space between objects and the body. He was a co-founder and the resident designer for SaBooge Theatre, designing all of their productions including the critically acclaimed shows *Hatched*, *Fathom*, and *Every Day Above Ground*.

Maxwell Ludlow is a British-American experimental musician and sound engineer. He is the audio producer of *Artists and Hackers*, a podcast about the history of technology and the internet, which recently received a 2023 Media Arts award through the National Endowment For The Arts. Max is the coordinator of Tribeca Festival's audio storytelling program and produces original podcasts for the festival's audio network. He received a B.A. in Media Studies and Anthropology from Purchase College.

Randi Rivera is a native New Yorker from the Bronx. She has been a freelance Stage Manager and Lighting Director since 2009, working both in NYC and on the road. A few favorite colleagues include Tina Satter & Half Straddle, Keigwin & Company, Dance Heginbotham, Harlem Stage, Faye Driscoll, Doug Elkins Choreography Etc, Sidra Bell Dance NY, The Chocolate Factory, Andrew Schneider, Ivy Baldwin, Cathy Weis, Gallim Dance, Sean Donovan, Phantom Limb Company, and Ballez. Rivera served as Associate Director for the Broadway run of Half Straddle's *Is This A Room* in 2021. She is thrilled to be on Leslie's team and back at The Kitchen. All of her work is for her family.

Amanda K. Ringger has lived in New York since 1997, designing locally, nationally and internationally with artists such as Faye Driscoll, Doug Elkins, Cynthia Oliver, Jennifer Archibald, Antonio Ramos, LMnO3, Nora Chipaumire, Julian Barnett, Alexandra Beller, Deborah Lohse, Laura Peterson, Donnell Oakley, Molly Poerstel, Kota Yamazaki, 10 Hairy Legs, Tiffany Mills, Darrah Carr, and cakeface, among others. She received a BA from Goucher College in Baltimore, MD and an MFA in lighting design from Tisch School of the Arts at NYU. She is the recipient of a 2009 Bessie award for her collaboration on Faye Driscoll's *837 Venice Boulevard* at HERE Arts Center.

PRODUCTION CREDITS & CREW

Leslie Cuyjet, *Artist, Dancer, Choreographer*

Andrya Ambro, *Originating Sound Design during DAP Residency*
Simon Harding, *Originating Video Design during DAP Residency*

Matthew Deinhart, *Video Designer*
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iki nakagawa, *Videographer*
Walter Wlodarczyk, *Photographer*

Special thanks to Matthew Lyons, Yve Laris Cohen and Moriah Evans, and the DAP Cohort of 2020/2021 Kennis Hawkins and Alex Rodabaugh. To Kaersten H. Colvin-Woodruff for additional videos from her personal collection. To the endless generosity and support of the Cuyjet family. TTS, JW

SITE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Kitchen acknowledges that its site has shifted over time from Greenwich Village, where it began in Mercer Arts Center, to a loft in SoHo on Wooster Street, to its home on 19th Street in Chelsea that it's held since 1986, and now to the temporary location of Westbeth Artists Housing as our building renovation is underway. Since its founding, The Kitchen has presented programming both within its sites and at partner venues around New York City. These sites traverse Indigenous space, Black space, Latinx space, working-class space, immigrant space, queer space, activist space, rebellion space. These diasporic histories have had deep impacts on avant-garde art production at large and The Kitchen's own experimental institutional work. We strive to bring light to these groundbreaking contributions as we carry this next chapter of our institution forward with care. This is a collaborative, thoughtful process taking place across all facets of our work here, and we look forward to continuing to create experimentation-forward space for all with these values as a guiding force.

The Kitchen

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