



**For Immediate Release**

## **PERFORMA 15 ANNOUNCES PERFORMA COMMISSIONS BY JÉRÔME BEL, PAULINE CURNIER JARDIN, JESPER JUST, ROBIN RHODE, AND FRANCESCO VEZZOLI AND DAVID HALLBERG**

**New York**—Performa, the internationally acclaimed organization dedicated to live performance across the disciplines, announces the first round of Performa Commissions to premiere during Performa 15. Since its inception, Performa has been a leader in commissioning individual artists who together shape the next chapter of the multi-century legacy of visual artists working in live performance. Performa 15 will premiere new work by artists **Robin Rhode** (South Africa) and **Pauline Curnier Jardin** (France), and Performa alums **Jérôme Bel** (France) and **Jesper Just** (Denmark), as well as returning artist **Francesco Vezzoli** (Italy) in special collaboration with dancer **David Hallberg** (United States). Performa 15 will take place November 1 – 22, 2015 at locations across New York City.

“I am thrilled to kick off our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a remarkable collaboration by two extraordinary artists in their respective fields, David Hallberg and Francesco Vezzoli, who pay tribute to the Renaissance and to centuries of artists creating live performances,” **said RoseLee Goldberg, Founding Director and Curator of Performa**. “Their exuberant and exquisite examination of performance in a by-gone era brings to our contemporary 21<sup>st</sup> century world a new understanding of the role of the artist in the power and politics of the past, whose visionary experiments went way beyond the great halls and picture galleries of palaces and cathedrals to the streets and squares of daily life, transforming the imagination of the public with their ephemeral works of wonder.”

Performa 15 will feature an ambitious new work by Italian artist **Francesco Vezzoli** in collaboration with American classical ballet dancer **David Hallberg**, principle dancer for the Bolshoi Ballet and American Ballet Theater. This new work follows Vezzoli’s unforgettable first live performance, *Right You Are (If You Think You Are)*, a Performa Commission (2007) that filled the entire Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, from its copolla to its theater below stairs, to much critical acclaim.

Continuing with Performa’s longstanding exploration of “Dance After Choreography,” a seminal and game changing series on contemporary dance and visual art which was a major research theme of Performa 07 and inspired a series of important and ongoing dance programs in major museums in the city, through both commissioned work and Performa Institute symposiums such as the 2011 *Why Dance in the Art World?*, Performa 15 will welcome the return of acclaimed French choreographer **Jérôme Bel** with **Ballet (New York)**. Presented in three separate spaces across the city, including a theater, dance studio, and gallery, Bel will work with a community of 15 New York-based performers of various ages and backgrounds,

gathered through an open call, who will respond to a series of tasks designed by Bel. *Ballet (New York)* toes the fine line between the banal and the theatrical, as the ensemble cast of trained and untrained performers negotiates their relationship to one another and the audience. The production will be Bel's first performance devised for the white cube gallery space. Jérôme Bel's *Ballet (New York)* is co-commissioned by Performa and Marian Goodman Gallery.

Performa 15 will also see the return of performance to the streets, utilizing both obscure and iconic locations within the urban landscape of New York City as impromptu stages for performance. Following Arto Lindsay's large-scale parade through Time Square in his Performa 09 Commission, South African artist Robin Rhode will utilize the iconic location as a public stage in a drastically new way. For Performa 15, presented in partnership with **Time Square Arts**, **Robin Rhode** will reimagine Austrian composer Arnold Schönberg's *Erwartung (Expectation)*, an atonal opera about love, loss, and longing that for Rhode resonates with the experiences of South African women waiting for their absent husbands, far from home while working in the city. Composed in 1909, *Erwartung* takes the unusual form of a one-act monodrama for a solo soprano, accompanied by a large orchestra. Rhode's Performa 15 Commission of *Erwartung: A Street Opera* will be sung by the renowned French soprano Carole Sidney Louis. Through a sparse set created from reclaimed doors from South African homes, Rhode distills the cacophony of Times Square into an evocative domestic space, inhabited only by the soprano and a man whom we never hear.

Drawing upon another New York City landmark, One World Trade Center, **Jesper Just** will return to create a new installation and live performance on the occasion of Performa 15, 10 years since his first commission for Performa 05. One World Trade Center itself will appear centrally in the video work, serving as a mediator for the live characters and the audience, while its prominence in the piece will establish it as a character itself. The performance, featuring live music and performance, will be accompanied by an installation of a set and films, mixing live and recorded elements.

Performa Commissions have also investigated time and duration, calling attention to the ephemeral quality of performance in different capacities from the 12-hour *Bliss* performance by Ragnar Kjartansson for Performa 11 to the one-night-only *Fecunditas* by Jennifer Rubell which celebrated Performa's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an organization in November 2014 with a tribute to the Renaissance, a theme that continues as a point of inspiration for artists of Performa 15.

Continuing with the Renaissance as a point of inspiration spanning Performa's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an institution in 2014 and 10 years since the biennial's inception in 2005, this November will be **The Revivification House** by French artist **Pauline Curnier Jardin**. For her Performa Commission, Curnier Jardin will present a week-long immersive theatrical event that will pay tribute to sixteenth-century pageantries. Drawing from sources as diverse as black magic, witches, camp, voguing, and the animal kingdom, *The Revivification House* will utilize Curnier Jardin's unique sensibility and an abundance of pop-cultural references to explore rituals in the Renaissance.

Performa's Curatorial Team for Performa 15, led by RoseLee Goldberg, includes Performa curators Adrienne Edwards, Mark Beasley and Associate Curator Charles Aubin, as well as curators from a consortium of cultural institutions, and is produced by Esa Nickle.

### **ABOUT TIMES SQUARE ARTS:**

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## **ABOUT PERFORMA:**

Founded in 2004 by art historian and curator RoseLee Goldberg, Performa is the leading organization dedicated to exploring the critical role of live performance in the history of twentieth-century art and encouraging new directions in performance for the twenty-first century. Since launching New York's first performance biennial, Performa 05, in 2005, the organization has solidified its identity as a commissioning and producing entity. As a "museum without walls," Performa provides important art historical heft to the field by showing the development of live art in all its forms from many different cultural perspectives reaching back to the Renaissance. The Performa Biennial is celebrated world wide as the first biennial to give specialized attention to this remarkable history, transforming the city of New York into the 'world capital of artists' performance' every other November. Performa attracts a national and international audience of more than 200,000 and receives more than 5,000,000 website hits during its three week run. In the last decade Performa has presented 592 performances, worked with 732 artists, and toured commissioned performances in 17 countries around the world.

The Curatorial Team for Performa 15 is led by RoseLee Goldberg and includes Performa curators Adrienne Edwards, Charles Aubin, and Mark Beasley, as well as curators from a consortium of more than 30 cultural institutions. Performa 15 is produced by Esa Nickle.

For more on Performa and its programs including the Performa Biennial, please visit <http://performa-arts.org/>.

Join the conversation: @PerformaNYC #Performa10Years

## **CONSORTIUM PARTNERS:**

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## **BIENNIAL SUPPORTERS:**

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Performa's annual programs and operations are supported by the Lambent Foundation, the David and Elaine Potter Foundation, The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and The New York State Council for the Arts, a State Agency. The Performa Institute and fellowship program is supported by Lambent Foundation, Ford Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and NYU Steinhardt Department of Art and Art Professions. Additional support provided by Artnet, Brooke Blashill, The Boston Foundation, Donor Advised Fund of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland grant recommended by Toby Devan Lewis, The Jedra Charitable Foundation, Lisa K. Lippman (in honor of Emily Glasser and William Sussman), Noam Andrews, Gregory Miller, and Anne Bergeron. Special thanks to the Performa Board of Directors, including Laurie Beckleman, Irving Benson, Todd Bishop, Amy Cappellazzo, Toby Devan Lewis (Honorary Chair), Wendy Fisher, Stephanie French, Emily Glasser, RoseLee Goldberg, Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn (Chair), Ronald Guttman, Barbara Hoffman, Rashid Johnson, Aditya Julka, Edward T. Nahem, and the Performa Producers, Curators and Visionaries Circles.

## **MAJOR SPONSOR:**

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## **\*\*NOTE TO THE EDITORS\*\***

### **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

**Jérôme Bel** (b. 1964, Paris) is a prominent choreographer who produces highly conceptual and critical works that explore the relationship between choreography and popular culture, dancer and spectator, often using humor as a device to break the usual formality of a theater setting. Bel's performances have both sincerity in their straightforward delivery and strong engagement with the audience. Bel's work has been presented at Performa (2007 & 2013); Venice Dance Biennale (2014); Festival d'Automne and Festival d'Avignon (2013); Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis (2013), Tate Modern (2012), the Centre Pompidou (2012), the Hayward Gallery, KunstenFestivaldesArts, as well included in DOCUMENTA 13 (2012). In 2005 Bel received the prestigious Bessie Award for *The Show Must Go On*, and in 2004 he was commissioned by Paris Opera to create *Véronique Doisneau*, a theatrical dance documentary.

**Pauline Curnier Jardin** (b. 1980, France), currently a Rijksakademie resident in Amsterdam, creates fictional scenarios and theatrical narratives that are presented as installations, performances, films, drawings and objects. Through text, lighting, color, texture, costumes, soundtrack, and props she creates and inhabits highly stylized visual settings that recall the fascinating worlds of Niki de Saint Phalle and Alejandro Jodorowsky. Curnier Jardin graduated in 2006 from both École nationale supérieure d'arts (Cergy-Pontoise) and École nationale des arts décoratifs (Paris). Her work has been presented internationally at Fondation Cartier, Paris (2015); MIT List Visual Center, Cambridge (2014); Haus der

Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2013); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2012); Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris (2010) and ZKM Museum of Contemporary Art, Karlsruhe (2010).

**Jesper Just** (b. 1974 Copenhagen, Denmark) uses film technology and installation strategies as vehicles to create work that addresses complex contemporary issues through open-ended visual narratives rich in detail and metaphorical import. Just has works in over twenty-five museum collections internationally. Recently his work has been presented at Galleri Nicolai Wallner (Denmark); Portland Art Museum; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Seoul) and the Herring Museum of Contemporary Art (Denmark). Just represented Denmark at the 2013 Venice Biennale.

**Robin Rhode** (b. 1976, Cape Town; lives in Berlin) works with photography, performance, drawing, and sculpture to create arrestingly beautiful narratives that draw from a rich range of historical and contemporary references. Rhode has had solo exhibitions at Haus der Kunst, Munich (2007), Hayward Gallery, London (2008), White Cube, London (2008) and has been include in the 2005 Venice Biennale and in the 2012 Sydney Biennale. His work is included in the collections of numerous museums among them the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Studio Museum Harlem, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Johannesburg Art Gallery; Honart Museum Collection, Tehran; and Centre Pompidou, Paris, among others.

**Francesco Vezzoli** (b. 1971, Brescia, Italy) studied at the Central St. Martin's School of Art in London and currently lives and works in Milan. His work has been exhibited at many institutions including: "The Films of Francesco Vezzoli," The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2002); Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin (2002); Fondazione Prada, Milan (2004 & 2005); Museu Serralves, Porto (2005); Le Consortium, Dijon (2006); "Francesco Vezzoli: Right You Are If You Think You Are," a Performa Commission, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, "Marlene Redux: A True Hollywood Story (Part One)," Tate Modern, London (2006); "Dali Dali Featuring Francesco Vezzoli," Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2009–10); "Marlene Redux: A True Hollywood Story!" Kunsthalle Wien (2009); The Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow (2010); "Museum of Crying Women," Qatar Museums Authority, Doha; "The Trinity: Galleria Vezzoli," MAXXI, Rome, Italy (2013); and "The Trinity: Cinema Vezzoli," MOCA, Los Angeles (2014). Past performances include "Right You Are (If You Think You Are)," a Performa Commission, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (2007) and "Ballets Russes Italian Style (The Shortest Musical You Will Never See Again)," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2009).

**David Hallberg** (b. 1982, Rapid City, South Dakota) is an American classical ballet dancer. He is a principal dancer for the Bolshoi Ballet and American Ballet Theatre, and became the first American to become a principal dancer with the Bolshoi in 2011. Hallberg has danced all the leading male roles in the classical ballet repertoire. Including the Bolshoi and ABT, he has danced with almost every major company worldwide. Hallberg was a recipient of the Princess Grace Fellowship and the Chris Hellman Dance Award, and won the Benois de la Danse Award in 2010 in Moscow. Most recently he was awarded the Bell Foundation award for emerging artist from Americans for the Arts. At ABT, he has created the David Hallberg scholarship, mentoring emerging male dancers and The Innovation Initiative, a platform for emerging choreographic talent.