

**MoMA PS1 PRESENTS EXHIBITION OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST RALPH LEMON OPENING
NOVEMBER 14**

Monthly Performance Program Features Renowned Collaborators

LONG ISLAND CITY, New York, October 16, 2024—This fall, MoMA PS1 presents a major exhibition of artist Ralph Lemon (b. 1952, Cincinnati), featuring more than sixty artworks made over the last decade across disciplines, and a program of six collaborative performances, details of which are newly announced and included below. Opening on November 14, 2024, *Ceremonies Out of the Air: Ralph Lemon* comprises dance, large-scale video installation, drawings, photographs, sculpture, and paintings throughout the Museum’s expansive third-floor galleries, alongside a synchronous monthly program of live works in a dedicated performance space. One of the most significant figures to emerge from New York’s downtown scene in the 1980s, Lemon engages deeply with the legacies of postmodern dance in the US and the capacity for storytelling through movement—reflecting on the state of performance in the museum, on stage, in celebration, and in daily life. Together, Lemon’s works position the body as an archive of raw emotion, physical labor, and received histories to challenge the ways we have been taught to see the world.

Ceremonies Out of the Air highlights Lemon’s sustained collaborations across disciplines, materials, and time. The centerpiece of the exhibition is *Rant redux* (2020–24), a major four-channel video and sound installation realized with Kevin Beasley and based on the live performance *Rant* (2019–ongoing). Composed of layered movement, sound, and video, this energetic tour de force is enacted by some of the most influential artists working in performance today—including Beasley, Okwui Okpokwasili, Samita Sinha, Darrell Jones, and Lemon himself. Lemon describes *Rant redux*, planned and produced in New York City immediately prior to the COVID-19 lockdown, as an exploded documentary of a “very loud...Brown/Black body cultural experiment in rage, freedom, and/or ecstasy.” Another highlight of the exhibition is the first comprehensive presentation of his foundational *1856 Cessna Road* (2002–24), a cycle of videos, photographs, and artifacts made in close partnership with Walter Carter and his family. A former sharecropper—who lived through Jim Crow in the Cotton Belt town of Little Yazoo, Mississippi—Carter developed a series of “task-based para-performances” in response to Lemon’s choreographic instructions, which slowly transformed into a speculative science-fiction opus on the afterlife of historical violence, the intimacy of artistic collaboration, and biography as social history.

Bringing into focus works that resist broad classification, *Ceremonies Out of the Air* illustrates Lemon’s characteristic style of deflection, or what he calls “fugitivity.” His anarchic, movement-based works obliterate formalist conventions, skewer straightforward tellings of history, and consider how time and place materialize in muscle memory. Recording daily events from diasporic Black life and culture, Lemon’s works on paper conflate these narratives with renderings of recognizable artworks and fantastical imagery, as well as vibrant color. His video works riff on cult figures like artist Bruce Nauman and writer James Baldwin. Across media, these works shed new light on Lemon’s connected interests in the mundane and the infinite, in dedication and spiritual release.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Ralph Lemon is a choreographer, writer, and visual artist based in Brooklyn and Philadelphia. His work has been the subject of exhibitions at The Kitchen (2007/2015), Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans

(2008), Studio Museum in Harlem (2012) and the Walker Art Center (2006, 2014, 2024). At MoMA, he performed in the Museum's Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium for *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century* (2010); he organized the performance series *Some sweet day* (2012); and he led the discursive project *Value Talks* as an Annenberg Fellow (2013–14). MoMA published the first monograph on his oeuvre, *Ralph Lemon* (2016) in the Modern Dance series. Lemon is a recipient of three Bessie Awards (1986, 2005, 2016), two Foundation for Contemporary Art Awards (1986, 2012), a 2009 Guggenheim Fellowship and Doris Duke Performing Artist Award (2012). In 2015, he received a National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama. He is a 2018 recipient of the Heinz Family Foundation Award and a 2020 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. Lemon won the Bucksbaum Award for his contribution to the 2022 Whitney Biennial. His works are in the permanent collections of institutions including the Walker Art Center, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

The *Ceremonies Out of the Air* performance program includes several world and New York City premieres of Lemon's newest works, which anchor the exhibition's explorations of generosity, mortality, devotion, Blackness, and joy. All performances are free with RSVP. Tickets are released two weeks prior to each event. For more info and to reserve, visit mo.ma/lemon.

Tell it anyway

November 14 and 16, 2024

The New York premiere of Lemon's latest performance *Tell it anyway* opens the exhibition. Lemon and his collaborators weave abstract movement and song lyrics into an explosive examination of memory, race, and impermanence. With music composed by Kevin Beasley, *Tell it anyway* was commissioned by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Performers: Kevin Beasley, Dwayne Brown, Paul Hamilton, Darrell Jones, Ralph Lemon, Lysis (Ley), April Matthis, Mariama Nougera-Devers, Okwui Okpokwasili, Angie Pittman, Samita Sinha, with Timothy Angulo

Untitled (The greatest [Black] art history story ever told. Unfinished), Interpreted

December 14, 2024 | Daphne Brooks

January 11, 2025 | Bob Hoffnar

February 15, 2025 | Will Rawls

March 8, 2024 | Saidiya Hartman

For these talks, invited guests respond to Ralph Lemon's narrative epic, *Untitled (The greatest [Black] art history story ever told. Unfinished)* (2015–), a layered and colorful series of works on paper. Lemon notes the series deals "with charged places, architecture, and people historically and presently, and also in some sort of illusory future, and none of that is going to stop." Participating artists, writers, theorists, and performers will each read or "interpret" Lemon's abstract narrative from their distinct point of view.

In Proximity

January 16, 18, 19*, 2025

*Brass Band only

Originally commissioned for the exhibition *Bruce Nauman: Contrapposto Studies* at Palazzo Grassi - Punta della Dogana, *In Proximity* makes its US premiere at MoMA PS1. Developed from Lemon's research into movement, text, and sound in non-dance spaces, the performance extends his dialogue/argument with the performative sculptural practice of artist Bruce Nauman. The work features an original score and sound design realized in collaboration with Philip White. At MoMA PS1, *In Proximity* includes a prelude by the Brass Band, who virtuosically abstract music from the New Orleans jazz tradition.

Performers: Darrell Jones, Lysis (Ley), Jimena Paz, Samita Sinha
Brass Band: Bantu Al-Abu, Warren "Trae" Crudup III, Kalia Vandever, Chris Ryan Williams

Low

February 20 and 22, 2025

The world premiere of *Low* marks an unfolding of twenty years of collaboration between Ralph Lemon and dancer Darrell Jones. The duet embodies a physical exploration of the energy that comes after exertion, in the wake of performance—the transition from fury and exhaustion to something beyond.

Performers: Ralph Lemon, Darrell Jones

Ceremonies Out of the Air

March 1, 2025

Ceremonies Out of the Air encompasses an artist talk by Ralph Lemon that concludes several narrative ideas in the films and objects of the *Walter Carter Suite*, on view in the exhibition. This world premiere features an extended solo performance by dancer Darrell Jones.

Performers: Ralph Lemon, Darrell Jones

Rant #6

March 22, 2025

MoMA PS1 presents *Rant #6*, the latest (and perhaps final) iteration of Ralph Lemon's collaborative work that debuted in 2019. Each performance is conceived as what Lemon calls "a very loud site-specific sound, movement, voice, Brown/Black body cultural experiment in rage, freedom and or ecstasy..." In *Rant #6*, voice, text, and trance movement collide into a whirlwind of exhaustion and emphatic resistance.

Performers: Kevin Beasley, Dwayne Brown, Paul Hamilton, Darrell Jones, Ralph Lemon, Lysis (Ley), Mariama Noguera-Devers, Okwui Okpokwasili, Angie Pittman, Samita Sinha, and invited guests

PUBLICATION

MoMA PS1

22-25 Jackson Ave
Long Island City
NY 11101
momaps1.org

A full-color publication accompanies the exhibition and includes essays by the exhibition's curators, Connie Butler and Thomas Lax, as well as newly commissioned essays, texts, and contributions by Kevin Beasley, Adrienne Edwards, Darrell Jones, Ralph Lemon, Okwui Okpokwasili, Pope.L, Kevin Quashie, and Kari Rittenbach. As a "devotional" handbook for the PS1 show, *Ceremonies Out of the Air* traces the arc of Lemon's ongoing collaborations, and features a dust jacket that unfolds into a poster. The publication is distributed by Artbook | D.A.P. / Distributed Art Publishers and available for \$30.

CREDIT

Ceremonies Out of the Air: Ralph Lemon is organized by Connie Butler, Director, MoMA PS1, and Thomas Lax, Curator, Department of Media and Performance, MoMA, with Kari Rittenbach, Assistant Curator, MoMA PS1.

SUPPORT

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Ford Foundation

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ABOUT MoMA PS1

MoMA PS1 champions art and artists at the intersection of the social, cultural, and political issues of our time. Providing audiences with the agency to ask questions, access to knowledge, and a forum for public debate, PS1 has offered insight into artists' diverse worldviews for more than 40 years. Founded in 1976 by Alanna Heiss, the institution was a defining force in the alternative space movement in New York City, transforming a nineteenth century public schoolhouse in Long Island City into a site for artistic experimentation and creativity. PS1 has been a member of New York City's Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) since 1982 and affiliated with The Museum of Modern Art since 2000.

Hours: MoMA PS1 is open from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Sunday, and Monday, and 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturdays. Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

MoMA PS1

22-25 Jackson Ave
Long Island City
NY 11101
momaps1.org

Admission: \$10 suggested admission; \$5 for students and senior citizens; free for New York State residents and MoMA members. Free admission for New York State residents is made possible by The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. Tickets may be reserved online at mo.ma/ps1tickets.

Visitor Guide: Discover even more from MoMA PS1 with the Bloomberg Connects app. Read wall text, hear directly from artists, and uncover the building's history with this multimedia visitor guide. This digital experience is made possible through the support of Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Directions: MoMA PS1 is located at 22-25 Jackson Avenue at 46th Ave in Long Island City, Queens, across the Queensboro Bridge from midtown Manhattan. Traveling by subway, take the E, M, or 7 to Court Sq; or the G to Court Sq or 21 St Van Alst. By bus, take the Q67 to Jackson and 46th Ave or the B62 to 46th Ave.

Information: For general inquiries, call (718) 784-2084 or visit moma.org/ps1.

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