

# PS1

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

**LONG ISLAND CITY, New York, March 21, 2024**—This fall, MoMA PS1 will present a major exhibition of artist Ralph Lemon (b. 1952, Cincinnati), featuring more than forty artworks made over the last decade across disciplines, and a program of six collaborative performances. Opening on November 14, 2024, *Ceremonies Out of the Air: Ralph Lemon* comprises dance, drawings, photographs, sculpture, paintings, and video throughout the Museum’s expansive third-floor galleries, alongside a synchronous program of live works staged in a dedicated performance space. One of the most significant figures to emerge from New York’s downtown scene in the 1990s, 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 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.

The expansive *Ceremonies Out of the Air* dance program includes several New York City and US premieres of Lemon’s newest choreographies, which anchor the exhibition’s explorations of generosity, devotion, Blackness, and joy. The opening weekend will feature an ensemble presentation of *Untitled (Tell it anyway)* (2024), commissioned and premiered by the Walker Art Center, and made in collaboration with Beasley, Okpokwasili, Sinha, Jones, April Matthis, Paul Hamilton, Mariama Nougera-Devers, Dwayne Brown, Angie Pittman, Roderick Murray, Mike Taylor, and Ley Gambucci. In spring 2025, a special presentation of *Rant #6* will transpose the cinematic suspension of the *Rant redux* installation back into real time. A full schedule of performances will be announced in the lead-up to the exhibition.

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

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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.

The exhibition also features several direct interventions by invited guests who will respond to Lemon's drawing series *Untitled (The Greatest [Black] Art History Ever Told)* (2015–present). MoMA PS1 will publish a companion catalogue to the exhibition, with contributions by theorists, artists, and collaborators.

Ralph Lemon is a choreographer, writer, and visual artist based in 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 (2014). At MoMA, he performed in the Museum's Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium for *On Line: Drawing in the 20th 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, *Modern Dance* (2016). 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, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Museum of Modern Art.

*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

Major support for *Ceremonies Out of the Air: Ralph Lemon* is provided by Sarah Arison and the Ford Foundation.

## Ford Foundation

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Additional support is provided by anonymous, James Keith (JK) Brown and Eric Diefenbach, and Zenas Hutcheson. Funding is also provided by the Harkness Foundation for Dance, Katherine Sachs, and Catharine and Jeffrey Soros.

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**MoMA**

**MoMA PS1**  
22-25 Jackson Ave  
Long Island City, NY 11101

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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.

**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](https://www.moma.org/ps1/tickets).  
**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](https://www.moma.org/ps1).

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