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taisha paggett with WXPT:
The School for the Movement of the Technicolor People
In collaboration with Ashley Hunt and Kim Zumpfe
Curated by Robert Crouch



Opening reception: Wednesday October 21, 2015 – 7-10PM

Exhibition: October 21-December 6, 2015

LACE presents *The School for the Movement of the Technicolor People*, a large-scale installation and performance platform by Los Angeles based artist **taisha paggett**. This project, which takes the form of a dance school, is shaped by the question, “what is a Black dance curriculum today?” The installation itself, developed in collaboration with artists **Ashley Hunt** and **Kim Zumpfe**, serves as a temporary dance school, performance space and home for dance company, **WXPT** (We are the Paper, We are the Trees).

The core of *The School for the Movement of the Technicolor People* is WXPT itself — a temporary, experimental community of queer people of color and allies, dancers and non-dancers alike. WXPT was conceived by paggett in early 2015 to expand upon the language and methods of modern and contemporary dance practices, to shift the ways dancers of color are positioned within the contemporary field, and to explore questions of queer desire, responsibility, migration and historical materials that inhabit our cultural imagination. The company consists of Joy Angela Anderson, Heyward Bracey, Rebecca Bruno, Alfonso Cervera, Erin Christovale, Loren Fenton, Maria Garcia, Kloii “Hummingbird” Hollis, Jas Michelle, Meena Murugesan, taisha paggett, Sebastian Peters-Lazaro, Kristianne Salcines, Ché Ture, Devika Wickremesinghe and Suné Woods.

In May of 2015, paggett organized *evereachmore*, WXPT’s premiere performance created for the Bowtie Project, a partnership between Clockshop and California State Parks to activate an 18-acre post-industrial lot along the LA River. Amidst the recent unfolding of state violence against Black bodies, *evereachmore* sought to forge new economies of resistance, and new sensations of time, space and togetherness.

Inspired in part by a “school for colored youth” that members of paggett’s family founded in early 20th century East Texas, *The School for the Movement of the Technicolor People* extends the praxis of WXPT into a curriculum and pedagogy. The installation at LACE takes up the form of a school as an artistic and social problem, building the school’s curriculum and infrastructure through physical and social sculpture, performance and image, where the roles of artist and viewer, dancing and non-dancing body, art and learning coalesce.

The School for the Movement of the Technicolor People will offer a program of workshops, weekly classes and micro-performances initiated by members of WXPT. The curriculum will be open to anyone, blurring lines between audience and participant, while especially encouraging queer people of color to join. Across the bodies of the company and the members of the public who join the school, the curriculum will build an accumulative performance score in weekly increments, culminating in the performance of a “collective movement choir” at the conclusion of the exhibition.

The School for the Movement of the Technicolor People began as a conversation between paggett, Rodney McMillian and Cauleen Smith.

Image: Courtesy of Clockshop by Gina Clyne.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

taisha paggett's work for the stage, gallery and public space includes individual and collaborative inquiries into the body, agency, and the phenomenology of race and gender. Her projects seek to expand upon the languages and frames of contemporary dance practices, and the limitations of the architecture of conventional dance spaces. Her works include solo and ensemble performance, sculptural installation, and participation as a dancer in the work of other artists and choreographers.

paggett's work has been presented in the 2014 Whitney Biennial, at the Studio Museum in Harlem, Danspace at St Mark's Church (New York); in the Quadruple Consciousness exhibition at Vox Populi (Philadelphia); at Defibrillator (Chicago); and Commonwealth & Council. As a dancer, paggett has worked with artists and projects including Every House Has a Door, Yael Davids, Kelly Nipper, David Roussève/Reality, Meg Wolfe, Vic Marks, Cid Pearlman, Cheng-Chieh Yu, and with Ashley Hunt in their ongoing collaboration, "On Movement, Thought and Politics." A recent recipient of a Headlands artist residency, a UCIRA grant and a MAP Fund grant, paggett is part of the full-time dance faculty at UC Riverside.

Ashley Hunt is interested in how images, objects, maps, writing and performance can engage social ideas and actions, including those of social movements, daily life, the exercise of political power, and the disciplinary boundaries that separate our art worlds from the larger worlds in which they sit. His work looks to structures that allow people to accumulate power, and those which keep others from getting it, while learning from the ways people come to know, contribute to or resist these structures. Rather than seeing art and activism as two exclusive spheres of practice, he approaches them as mutual and complementary — drawing upon the ideas and aesthetics of social movements, cultural theory and art alike, the theorizing and practices of each informing the other.

Recent exhibitions and performances include Cue Art Foundation, Threewalls Gallery in Chicago, The Kitchen in New York, the 2012 Made in L.A. Biennial of the Hammer Museum, Sinopale 4 biennale in Sinop, Turkey, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tate Modern in London, Woodbourne State Correctional Institute in upstate New York, Putnamville Correctional Institution in Indiana, and numerous grassroots and community venues throughout the U.S. Recent writing has appeared in X-TRA Contemporary Art Quarterly (2014), Native Strategies issue 4 (2014), Shifter Magazine #20 (2013). Hunt co-directs the Program in Photography and Media at California Institute of the Arts and is on the faculty of the Visual Arts MFA program at Vermont College of Fine Arts.

Kim Zumpfe is an artist and educator who lives and works in California. She works with images, objects, text, installation, collaborative structures, and exhibitions. In these various media, she is engaged with relationships between the ideological body and subjectivity in locations where multiple bodies develop, displace, produce, and forget to maintain boundaries and relations. Through modes of transformation, she investigates where borders within form disperse – in the body, subjectivity, and politicized space, as a way to interrogate encounters where collapse of identity, intimacy, responsibility, and power structures overlap.

Her work has been exhibited at Culver Center for the Arts Riverside, Visual Arts Center Fullerton, University Art Gallery Irvine, University Art Museum Long Beach, and several public and online sites. She is a member of Emily O, a free-floating artist collective that questions the relationship between individual and collective processes and identity through organizing exhibitions.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Robert Crouch is an artist and curator whose work encompasses sound, performance, and technology. As an artist, he locates his work with the intersection of post-phenomenological listening practices, conceptual sound art, and contemporary electronic music. At its core, his work can be understood as a conversation between tonality, context, history and subjectivities. Similarly, Crouch's curatorial work focuses on the overlapping disciplines of sound, technology, movement, and performance.

In 2014 he organized the North American premiere of *Sphæræ*, a large-scale inflatable performance space and public artwork by Dutch artist Cocky Eek. He is currently co-curating *Juan Downey: Radiant Nature*, a survey of early interactive and performance work of the late Chilean artist as part of the Getty initiative, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA.

Crouch is the former Associate Director/Curator at LACE, where he curated solo exhibitions with artists Karen Lofgren, Gina Osterloh, Steve Roden, Sean Sullivan, and Margo Victor, and performances with artists including William Basinski, Celer, Lawrence English, Dominick Fernow, and Yann Marussich. He is also the founding partner of VOLUME, a curatorial project that functions as a catalyst for interdisciplinary new media work through exhibitions, performances, events, lectures, and publications, and has worked with a wide range of artists including William Basinski, Nate Boyce, Frank Bretschneider, Richard Chartier, Heather Cassils, Celer, Loren Chasse, William Fowler Collins, Tim Hecker, Isis, France Jobin, Kadet Kuhne, Lucky Dragons, Mamiffer, Carsten Nicolai, Yann Novak, taisha paggett, Steve Roden, Terre Thaemlitz, Julie Tolentino, and Christopher Willits.

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