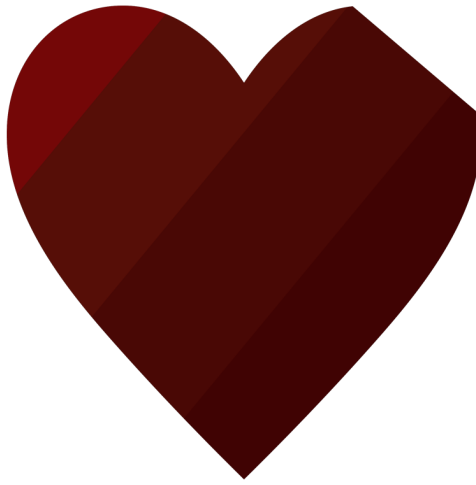


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**PERFORMANCE SPACE NEW YORK PRESENTS DOZIE KANU'S *BLOOD TYPE*,
BEGINNING OCTOBER 15 (OPEN THURSDAYS - SUNDAYS, 12-6 PM)**

***Blood Type* Launches Performance Space New York's *Open Room*, a Program that Envisions New Ways
of Creating Public Space Within its Lobby**

**Artist-Organized Performance Series *Octopus* Restarts with Kanu Bringing Multidisciplinary Artists
Dawuna, Valerie Franco & Caroline Sultzer, Matt Hilvers, and Elliot Reed Together for an Evening of
Performances, October 19 at 7pm**

Performance Space New York presents visual artist **Dozie Kanu's *Blood Type***, an exhibition of individual works that coalesce into an immersive environment. Beginning October 15 and open to the public Thursdays through Sunday from 12pm to 6pm, *Blood Type* inaugurates Performance Space's ***Open Room*** program, which creates publicly accessible space within its lobby (150 1st Ave, 4th floor). Kanu's art teases and disrupts functionality, and reforms the familiar with jarring, culturally evocative materials. In this exhibition, Kanu returns to his world-building origins studying production design, constructing a singular and insinuating environment drawing on the banal simultaneity of welcome, alienation, and discomfort that pervades coworking spaces. Chairs, stools, a worktable become sculptural works embedded with the artist's probing inquiries into fraught, autobiographically-resonant substances.

Kanu will organize *Octopus: An Evening Inside of Blood Type* (October 19 at 7pm; tickets available [here](#)), with various artists, including **Dawuna, Valerie Franco & Caroline Sultzer, Matt Hilvers, and Elliot Reed**. Tickets for *Octopus* are available [here](#).

In *Blood Type*, the room is softened and soaked in dark tones. A work table snakes down the wall, onto the floor, across the room, back onto the floor, across the room. An array of stools are lined up, free to be taken and used. On the walls, framed images simultaneously transcribe and obscure demarcations of identity and history, displayed in a room enveloped in a sanguine opacity. Anachronistic shapes sourced from Portugal, Nigeria, and America loosely trace their entangled past. Throughout the work, Kanu investigates and evades external signifiers of location and identity, presenting them in tension with the primally personal medium of blood.

Kanu—born in Houston, TX to Nigerian immigrant parents, and currently residing in a warehouse he renovated in rural Portugal—offers up history and autobiography as a gathering space: to be filled with performance and visitors, each bringing multitudes of interpretation to its charged surfaces.

Open Room

Inspired, in large part, by Brujas' Free Crib (in 2020) and niv Acosta and Fannie Sosa's *Black Power Naps* (in 2019), and organized by Performance Space New York Head of Community Access and Inclusion **Ana Beatriz Sepúlveda** (in a newly created position that emerged from the future-oriented, artist-led year-long project *02020*), Open Room is a place for collective and individual gathering. Although lobbies are typically defined as transitional waiting spaces, Performance Space New York's lobby (on the building's 4th floor) is intended as a continuous, open, communal, and accessible space for people to create, work, stay still, or pass through—to make community and allow for community to define the space and its use. It offers an alternative in a neighborhood where access to indoor space to sit and commune often requires some form of purchase.

Ana Beatriz Sepúlveda says, "This was largely inspired by *02020* and Free Crib, which pushed us to really prioritize opening the lobby up as a public space in a way that would set the tone, the culture, and the inner workings of Performance Space overall. With *Blood Type* beginning *Open Room*, the use of the space will be defined by people navigating the invitations and constraints of Dozie's works—not to mention how we're navigating offering 'public space' amidst an ongoing pandemic, and responsively adjusting as needed. What's exciting is wondering, a year from now when perhaps the installation or exhibition changes, how will people again give new use and meaning to the space? The continuing rotation means the public will have something to come and redefine on their own terms."

Performance Space New York Executive Artistic Director Jenny Schlenzka says, "*02020* was the first time we asked our community, 'what would you really do with our spaces?'— and gave them the resources to do it. Free Crib was the first thing Brujas—whose members grew up in Downtown NYC—came up with; they said 'we and our peers need actual space.' And they went to Material for the Arts, grabbed whatever they could find, loaded it into a Uhaul and slammed it in. The space became immediately alive. Open Room seeks to emulate that energy; we have no idea what's going to happen; I have no idea how people will use the space—it's exciting."

As Performance Space New York continues to consider new ways of reclaiming the institution as a public space, *Open Room* launches alongside a new version of ***Open Movement***, organized by **Monica Mirabile**. *Open Movement* provides free open space in the organization's theaters every Sunday from 10am-6pm, inviting everybody and any/body to join for lo-fi rehearsals and creative cross-pollination, with no reservations necessary (beginning October 17).

Covid-19 Safety Protocol

Performance Space New York is happy to welcome back the public to their theater spaces. In an effort to keep their audience safe and in compliance with New York City's vaccine mandate, all visitors 12 years of age and older must show proof of a COVID-19 vaccination. Accepted proof of vaccination includes NYC COVID Safe app, New York State Excelsior Pass, CDC Vaccination Card (or photo), or NYC Vaccination Record.

Please take a look at [Performance Space's safety guidelines](#) to help you prepare for your visit.

About Dozie Kanu

Dozie Kanu (Houston, Texas, 1993) is presently based in Santarém, Portugal. He graduated from the School of Visual Arts in 2016. His research focuses on an idea of sculpture that looks at the production of objects in which a tension between their use and their history, memory and materiality is embedded. His singular visual language criticizes western art history canons, subtly and elegantly revealing in the objects narratives involving colonialism and identity, focusing on their diasporic condition. Selected solo and two person exhibitions include: to prop and ignore, Manual Arts, Los Angeles, California. value order [[gentrify.pt](#)], Galeria Madragoa, Lisbon, Portugal. Recoil (with Cudelice Brazelton IV), International Waters, Brooklyn, New York, 2020; Owe Deed, One Deep, Project Native Informant, London, 2020; FUNCTION, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, 2019. Selected group exhibitions include Enzo Mari, curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Triennale Milano, 2020; Crack Up – Crack Down, Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw, 2020; Transformer: A Rebirth of Wonder, 180 The Strand, London, 2019; Midtown, organized by Salon 94 and Maccarone Gallery, Lever House, New York, 2017.

About Performance Space New York

At Performance Space New York, artists shed the confines of genre and form, building worlds that reveal new potentials and alternate futures for art and society. Here, performance art, dance, theater, music, visual art, poetry and prose, ritual, partying, food, film, and technology spill into one another in vital interdisciplinary offerings. The organization believes that artists and culture are at the forefront of social change and political engagement, and that performance has a particular ability to address, critique, and transcend our precarious moment and challenge its oppressive politics.

When Performance Space turned 40, it took steps to reconceive artists' place in relationship to, and within, the institution. These included: building an artist-populated board that places artists at the center of everything Performance Space does; the *02020* project, a year of revisioning institutional

structures, with a cohort of salaried artists (Janice Amaya; members of BRUJAS Arianna Gil, Dada Coz, Sarah Snider, and Ripley Soprano; Jonathan González; Monica Mirabile; and The New Red Order, with core contributors Adam Khalil, Zack Khalil, and Jackson Polys) working side-by-side with the organization's staff and project-initiator Sarah Michelson. In 2021, Performance Space continues its work with many *02020* members to further consider how to make artists central to all facets of the institution and reshape the vision and strategic plan for the future by **building systems** for access, equitable employment, and life-affirming institutional practices.

Aware of the art world's sweeping history of exclusion and canonic myopia, as well as how our city and country's entrenched racism and wealth inequality create severe gaps in access, the organization uncompromisingly seeks to serve and create space for diverse communities and artists. As New York's relentless gentrification and development prices people out of having the time and space to create with and engage one another, Performance Space New York fervently aims to foster a future-focused collectivity by providing space for lasting social and intellectual encounters, participation, and experimentation.

Founded in 1980 (as Performance Space 122) by a tight-knit group of artists wielding the political momentum of self-expression amidst the intensifying American culture wars, Performance Space is the birthplace of contemporary performance as it is known today—and an incubator for how it will be known tomorrow.

Performance Space New York pays respect to the Lenape ancestors past, present, and future. The organization acknowledges that the work of Performance Space is situated on the Lenape island of Manhahtaan (Mannahatta) and more broadly in Lenapehoking, the Lenape homeland.

Press Contact

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