

Heavy handed, we crush the moment

A performance commission by Last Yearz Interesting Negro

The Pit, Barbican, London

Thursday 28 November – Sunday 1 December 2019

#heavyhanded @barbicancentre

This November Barbican Art Gallery presents ***Heavy handed, we crush the moment***, a new commission by **Last Yearz Interesting Negro**, the performance project of London-based artist and dancer **Jamila Johnson-Small**.

Dance, darkness and bass frequencies – *Heavy handed, we crush the moment* is an immersive experience, somewhere between a dreamscape, a meditation, a nightmare and a nightclub. Over four evenings, Last Yearz Interesting Negro presents a series of genre-blurring happenings. The Pit is transformed into a sculptural landscape – an installation created in collaboration with design collective **Studio Augmenta**, sound designer **Josh Anio Grigg** and lighting designer **Jackie Shemesh**.

Last Yearz Interesting Negro will stage a new choreographic work performed with **Fernanda Muñoz-Newsome**, with sound by **Rowdy SS** and set and costumes by **AGF Hydra**, featuring new music by **+TETRA+**, **ABENÇOADA**, **Andrew Kerton & Hannah Holland**, **Verity Susman**, **Young Nettle** and **Rebecca Bellantoni**. This work unfolds over the course of each evening, acting as an environment to host interventions by guest artists including **keyon gaskin**, **Trembling Collaborations (A. Livingstone with Mich Cota)**, musician and DJ **Planningtorock**, and more to be announced. The commission forms the final part of a trilogy of performances known as *FURY* (the first two works are *Fury1* and *Fury2*).

Focusing on the sensory impact of the live encounter for performers and audience alike, *Heavy handed, we crush the moment* is an invitation to reflect on boundaries, intimacy, spectacle and the inevitability of movement. Last Yearz Interesting Negro and collaborators create a charged atmosphere through sound, light, set and live performance.

Working from the potential of dance as a radical social practice, this performance commission is a contemporary response to the Barbican exhibition *Into the Night: Cabarets and Clubs in Modern Art* (4 October 2019 – 19 January 2020).

Last Yearz Interesting Negro/Jamila Johnson-Small said: *"This constellation of encounters will offer a climate of intensities and sensation, a sonic environment that facilitates shifting states of dancing and being as performances swell, spill and subside through the course of each evening. I am thinking about a choreographic space that is both social and meditative, reflective and relational, that allows space for varying relationships to linear time and coherence; a gathering of energies - both held and unravelling - formed between the works of different artists and a public as we meet the moment."*

Jane Alison, Head of Visual Arts said: *"London's own Jamila Johnson-Small is undoubtedly one of the most exciting experimental performers working at the intersection of dance and art and we're delighted to have commissioned her most ambitious work yet. The gallery has a long history of exhibiting radical performance, including Trajal Harrell: Hoochie Koochie in 2017, Ragnar Kjartansson in 2016, and Laurie Anderson, Trisha Brown and Gordon Matta Clark: Pioneers of the Downtown Scene, New York 1970s in 2011. Creating a late-night event for the Barbican's studio theatre, The Pit, in association with our art gallery exhibition Into the Night: Cabarets and Clubs in Modern Art, I have no doubt that this performance will be an absolute 'must-see'."*

Last Yearz Interesting Negro is the performance project of London-based artist and dancer Jamila Johnson-Small. Johnson-Small works from the idea of dance as a radical, social practice, using interior landscapes – emotional, physiological, psychic – as material and strategy for performance.

In her work, bodies of public and performer(s) are navigated as object, animal, human, machine, environment and energy, noting, utilising and steering movements of power in spaces to build atmospheres created by the live unfolding of the tensions between things that create meaning.

Johnson-Small has recently presented work at Siobhan Davies Studios, London; Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich; Kaaistudios, Brussels, as part of Performatik19; Cafe Oto, London; Vooruit, Ghent; Borealis festival, Bergen; The Yard, London; Nuit Blanche, Paris; Buenos Tiempos Int., online; Konsthall C, Stockholm; Baltic Triennial, Tallinn; ImPulsTanz, Vienna; ICA, London; Block Universe, London; Tramway as part of Take Me Somewhere, Glasgow; The Showroom, London; and Silencio, Paris. In 2018 Jamila undertook residencies at Palais de Tokyo and Wysing Arts Centre. In 2019 she is recipient of the Arts Foundation Futures Award Fellowship in Visual Art and the second Torchlight Artist with Siobhan Davies Dance.

Notes to Editors

Press Information

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Full press pack available online from the Barbican Newsroom:

Links to all documents can be found in the 'Downloads' box on the top right-hand side of the page from www.barbican.org.uk/HeavyHandedNews

Public Information

Performance dates: Thursday 28 November – Sunday 1 December 2019

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0845 120 7550, www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery

Ticket Prices:

£5 plus booking fee (70p on the phone, 60p online, free in person)

Tickets go on sale in September 2019.

For more information on Barbican membership please visit;

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/membership>

Important Notes

Performance times, running times and age guidance to be confirmed

Into the Night: Cabarets and Clubs in Modern Art

4 October 2019 – 19 January 2020, Barbican Art Gallery

Media View: Thursday 3 October 2019, 10am – 1pm

Into the Night: Cabarets and Clubs in Modern Art explores the electrifying history of cabarets, cafés and clubs in modern art across the world, from London to New York, Paris, Mexico City, Berlin, Vienna, and Ibadan. Spanning the 1880s to the 1960s, the exhibition celebrates the creativity of the spaces in which artists, performers, designers, musicians and writers congregated to push the boundaries of artistic expression. The exhibition offers insight into the immersive Cabaret Fledermaus in turn-of-the-century Vienna; the heady atmosphere of Berlin clubs in Weimar Germany; the pulsating energy of the jazz scene in Harlem, New York; the vibrant context of the Mbari clubs in 1960s Nigeria; and more.

For information and images please visit: www.barbican.org.uk/IntoTheNightNews

Barbican Art Gallery and The Curve

Our visual arts programme embraces art, architecture, design, fashion, photography and film. Many of our exhibitions explore the interconnections between disciplines, periods and cultures, and aim to imagine the world in new ways. Designers, artists and architects are our collaborators in this process.

We invest in the artists of today and tomorrow; The Curve is one of the few galleries in London devoted to the commissioning of new work. Through our activities we aim to inspire more people to discover and love the arts. Entrance to The Curve is free. Through Young Barbican we offer £5 tickets to 14-25 year olds for our paid exhibitions, children under 14 are free.

Our exhibitions are complemented by comprehensively researched catalogues and a full range of public events. We develop engaging online content for audiences and offer special tours for schools. In partnership with renowned museums and art galleries, many of our exhibitions travel to reach both national and international audiences.

About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over a million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas 1, 2 and 3, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, public spaces, a library, the Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). The [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#) are the Barbican's International Orchestral Partner, the [Australian Chamber Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court, and [Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble.

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