



Photo: Johanna Austin

MODUPÚE : IBAYE

The Philadelphia Yoruba Performance Project

MEDIA ARCHIVE EXHIBITION

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12 - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

Icebox at Crane Arts, 1400 N. American St, Philadelphia, PA 19122

MODUPÚE : IBAYE

The Philadelphia Yoruba Performance Project

Modupúe | Ibaye activates performance as research, engaging intimately with community historians, local masters, and spiritual and cultural practitioners to trace the history, diversity, and intensity of Yoruba-rooted performance practice in Philadelphia. Over the two-year project arc, the living and embodied histories of these traditions transform into public events as dynamic and vibrant as the Philadelphia Yoruba communities in which they exist.



Photo: Aidan Un



Photo: Johanna Austin

WHAT IS YORÙBÁ?

Yorùbá is an ethnic group, a culture, a religious/spiritual practice, a language, and artistic aesthetic. Through forced migration (transatlantic slave trade), Yorùbá spread from West Africa to the Western Hemisphere, and grew distinctive branches as it rooted in Cuba, Haiti, Brazil, Puerto Rico, West Indies, and other places, creating an African diasporic pantheon. Since the mid-20th century, Philadelphia has become an increasingly significant location for absorption, preservation, evolution, and transmission of Yoruba-rooted practice and thought.

WHY IS THIS CALLED MODUPÚE | IBAYE: THE PHILADELPHIA YORUBA PERFORMANCE PROJECT?

In the Yoruba language, “Modupúe” means thank you, and “Ibaye” is a salutation to ancestors. Our approach to this project is based on our belief that performative research - inquiry strategies that are embodied, sensory, and immediate - is the best way to locate and explore the extensive and diverse web of Yoruba practice in Philadelphia. We believe that the best way to recognize Philadelphia’s historical and current Yoruba landscape is to use means that are performative, communal, and immersive, such as story circles, song and movement workshops, and exploratory artist residencies.

HOW DOES MODUPÚE | IBAYE SERVE INTERCULTURAL JOURNEYS’ MISSION?

Intercultural Journeys’ mission serves to forge cultural connections by working at the intersection of arts and dialogue, and activating spaces for artistic exchange and community engagement. *Modupúe | Ibaye* has been a catalyst for new programming approaches that deepen relationships with specific cultural communities through both performance and dialogue, enhancing IJ’s growth over the course of this two-year project. By focusing on Philadelphia’s diverse Yoruba-rooted communities, *Modupúe | Ibaye* becomes an opportunity for those communities to celebrate with one another and share the complexity, beauty and power of Yoruba performative culture.

IN GRATITUDE

We are indebted to all the Philadelphia Yoruba-rooted community members and ambassadors who generously contributed their time and stories to this project over the past two years. We also thank our Community Ambassadors for their guidance, our Study Group Advisors for their valuable insight, and Intercultural Journeys’ Board of Directors for their ongoing support.

The Media Archive Exhibition is a dynamic presentation of deeply personal stories and images gathered and archived during the 2-year arc of Modupúe | Ibaye: The Philadelphia Yoruba Performance Project. Crafted by Project Artistic Co-Directors Lela Aisha Jones and Alex Shaw in collaboration with Project Advisor Germaine Ingram and celebrated media artists Laura Sofía Pérez, Aidan Un, and muthi reed, this immersive exhibition artistically displays projections in conjunction with soundscapes that reflect the movement, music, history, and material culture of Yoruba-rooted communities in Philadelphia.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2019

4 - 9 PM

6 pm

SECOND THURSDAYS @ CRANE ARTS
Media Archive Exhibition Grand Opening

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2019

4 - 9 PM

6 pm



PERFORMANCE: YORUBA EGUNGUN MASQUERADE

A live Yoruba Egungun masquerade performance to pay tribute and honor the community's ancestors. Egungun refers to the traditions of Yoruba masquerades connected with ancestor reverence, grounded in the belief that the ancestors have the responsibility to compel the living to uphold the ethical standards of the past generations.

6:30 pm



LECTURE & DISCUSSION: SACRED GROVES: DIASPORIC ROOTS, PHILADELPHIA TRADITIONS*
(DR. NZINGA METZGER)

A riveting lecture and guided discussion by Dr. Nzinga Metzger grounds us in the histories and collective catalysts that have given birth to and sustained the numerous and diverse sects of Yoruba-rooted and diasporic sacred groves cultivated in Philadelphia over generations. Dr. Metzger is the *Modúpúe | Ibaye* Scholar-In-Residence, and author of the dissertation *Life in the Banyan Branches: African Americans and Órísá Traditions in Philadelphia*.

Spanish and Portuguese interpreter onsite

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2019

12 - 9 PM

1 pm



OPENING CEREMONY: PHILADELPHIA LIVING TREASURES

In the spirit of Philadelphia's evocative diasporic Yoruba rooted lineages of processing and parading, this opening ceremony features live performative activations by some of our most vibrant artists and ensembles including Timbalona, Troupe Da Da, and the Women's Sekere Ensemble.

3 pm



COMMUNITY DIALOGUE: BEYOND/WITHIN THE SACRED: YORUBA TRADITIONS, POP CULTURE, AND CONTEMPORARY ART* (ARIELLE JULIA BROWN)

Future reaching and seeking, this facilitated community dialogue opens space for the public to consider Philadelphia's Yoruba-rooted histories of art-making alongside the work of pop/contemporary artists manifesting fresh vibrations of ancient practices. What are triumphs and traumas around spiritual traditions becoming a part of the secular creative sector and the arts and entertainment economy? How is this work done with respect and integrity? What are the implications of incorporating references to spiritual traditions in contemporary and popular arts practice and performance?

*Spanish and Portuguese interpreter onsite

6 pm



CLOSING CEREMONY: TIMELESSNESS OF OBATALA - KÙLÚ MÈLÉ AFRICAN DANCE AND DRUM ENSEMBLE

Juxtaposed with glorious archival film of "Obatala" by the Arthur Hall Afro-American Dance Ensemble, a stunning live performance of "Obatala" by Philadelphia's renowned Kùlú Mèlé African Dance and Drum Ensemble, led by Artistic Director Dorothy Wilkie, connects the past to the present. Obatala is an orisha entity and energy in the Yoruba spiritual pantheon, considered to be the embodiment of collective consciousness and the manifestation of purity and righteousness among humanity.



SPEAKERS & PERFORMERS

ARIELLE JULIA BROWN

Arielle Julia Brown is a creative producer, social practice artist and dramaturg. Emerging from her work and research around U.S. slavery, racial terror and justice, Arielle is committed to supporting and creating Black performance work that commands imaginative and material space for social transformation. She is the founder of the performance & workshop series The Love Balm Project (2010-2014), founder and director of performance residency Black Spatial Relics, and co-creative producer on Remember2019. Arielle was a 2017-2018 Diversity and Leadership Fellow with Alliance of Artists Communities and 2019 Monument Lab National Fellow. Arielle was the 2015-2017 graduate fellow with the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University where she received an M.A. in Public Humanities.

DR. NZINGA METZGER

Dr. Nzinga Metzger received her B.A. in history from Florida State University, her M.A. in history from Temple University, and completed her Ph.D. in cultural anthropology at Florida State University. A scholar, folklorist, and artist, Dr. Metzger's anthropological work focuses on Africa, the African diaspora, ritual, religion and identity. Her graduate work focuses on themes including West African notions of personhood, the historical context and the socio-cultural politics of identity in relation to colonial power, and issues of diaspora and identity formation. Dr. Metzger is also the founder and director of The DuniaForé Foundation, a philanthropic 501(c)3 organization dedicated to working in the African Diaspora. The organization ran a successful summer school for traditionalist children in Osogbo, Nigeria in 2017 and 2018. The summer school, called "Asalaye Academy" will also be running in Nigeria this year.

TIMBALONA

TIMBALONA Collective is a percussion duo established by musicians Andrés Cisneros and Christian Noguera, focused on folklore and popular music from the Caribbean and Latin America. Often collaborating with special guests, TIMBALONA's musical expressions span from Afro-Caribbean diaspora genres such as Cuban Rumba and Puerto Rican Bomba to South American genres like Cumbia and Malambo.

TROUPE DA DA

Founded by Iya Oyin Hardy, Troupe Da Da's mission is to represent West African and Cuban culture at the highest level of artistic excellence through the preservation and presentation of traditional dancing as well as masquerade, music, and storytelling. Troupe Da Da seeks to expand the cultural awareness of African contributions to the arts through educational programs and performances that highlight the social and ritualistic customs of the people of the African Diaspora.

WOMEN'S SEKERE ENSEMBLE

Founded by Omomola Iyabunmi in 1988, the Women's Sekere Ensemble is dedicated to making West African traditional music a resource for communities. As Africans born in America, Women's Sekere Ensemble members are committed to reclaiming and sharing African culture. They work to foster an appreciation for African music through performances, workshops, classes, lecture/demonstrations, and residencies. Students of West African music for well over twenty-five years, the women's group offers performances featuring a range of traditional,





secular, and festive music originating among the peoples of Nigeria and Ghana, Cuba, Haiti and other locales throughout the African diaspora. They make and play sekeres (hand drums made from gourds and intricate beadwork) and other traditional percussion instruments.

KULU MELE AFRICAN DANCE AND DRUM ENSEMBLE

Founded by Baba Robert Crowder in 1969, directed by Dorothy Wilkie and inspired by the voices of its ancestors, Kulu Mele African Dance & Drum Ensemble preserves, presents and perpetuates the traditional dance and music of West Africa and the African Diaspora. Based in Philadelphia, Kulu Mele has been a highly regarded cultural institution in the Delaware Valley for 50 years. Kulu Mele has performed at some of the world's most prestigious performing arts venues, including the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, and Disney Hall at The Los Angeles Music Center. Kulu Mele's extensive arts education program, Omo Kulu Mele, serves thousands of Philadelphia school children annually.

MEDIA ARTISTS

LAURA SOFÍA PÉREZ

Laura Sofía Pérez is a multidisciplinary artist who works in the realms of video, installation, and sound. She received her MFA in Film/Video from California Institute of the Arts and her BFA in Fine Arts from Parsons: The New School for Design. Her work has been screened and exhibited in San Juan, New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and Buenos Aires. Exhibitions include "WAVEFORM" (Curated by CultureHub LA), Shatto Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2019), "No Limits Within," California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles, CA (2017), "Homeless," Miami, FL (2017), "Without a Song," Fundación ACE, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2014), and "WIMMIN," Glasshouse, Brooklyn, NY (2013). She was a SUB30 artist in residence at Fundación ACE, Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2014 and is a 2019 resident of La Práctica at Beta-Local, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Her installations often speak on ideas of deterritorialization and the air of melancholy that arises from displacement.

MUTHI REED

serena muthi reed works with archival media, story, objects and design, to generate fresh language and ways of seeing. They borrow from aesthetics of Black, Native and Queer life, digital artifacts from the internet, algorithm, interior studies of ecologic, geographic & social migration forms patterns and possibilities.

AIDAN UN

Originally from the suburbs of Paris, France, Aidan Un is a French-Korean-American filmmaker and photographer based in West Philadelphia. He works primarily in the genre of documentary and is interested in questions of culture, place, and identity. Recent works include documentation of Kulu Mele African Dance and Drum Ensemble's 50th Anniversary project Ogun & the People (2018/19) and video and photo documentation of Intercultural Journeys (2015-19). Aidan's work has been featured at BlackStar Film Festival, Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival, Mustard Seed Festival, The Outlet Dance Project Festival, New Urban Film Festival, and The Philadelphia Museum of Art.



COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Adenilson dos Santos / Mestre Doutor ~
Akinlana Lowman +
Ama Schley ~ +
Andrés Cisneros ~
Arnetta Curry ~
Aviva Kapust ~
Barbara Ibuladewa Gibbs ~
Raymond Beanz Ellis +
Brenda Toler ~
Carol Butcher ~
Chad Kehinde Graham *
Christian Noguera *
Cleonce Fonseca ~ * +
Dan D. Thomas ~
Dana Williams +
Danzel Thompson ~
Delphine dos Santos ~
Dermis de Jesús *
Desiree Brittingham +
Diane Bridges ~
Baba Doc Gibbs ^
Dolio Durant ~
Edina Brown ~
Eiko Fan +
El Sawyer ~
Elizabeth Sayre ^
Gheri Garnett ^
Baba Facundo Roanld Harris ~ + [Ibaye 2019]
Gilset Mora * + #
Ira Bond *
Izea Harris ~
Jaquan Fields ~
Jeannine Osayande ~ + #
Jhazmin Bigelow *
Joan Huckstep ~
Baba Joe Bryant * +
Baba John E. Wilkie ~ * +
Jonathan Delgado-Melendez ~ +
Kamau Blakney / Mestre Kamau ~
Kareem Idris Chappell +
Katherine Barnes ~

Ken Dossar, PhD ~
Kofi Asante ~
Krystal Singleton ~
Lillian Dunn ~
Merián Soto +
Michelle Ortiz ~
Monique (Temitope) Carter * +
Natasha Mosley ~
Ngozi Eure-Bethea *
Nicole Denise Coleman +
Norman R. Mills ~
Baba Okikilu Hardy * + ^
Iya Olufemi DeWindt ~ * +
Olufemi Olatunji +
Iya Omomola Iyabunmi ~ * + ^
Iya Oyin Yemoja Hardy ~ *
Patricia Edwards ~
Payin Schley ~
Peaches Patricia Jones ~ +
Petra Brizan-Brown +
Reggie Johnson ~
Renelle Smith ~
Sade Oyewayo ~
Sandra Andino +
Baba Sekou Olayinka ^
Shawn (Dade) Beckett * +
Shawn Hennessey +
Somalia McNair Knight *
Stanley Crawford ~
Stephanie Amma Young ^ *
Steven M. Jackson ~
Svetlana Cubana ~ *
Sylvia McKinney ~
Tanya Lipscomb +
Tekeytha Fullwood +
Theresa "Hanifah" Burnett ~
Thomas Lowery ~
Tommie Smart ~
Trapeta Mayson ~
Viviane Aires ~
Yusuf Young +
Zakiya L. Cornish ~

PROJECT LEADERSHIP

Dudley Cocke, Story Circle Specialist
Tia-Simone Gardner, Study Group Advisor
Germaine Ingram, Senior Project Advisor & Curator ~ * +
Kayhan Irani, Study Group Advisor
Lela Aisha Jones, Project Co-Director & Curator ~ * + #
Omi Osun Joni L. Jones, Resident Artist
Dr. Nzinga Metzger, Lead Yoruba Scholar ~ * + ^
Pepón Osorio, Study Group Advisor
Laura Sofía Pérez, Exhibition Design Advisor
Arielle Pina, Project Events and Outreach Coordinator
Carly Rapaport-Stein, Intercultural Journeys' Executive Director
Dr. Toni Shapiro-Phim, Research Methods Advisor
Alex Shaw, Project Co-Director & Curator, Intercultural Journeys' Artistic Director ~ * +
Amy Smith, Project Events Stage and Production Manager
Alejandro Utria, Project Events and Outreach Coordinator, Interpreter
Mama Dorothy Wilkie, Community Relations Advisor ~ * ^
Billy Yalowitz, Study Group Advisor

COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

Iya Betty Aldridge ~ + ^
Cachet Ivey * +
Daryl Kwasi Burgee ~
Nikki (Niamba) Hayes ~ * + ^
Michael Hinson ~ + ^
Wilna Taylor ~

PHOTOGRAPHERS & VIDEOGRAPHERS

Johanna Austin
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Toni Shapiro-Phim
Torian Ugworji
Aidan Un

MEDIA ARTISTS

Laura Sofía Pérez
muthi reed
Alex Shaw
Aidan Un

EVENT LOCATIONS

The Barnes Foundation
Community Education Center
Crane Arts Building (Icebox)
Greene Street Artist Cooperative (Hosted by Trapeta Mason & Vernon Gardner)
Headlong Studios
Oak Lane Library
Performance Garage
Project Capoeira
Taller Puertorriqueño
The Village of Arts and Humanities (Ile Ife Black Humanitarian Center)

~ *story circle*

* *performer*

+ *workshop/residency*

^ *interview*

choreography

ADIRE IMAGE CREDITS:

Margaret Olugbemisola Areo
Nike Davies Okundaye of Nike Centre for Art and Culture

Archival Footage Courtesy of Philadelphia Folklore Project, Baba John Wilkie, Bruce Williams, and Dr. Henry John Drewal.



Modupúe | Ibaye: The Philadelphia Yoruba Performance Project is a project of Intercultural Journeys, and has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage or The Pew Charitable Trusts.

