



JUMATATU M. POE & JERMONE DONTE BEACHAM:  
LET 'IM MOVE YOU: THIS IS A FORMATION

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8pm

presented by

REDCAT

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California Institute of the Arts

CaLARTS

*We gratefully acknowledge that we operate on the traditional lands of the Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash peoples—including the Gabrieleño, Fernandeño, and Ventureño; members of the Takic and Chumashan language families; and other Indigenous peoples who made their homes in and around the area we now call Los Angeles. We honor their ancestors past, present, and future, and recognize their continued existence and contributions to our society..*

# JUMATATU M. POE & JERMONE DONTÉ BEACHAM: LET 'IM MOVE YOU: THIS IS A FORMATION

Artistic Direction by jumatatu m. poe

Choreography and Styling by jumatatu m. poe and Jermone Donté Beacham

Performance by Jermone Donté Beacham, jumatatu m. poe, LaKendrick Davis,  
Maria Bauman, Nikolai McKenzie Ben Rama, Sanchel Brown, William Robinson

Sound, Text and Vocal Compositions by jumatatu m. poe

Sound Design and DJ Performance by Zen Jefferson

Video Installation by Mx. Oops

Lighting Design and Technical Direction by Juan "Co-eL" Rodriguez

Panel Design and Costume Consultation by Precious Lovell

Provocation by Thomas F. DeFrantz

Ethical Artistry Guidance by Shani Akilah

Producing and Tour Management by Maríya Wethers

Website Design by PURPOSE Productions

Website by Denise Shu Mei

Marketing and Archival Images by Tayarisha Poe

Series Logo by khaleel

Project Zine Design by Danae Mobley

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## ABOUT THE WORK

*Let 'im Move You* is a series born from the artistic relationship between artists jumatatu m. poe and Jermone "Donte" Beacham. The series centralizes J-Sette performance form and culture to address the artists' search for satisfaction and subversion within J-Sette's team-oriented call-and-response structure. While the artists see performance as an opportunity to communicate across various cultural distinctions, they see their work as chiefly in conversation with other Black queer alien artists.

Thank you to Yeman Brown for his participation in the creative process of this work.

Thank you to Black queer youth (younger than us), peers, elders, and ancestors who hold our hands while we practice life alongside others.

Thank you to the Black femme innovators of this form. Since the beginning of the 1970s, from the majorettes in the stands at historically Black colleges and universities, to the squads in formation on the dance floors at Southern gay clubs, you have graced the work with such an intricate and joyful testament to rigor and full-bodied beauty.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**jumatatu m. poe** (flex pronouns, as long as it's coming from a respectful place) I am a choreographer, performer, and educator based between Philadelphia, PA and Durham, NC who grew up dancing around the living room and at parties with my siblings and cousins. My early exposure to concert dance was through African dance and capoeira performances on California college campuses where my parents studied and worked, but I did not start formal dance training until college with Umfundalai, Kariamu Welsh's contemporary African dance technique. My work continues to be influenced by various sources, including my foundations in those living rooms and parties, my early technical training in contemporary African dance, my continued study of contemporary dance and performance, and my recent sociological research of and technical training in J-setting with Donte Beacham. I produce dance and performance work with idiosynCrazy productions, a company I founded in 2008 and now co-direct with Shannon Murphy. Previously, I have danced with Marianela Boán, Silvana Cardell, Emmanuelle Hunyh, Tania Isaac, Kun- Yang Lin, C. Kemal Nance, Marissa Perel, Leah Stein, Keith Thomby ópson, Kate Watson-Wallace, Reggie Wilson, and Kariamu Welsh (as a member of Kariamu & Company). As a performer, I also collaborate with Merián Soto. | [jumatatu.org](http://jumatatu.org)

**Jermone "Donte" Beacham** (he/him/his) Dancing has been in my blood since I can remember. It started off with hip hop dancing for my high school -- I began to recognize my skill and talent. After 4 years of that, I was introduced to the world of J-Sette by women. J-Sette historically refers to Jackson State University's female drill team that began in the 1970s. They "created" the dance style, and thus far have made it a distinctive form of dance. I was interested in this type of dance, but not entirely until I saw a group of males performing it. At that point, I claimed the style for myself and perfected it on my body. Currently, I have my own J-Sette line, Mystic Force, and plan to increase our already considerable renown in this style of dance in our community, and eventually internationally. Previously, I served as co-captain of Dallas' Texas Teasers. I have

participated and competed in several events and competitions, including 2 SetteltOff video challenges, Atlanta Pride 2010, Tennessee Classics 2009, and Memphis Pride 2008. In 2015, I was named New Legendary by the Meet Me on the Dance Floor J-Sette council, and have gained many titles since then, such as Best Dancer and Most Entertaining. Since then my biggest artist work has been a collaborative co-choreographed performance with jumatatu m. poe. This work, the *Let im' Move You* series, has been awarded the 2019 Queer Art Prize, and nominated for the Bessies in 2020. Currently, I lead the renovated Texas Teasers queer male jsette team. Our mission is to provide opportunities and guidance in pursuing dance careers for our younger generation of queer male dancers, and providing scholarships to two of those young folks per dance (majorette) season.

**Juan "Co-el" Rodriguez** (he/him/his) BFA in Dance from Arizona State University, Artist, educator, performer and researcher. Coel began his artistic venture at the age of 12 in urban dance, his primary form of study being Breaking or B-Boying. Through a variety of programs and training he began to study other forms including postmodern dance, house, and locking, as well as train as a lighting designer and theatre technician. Currently, Coel's work entails the academic and embodied research of both history and aesthetics of urban based dance forms, primarily breaking, as well as researching his own integrative contemporary practice.

**khaleel** instagram: @khaleelartt

**LaKendrick Davis** (he/him) was born and raised in Greenville, MS. Chief Choreographic Consultant at ChoreoJazzy Elite Productions. LaKendrick began his journey in the arts at a very young age participating in Chorus and Marching Band. Throughout the years, he began to explore other areas of the arts including music composition, cheerleading, baton twirling, and a host of additional talents as he completed his high school and middle school years. LaKendrick began training others in the style of Majorette Dance in 2004-2005 and has become one of the most acclaimed instructors in the southeast today. LaKendrick is lead competitive choreographer for the Sensational Sassettes (Atlanta, GA) and the Atlanta ToXiC All-Stars (Atlanta, GA). LaKendrick has appeared in the YouTube Red Series, "Step Up: Highwater", Jamal Sims' "When The Beat Drops", and Lifetime's "Bring It" just to name a few.

**Maria Bauman** (she/her) is a Brooklyn, NY-based multi-disciplinary artist and community organizer from Jacksonville, FL. She creates bold and honest artworks for her company MBDance, based on physical and emotional power, insistence on equity, and fascination with intimacy. In particular, Bauman-Morales's dance work centers the non-linear and linear stories and bodies of queer people of color onstage. She draws on her long study of English literature, capoeira, improvisation, dancing in living rooms and nightclubs, as well as concert dance classes to embody interconnectedness, joy, and tenacity. Bauman-Morales was recently recognized with a Bessie Award for Outstanding Performance with Skeleton Architecture. Currently, she is an Urban Bush Women Choreographic Center Fellowship Candidate and an Artist in Residence at Brooklyn Arts Exchange. She just finished her tenure as Community Action Artist in Residence at Gibney Dance. Bauman-Morales is also a community organizer and co-founder of ACRE (Artists Co-creating Real Equity). Organizing to undo racism informs her artistic work and the two areas are each ropes in a Double-dutch that is her holistic practice. | [mbdance.net](http://mbdance.net)

**María Wethers** (she/her) has been working with jumatatu as Managing Producer since 2017. She is an Independent Producer, Creative Strategist, Curator, and dancer based in Lenapehoking (NYC) since 1997, and also works as the Director of the GPS/Global Practice Sharing program at Movement Research. As a Curator she conceived and created the three-week performance series "Gathering Place: Black Queer Land(ing)" at Gibney Dance and curated for the Queer NY International Arts Festival (2016 & 2015) and Out of Space @ BRIC Studio for Danspace Project (2003-2007). Her writing includes Configurations in Motion: Curating and Communities of Color Symposium publications, organized by Thomas DeFrantz at Duke University (2016 & 2015); UnCHARTed Legacies: women of color in post-modern dance in the 25th Anniversary Movement Research Performance Journal #27/28 (2004). María is also a Bessie Award winning dancer (Outstanding Performance with Skeleton Architecture, 2017).

**MXoops/Wendell Cooper** is a multimedia performance artist focused on the intersection of urban arts and consciousness studies; rapping and dancing within video installations. A certified yoga instructor (500hr RYT) and practitioner of Thai Yoga Massage, they are also trained in various forms of energy healing. Their work has toured Kenya, China, Russia, Vienna, the Netherlands, and has been presented in NYC venues such as HERE Arts Center, Santos Party House, The Box, Dixon Place, Joyce Soho, BAAD, and Harlem Stage. Their work has been supported by the Jerome Foundation Travel Study Program, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the New York Live Arts Suitcase Fund, and as a Cultural Enjoy of the U.S. State Department in Kenya. Cooper studied dance and religion at the George Washington University and completed an Integrated Media Arts MFA at Hunter College. They currently teach in Lehman College's Dance (BA) and Multimedia Performing Arts (BFA) Programs. | [mxoops.com](http://mxoops.com)

**Nikolai McKenziei Ben Rama** (he/they) Born in St. Andrew, Jamaica, and raised in the American South, Nikolai is a movement artist, improviser, actor, writer, and teacher whose work and research deal with the tectonic plates of race/history/class/ sexuality/ language politics/ patriotism, and how these facets of identity filtered through a queer immigrant experience can physically and emotionally manifest in space and word. A graduate of the BFA in Dance and Choreography Program at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA, Nikolai's choreography has been performed in New York, Richmond, VA, and Norfolk, VA, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. Some performance highlights include the works of Arthur Aviles, Banning Bouldin, Azure Barton, Robert Battle, jumatatu m. poe and Donte Beacham, Vince Johnson, Gunnar Montana, Adam Barruch, Kun-Yang Lin and Christian Von Howard. Nikolai is currently creating dance theater works rooted in storytelling of personal ancestry as a decolonizing reclamation of queer Caribbean birthright, as a rebel yell, as a reimagining the queer future of the Caribbean and the Diaspora. IG: @nikobandra

**Precious Lovell** is an artist + designer + maker and educator. She holds a BFA in Fashion Design and a Master's Degree in Art and Design with a Fibers and Surface Design concentration. Her socio-cultural creative practice explores the narrative potential of cloth and clothing through textile and garment-based art. Her mixed-media pieces often integrate traditional textile techniques with newer technologies and when appropriate, incorporate non-textile objects essential to her story-telling process. The cultural significance, narrative, aesthetic and technical

qualities of traditional textiles and clothing, particularly those of the African Diaspora, heavily influence her work. She has traveled to 44 countries researching and collecting indigenous textiles and clothing. Precious' work has been exhibited in the US and internationally.  
| [preciousdlovell.com](http://preciousdlovell.com)

**PURPOSE Productions** supports artists and organizers in the mothering of PURPOSE-full work that seeks to unify and develop our world community. Founded by A. Nia Austin-Edwards, PURPOSE Productions works with individuals and institutions to collaboratively bring visions to fruition through strategic consulting, marketing, management, support for families, and more. Named after the Swahili translation of the name Nia, PURPOSE Productions grounds itself in the principles of Kwanzaa, an African American holiday celebrating the fruits of ancestral, communal, and individual labor. Since 2013, PURPOSE has supported dance artists such as Adia Tamar Whitaker and Marjani Forte -Saunders, theater artists such as Ella Turenne and Latonia Phipps, organizations such as 651 ARTS and STooPS, and initiatives such as Paloma McGregor's *Dancing While Black* and Camille A. Brown's *The Gathering*, among others. This work is rooted in an Africanist aesthetic alongside Black Feminist value systems, and our community embodies diverse cultures, genres, and experiences. | [purposeproductions.org](http://purposeproductions.org)

**Sanchel Brown** (she/her) is an international dancer/choreographer/actress originally from Baltimore, MD. She has obtained her B.F.A from Virginia Commonwealth and has extensively studied movement of the African Diaspora in Senegal, West Africa under the direction of Germaine Acogny at L'Ecole De Sable. Sanchel has had the honor to work with many choreographers such as Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Maria Bauman, Paloma McGregor, Jumatatu Poe, David Brick and many others. Her past performance credits include *Urban Bush Women*, *Black Nativity*, *The Kimmel Center's Kinetic Tree Show*, *JAMAICA the Musical*, *Don't Bother Me I Can't Cope*, *First World Theater's Say He Had More Than A Dream*, and *Black Nativity*. She is a 2015 Barrymore Award nominee for Best Lead Actress in a Musical and winner for Best Ensemble for her outstanding performance as Mary in Theater Horizon's production of *Black Nativity*. Her choreography credits include Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls*, New Freedom Theater's *Black Nativity*, as well as her self-produced one woman show, *Ode to Black Wombman*. Her teaching engagements include Gibney Dance Center, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, Dancing Grounds, New Freedom Theater and University City Arts League.

In January of 2016, **Shani Akilah** visioned and created the Black and Brown Workers Cooperative (BBWC)—a collective that is now 400 workers strong in Philadelphia. The BBWC has successfully changed the power structure in the Philadelphia gayborhood by ousting former LGBTQ liaison to the mayor, Nellie Fitzpatrick, organizing with and unionizing Mazzoni workers, as well as impacting city wide policy. Today, the BBWC continues to focus on Black and Brown workers who straddle identity lines along race, class, sexuality and gender identity and identity expression. They are also launching a 2018 agenda focused on disrupting and fighting gentrification in south west Philadelphia.

**Tayarisha Poe** creates complex portraits of young people of color in her multisensory work that blends film, photography, and prose across media platforms. "My stories seek to show young

people of color that they can choose how to define themselves, and they can shape their world," she says. Poe's forthcoming debut feature film, *Selah and the Spades*, began as an online series of photographs, short films, prose, and web design, telling the story of a charismatic black teenager in a fictional Pennsylvania town. The project marked Poe as one of *Filmmaker Magazine's* "25 New Faces of Independent Film" in 2015 and was recently further developed at the Sundance Screenwriter's Lab. Poe is a 2016 Knight Foundation Sundance Fellow and has been awarded grants from the Cinereach Foundation and Leeway Foundation. She holds a BA in film and literature from Swarthmore College and has been a filmmaking instructor at Scribe Video Center since 2013. | [tayarishapoe.com](http://tayarishapoe.com)

**Thomas F. DeFrantz** received the 2017 Outstanding Research in Dance award from the Dance Studies Association. He is Professor at Duke University, and director of SLIPPAGE: Performance, Culture, Technology, a research group that explores emerging technology in live performance applications. Books: *Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance* (2002), *Dancing Revelations Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture* (2004), *Black Performance Theory*, co-edited with Anita Gonzalez (2014), *Choreography and Corporeality: Relay in Motion*, co-edited with Philipa Rothfield (2016). Creative: *Queer Theory! An Academic Travesty* commissioned by the Theater Offensive of Boston and the Flynn Center for the Arts; *fastDANCEpast*, created for the Detroit Institute for the Arts; *reVERSE-gesture-reVIEW* commissioned by the Nasher Museum in response to the work of Kara Walker, January, 2017. Convenor, *Black Performance Theory*, and Collegium for African Diaspora Dance. Curation: *afroFUTUREqu###r* with niv ACOSTA at Jack, October, 2015; National Black Arts Festival Dance Focus, 2015. Teaching: American Dance Festival, ImpulseTanz, the New Waves Dance Institute, as well as MIT, Stanford, Yale, NYU, Hampshire College, and the University of Nice. Musical score, *past-carry-forward* for Dance Theatre of Harlem, 2013. He convenes the Black Performance Theory working group. In 2013, working with Takiyah Nur Amin, he founded the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance, a growing consortium of 200 researchers. In 2015 he created a tap work "tell me a secret" for students at Washington University in St. Louis, and in 2016 he created a contemporary improvisational work "...but are we good now?" for the students at Columbia College Chicago; in 2017 he created the tap work "... how could I have known?" for students at Connecticut College. DeFrantz believes in our shared capacity to do better, and to engage our creative spirit for a collective good that is anti-racist, anti-homophobic, proto-feminist, and queer affirming.

**William Robinson** (he/him) is from Washington D.C., son to parents Patricia and Maurice Robinson Jr. He attended college at The University of the Arts, graduating in 2008. He is a current performer with idiosynCrazy productions, Brian Sanders' Junk, and Cardell Dance Theatre.

**Zen Jefferson** / dæʒ ʧ@kɛ (they/them) is a Swiss British American dancer/performer, DJ and Bessie nominated sound collage artist based in Berlin. In 2006, they graduated with a BFA in dance from the Juilliard School and have since worked in creative constellations across Europe, Asia & Africa exploring themes of identity, race, home & community. Their collaborations and practice interrogate the intersections of spirit within performance, ritual, and healing that seek to disrupt the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, using the body, sound and healing as a transformative vessel for collective & inter - celestial connection. IG: @zen\_dem

## STATEMENT FOR FORMATION TOUR

We have been nurturing a creative and social process that prioritizes an ethic of care. Proceeding at paces that allow us to really get to know one another... Again... In these new bodies and in this new moment. Proceeding at the metaphysical speed of slow - even when we are moving quickly. Proceeding at paces that allow us to be known by one another. To trust one another and to be trustworthy for one another. For ourselves. We uplift the sanctity of our group of primarily Black queer folk, knowing that we are bringing so many of us with us, even if not in these immediate real-time moments.

The act of touring for public professionalized performance is always inherently risky. Being in contact, among other things that it is, is risky. And being a group of primarily Black queer folks engaged in touring professionalized performance is particularly risky because Black queer folk exist at the intersections of so many public health pandemics - of state-sanctioned violence, of historic and contemporary displacement and housing insecurity, of persecutions by religious doctrine. And, of course, in this moment, we are all contending with the COVID-19 pandemic, and trying to protect our safety in the face of it.

The following are specific protocols that our touring group of collaborators has designed to help keep us and others safe in this dangerous moment:

- We are making informed decisions about health and safety related to COVID-19 by learning from ethical consultants, research gathering (articles, podcasts, etc), honoring personal health and racial histories, and consulting national, state, local, and venue guidelines
  - Each of us will decide individually if we are unmasked outdoors, and we will consistently be masked indoors for rehearsals, performances, and larger social gatherings of four or more outside of our touring group. Our decisions will at minimum be aligned with venue, city, and state mandates.
  - Our touring group be tested for COVID-19 every five days at minimum, with some people opting for more frequent testing. Audience Infiltrators will be tested every three days (beginning three days before work with us).
  - If someone tests positive for COVID-19, that person will quarantine in accordance with CDC and local guidelines. We will organize with each venue, making sure our colleague is taken care of with respect to wage, housing, food, social interaction, and medical consultation

We invite you, as witness participants, to engage in our ethic of care with us. We invite you to know how we are caring for ourselves. We invite you to yield sublime attention to the ways that we can care for one another, with constant respect to how we need and want to be cared for.

See you on the dance floors... All of them.

**Let 'im Move You team**