

## We Are All Here Right Now



workshop at Centre Chorégraphique Multicorps, Cotonou, Benin photo: Marcel Gbeffa

**We Are All Here Right Now** is a practice in activated serendipity.

**We are** bodies. We are people of action, fully present, engaged in the moment, in our bodies and with each other. We are pragmatic magicians.

**All** of us are in this together, whether we want to be or not, whether we choose to see it or not.

**Here** is wherever we are. Here changes. Here moves. Today, Here may be in Brazil. Tomorrow, Here may be in Ethiopia or Tokyo.

**Now** is when we move.

It is incumbent on us to move.

It is incumbent on us, as artists, as activists to drag society into a new, better place.

It has always been our job, and it always will be.

It is incumbent on us to step into the circle and make magic.

This will be my starting point.

**Process and research:**

The research we will conduct in the creation of this work will be on searching for the profound in the spectacular, and the spectacular in the mundane.

The core company will be made up of six dancers, equal numbers women and men. These dancers have the capacity to perform spectacular movement and also to make the mundane deeply beautiful. For many years, despite being a capoeirista myself, and working with dancers who are capoeiristas and practitioners of other martial arts, b-boys/girls and traceurs (practitioners of parkour/free-running), I have avoided "spectacular," virtuosic movement in my choreography. Although I enjoy these kinds of movement in my own body, I have shied away from them in performance to avoid the sense of "m'as tu vu?," of showing off, of tricks for the sake of tricks. In this project, we will be engaging directly with these movements, attempting to strip them of this demonstrative quality, finding their emotional impact outside of the "wow factor".

On the other end of the spectrum, we will be working with mundane, quotidian movement – walking, running, falling, standing – finding ways in which these movements can become spectacular by virtue of their execution, and the energy between dancers within a group.

We will explore this within the group, as well as in constant interaction with participants in the workshops that will be concurrent with and essential to our creative process. The first of these workshops occurred in October in Cotonou, Benin at Centre Chorégraphique Multicorps, the dance home of two of the ensemble members.

Much of the structure of the work will be built on a series of improvisational practices, some of which will be developed into set choreography. Others will remain as clearly defined improvisational scores. Listening strategies layered onto strict improvisational scores create moments that appear choreographed, but are in fact different every time. Some of these moments will become set choreography that are then used as jumping off points – i.e. when a situation occurs, it sets a series of choreographed events into motion.



Core company member Arouna Guindo  
Photo: Barbara Calí



The scores and images we will use in the creation of the work are ones that have themselves appeared serendipitously –a score that appeared at an unexpected moment during a memorial service, a score that appeared while trying unsuccessfully to explain a concept to a colleague and the feeling that as we watch the sunset, we are falling backwards.

For the musical score, I will be collaborating with Paris-based electronic musician Fraction (Eric Raynaud). This will be our second major collaboration. Eric's research in electronic music parallels the movement research of this piece. He will be engaged with the project throughout, in an equal and bilateral process of creative influence.



workshop at Centre Chorégraphique Multicorps, Cotonou, Benin photo: Marcel Gbeffa

**Timeline:**

We will create the work primarily over a series of three residencies – in France, the US and Benin. The first will take place in Boston, the second in Cotonou. We request a residency at CCN Orleans for the third and final residency. The work will premiere in Boston in early 2020.

**Period of residence requested** – 10 days in September or December 2019

October 2018 - 10 day intensive workshop in Cotonou, Benin at Centre Chorégraphique Multicorps (completed)

December 2018 - creative research in Thrissur, India/workshop (confirmed)

January 2019 - creative research in Chennai, India/workshop (confirmed)

February 2019 – creative research in Boston/workshop for Boston community dancers (confirmed)

May 2019 - 10 day residency in Boston at The Dance Complex, Cambridge, MA (confirmed)

June 2019 – creative research in Tokyo, Japan/workshop (confirmed)

July 2019 – creative research in Boston/workshop for Boston community dancers (confirmed)

August 2019 - 10 day residency in Cotonou at Centre Chorégraphique Multicorps (confirmed)

September or December 2019 - 10 day residency at CCN Orleans (proposed)

January 2020 presentation of excerpts of project at Association of Performing Arts Presenters conference in New York City

June 2020-onward Touring

## WE ARE ALL HERE RIGHT NOW | ANIKAYA:

ANIKAYA's mission is to break down the perceived boundaries between people, cultures and art forms. We weave together music, dance and storytelling to create works that pull from the full range of the body's communicative capabilities. We incorporate traditional forms, internalizing them and allowing them to reemerge as part of a new movement vocabulary. The result is work that is resonant of deep-rooted traditions, without being bound to any particular genre, place or practice.

ANIKAYA engages in the creation, production and touring of movement theater works. In conjunction with and preparation for these projects, ANIKAYA presents workshops for people of all ages and abilities in the US and abroad.



Our work has so far extended across the US, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, France, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mali and Turkey.

Dance Diplomacy is the practice of building cross-cultural connections through movement. It is a way to listen to the multiple voices and stories that make up the human narrative. ANIKAYA Dance Diplomacy has created an ever-growing web of people across the globe who may share no common language, but who have shared in a common corporal, intellectual and emotional experience.

ANIKAYA also has an intrinsic commitment to the world-wide Deaf community and to collaborating with Deaf performers. Our focus on placing the marginalized at the center results in truly cross-cultural works of visual theater that are accessible at an integral level to both Deaf and hearing audiences.

ANIKAYA's vision is to bring people around the world into a global conversation through movement. This worldwide dance does not recognize borders, and does not require language. It is one that celebrates our common humanity through a constant practice of radical empathy.

Our performance works reflect and make manifest this vision.

## WE ARE ALL HERE RIGHT NOW | Lead Artistic Team:



### WENDY JEHLLEN (director/choreographer)

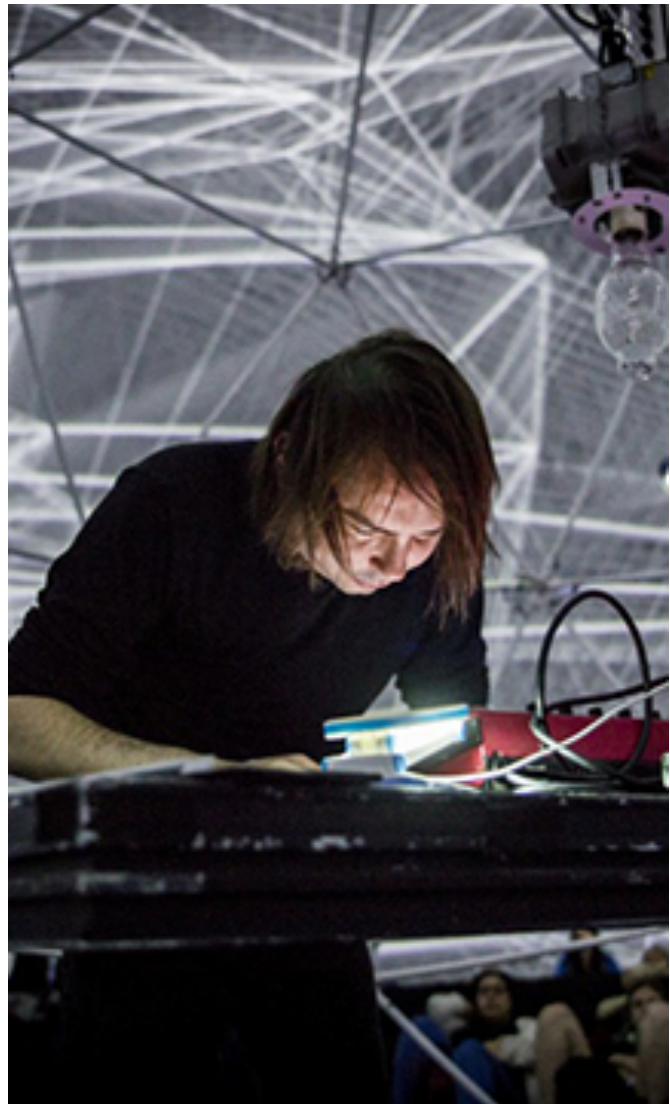
Wendy Jehlen's career has been marked by international explorations, study and creative collaboration. She received her Bachelor's degree in ritual and performance from Brown University and her Master of Theological Studies degree from Harvard Divinity School. Wendy engages in collaborations across languages, culture, media and genres. Her work questions the boundaries that we imagine between ourselves, and seeks to break down these imagined walls through an embodied practice of radical empathy. This practice takes her around the world to conduct workshops, collaborations and performances which she calls collectively Dance Diplomacy. Her unique approach to choreography incorporates elements of Bharata Natyam, Odissi, Capoeira, Kalaripayattu, West African dance, Butoh, and a wide-range of Contemporary movement forms. Her emotionally powerful choreography has been created and

performed in the US, Canada, Italy, India, Japan, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Mali and Turkey, with current collaborative projects in Benin, Japan, India, Brazil and Turkey. Her works include *Entangling* (2015), a duet with Burkinabe choreographer Lacina Coulibaly inspired by Quantum Entanglement; *The Deep* (2015), a work for 25 dancers created in São Paulo, Brazil; *Lilith* (2013), a solo on the first woman; *The Knocking Within* (2012), an evening-length duet on a disintegrating relationship; *Forest* (2010), a journey through the archetypal forest; *He Who Burns* (2006), a trio on the figure of Iblis (Satan); *Breathing Space* (2003), a collaboration with Japanese choreographer Hikari Baba in Tokyo; *Crane* (2002), based on images from Japanese Buddhist poetry; and *Haaaa* (2002), inspired by the experience of childbirth. Jehlen has received support from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art (2017-2018), Theater Communications Group (2018), the Japan Foundation (2017), the Boston Foundation (2012, 2017), New England Foundation for the Arts (2016, 2017, 2018), Network of Ensemble Theaters (2016, 2017), the Embassy of the United States in Benin (2017), the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (2015, 2016, 2017), the Boston Center for the Arts Choreographers' Residency program (2010, 2015), the Artist Fellowship Program of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (2003, 2012), the American Institute of Indian Studies (2001, 2013), the Boston Dance Alliance (2013), the National School of Drama (2006, 2011, 2013), the BU Jewish Cultural Endowment (2012), the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (2011), the Alliance Française de Madras (2006), the Fulbright program (2005-2006), the National Endowment for the Arts (2005), the Tokyo American Center (2002), the Puffin Foundation (2001), and the Ford Foundation/Arts International (1996), among others.



FRACTION/Eric Raynaud  
(composer/music producer/sound  
design)

Fraction/Eric Raynaud a french music composer and digital art creative designer living in Paris whose work particularly focuses on sound immersion and its interactions with visual media. After his first release on the prestigious French label InFiné, Raynaud moved away from the field of traditional music to focus on digital arts, working on complex stage designs and hybrid writings that combine visual, sound and physical medias. In 2013, he developed DROMOS for the Mutek Festival (Canada), a stunning immersive performance that found a lot of echoes in the blogosphere and eventually was featured by Apple for its 30 year anniversary video clip. Since then, he has continued merging 3D immersive sound with contemporary art and architecture, incorporating his research on themes that combine science and contemporary sociology. Experiments



on the spatial, physical and emotional characteristics of sound are the epicentre of his unique work. He was awarded by Institut Français in Digital Arts field in 2014 and led several months of research and creation on sound immersion and new media interactions at Society for Arts and Technology of Montreal. This led him to imagine a new piece called Entropia, that has toured the world ever since and has been covered by well-known media outlets like Creators Projects, DesignBoom, XLR8 and many more. Most recently, he was the first artist in residence invited to the new and innovative Spatial Sound Institute created by 4DSound in Budapest (Hungary). He was nominated SHAPE artist 2017, a program of 16 festivals and an arts center that supports musicians and multi-disciplinary artists with innovative approaches in Europe. In 2018 he is a laureate of the Ircam Artist Research Program for the project Symbiosis where he will explore a new artistic process for audiovisual creation involving real time sound spatialization.



Photo: Marcel Gbeffa

## AROUNA GUINDO

(Assistant to the choreographer)

Arouna Guindo is a hip hop dancer by foundation. His research has taken him to the study of capoeira, contemporary dance and contemporary approaches to movement, including Axis Syllabus with Francesca Pedulla and Frey Faust, African contemporary dance with Bienvenue Bazié, Marcel Gbeffa, Pierre Doussaint, Awoulath and Koffi Koko. He has danced in innumerable battles throughout West Africa and in Germany and was the winner of

many of the same, including Duels Cruels, Hip Hop Academy, Talents d'Afrique and Battling of Taet Vremya, Lake Studios, Berlin. He has danced and choreographed for Cie Djembé, Cie Awoulath and currently dances for Cie Multicorps of Benin under the direction of Marcel Gbeffa.

### **Partners:**

ANIKAYA Dance Theater  
Centre Chorégraphique Multicorps, Cotonou, Benin  
Bharata Kalanjali, Chennai, India  
Baseworks, Tokyo, Japan  
Invisible Technologies/Jose Koshy, Thrissur, India

### **We are currently in discussion to secure partnerships for presentation in 2020 with:**

Boston Center for the Arts  
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts  
Centro de Referência da Dança da Cidade de São Paulo, Brazil