



Power Goes...and goes, and goes

Read how The Seldoms, in collaboration with Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, used their Creation Fund, and later the Forth Fund, to craft a powerful and ambitious new work.

The Creation Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts; the Forth Fund is supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

—————> CONTINUES ON PAGE 04

Power Goes, The Seldoms



Interested in Presenting a Korean company?

Center Stage Korea, a program of the Korea Arts Management Services (KAMS), is a grant that supports travel and freight costs for Korean artists/companies touring to two or more venues in the United States. Deadline is November 30, 2014.

For more information and an application form:
eng.gokams.or.kr/o1_kams/kams_view.aspx?Idx=225&flag=notice



Plan for *what if* — not *why me*

NPN/VAN and South Arts (SA) encourage you to avoid the pain and panic of being unprepared, whether for a data crash, a public relations debacle, or an auditorium flooded by a broken pipe. ArtsReady, a program of SA, will help you start, or update/expand, your readiness plan. Here are some easy-to-use resources and ideas to help you out:

- You've likely had changes in the names and/or contact information for your staff and roster artists. Make sure you have an updated phone/personal email tree to reach everyone speedily in the event of emergency, and that you have an "In Case of Emergency" contact for each individual. Here's a sample from the ArtsReady Library: www.artsready.org/home/public_article/76
- Download handy mobile apps that will help you keep tabs on bad weather, respond in first aid/emergency situations, or be aware of police activity in your area: www.artsready.org/home/public_article/313
- Take a tour of your venue/working space, making sure that alarms, fire extinguishers, emergency signage and other safety devices are easy to see, operational and current.
- Join ArtsReady. A Premium Membership gives you access to an online planning tool, cloud-based critical information storage, online training opportunities and more.

Call the ArtsReady team for assistance with any of these resources. Omar Nelson, Membership Manager, onelson@southarts.org, (404) 874-7244 x 28.



Niicugni, Emily Johnson/Catalyst Dance, photo by Ian Douglas

Live and On Stage!

As part of its Annual Meeting, NPN/VAN will present two nights of performance in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Performances will feature works supported by the NPN Creation and Forth Fund programs as well as Tulsa-based companies. All performances are open to the public at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center; buy tickets at www.tulsapac.com. If you can't make to the show view online through HowlRoundTV at www.livestream.com/newplay/.

Monday 11/17 @ 8pm

Armando Castellano/Quinteto Latino:
Voces Del Desierto (Menlo Park, CA)

Theater North (Tulsa, OK)

Lionel Popkin: *Looking for Ruth*
(Los Angeles, CA)

Perpetual Motion Dance (Tulsa, OK)

Tuesday 11/18 @ 8pm

Emily Johnson/Catalyst Dance:
Niicugni (Minneapolis, MN)

Tulsa Modern Movement (Tulsa, OK)

Paul Flores: *PLACAS: The Most Dangerous Tattoo*
(San Francisco, CA)

Portico Dans Theatre (Tulsa, OK)

The Seldoms *Power Goes*

By Carrie Hanson, Artistic Director of The Seldoms

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 01



From the outset, the prospect of making a new piece of dance theater drawing upon the figure of Lyndon Baines Johnson – and what we learn from him about power and its operations – was daunting to the artistic team and perhaps puzzling to the presenters we approached. Fortunately we had a history with the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago’s (MCA) performance team, having premiered *Marchland* there in 2010. We built upon that existing relationship and record of work as we described our inquiry and inspiration, and invited them

to support and present *Power Goes*. The project was The Seldoms’ first collaboration with a playwright, Stuart Flack, as well as his first devised project and effort outside of a more traditional theater scene, thus it came with some new challenges and risks. The large group of collaborators included both veterans and new voices in our midst; that too meant navigating a robust, extensive, and sometimes uneven, conversation about the central thrust of *Power Goes* and how we would get there.



In the MCA's performance team, Peter Taub and Yolanda Cesta Cursach, we have two very knowledgeable, invested and accessible presenters/guides. They have partnered with us at every stage of development of *Power Goes* — as responders to work-in-progress, as provocateurs posing critical questions, as partners in seeking and securing funding support, including acting as lead commissioner for a Creation Fund and guiding us through our first NPN award and, later, the Forth Fund opportunity of a design residency.

We recently concluded our Forth Fund-supported design residency at the MCA Chicago. At eight days long, it was the single most productive and illuminating period in *Power Goes*' extended two-year process. The experience of being in the theater without the urgency or weight of a premiere at week's end is too rare in the dance world, and yet essential in the creation of multidisciplinary work. *Power Goes*, as a piece that references the 1950s-60s and the LBJ presidency, relies heavily on historic photos and audio recordings to situate the physical and spoken material; the whole of video and sound design plays an essential role. (Johnson's imposing physicality and one-on-one arm-twisting phone conversations were instruments of power in his arsenal, and thus are key players in our exposition of power.)

In addition to video projection, the scenography features an immense installation — a rigged structure of 75 chairs on the stage's back wall, a metaphor for the body politic, the citizenry or alternately, the U.S. Congress. The whole visual and sonic environment of *Power Goes* is dense and operates as a sort of space/time capsule that contextualizes action occurring within it — an envelope for the various encounters, shows of force, acts of persuasion between players. The Forth Fund

residency afforded an important opportunity to both define the technical aspects of this visually complex show, and understand the various meanings and readings of the images and installation.

In residency, the entire team of designers — choreography, performance, sound, video, lighting, text — was watching, responding and modifying in the room with one another, in the moment. The contribution of each artist was layered upon the others, sometimes in successful interplay, at other times working against each other, and often needing subtle tuning and refining. Within the mix, new meanings emerged, and new openings and opportunities became apparent. We saw where we needed to supplement, or pare away and simplify, or go a different course altogether. And importantly, for a 75-minute work, we began to feel the arc of *Power Goes*. A design residency affords two crucial opportunities: the venue and technology to test interaction of body, voice, visual and audio content, and shared space and time for artists to witness immediately and directly the whole of what is being made, well in advance of a premiere. During our week at the MCA, the process of building *Power Goes* was elevated, and the process of deepening the work began. For the collaborating artists, that intense, sustained time together also solidified our mode of working together, which as mentioned above, has been a robust space and practice of multiple voices.

Our design residency concluded with an open public showing of *Power Goes* excerpts, followed by an artist/audience conversation. We had a terrific audience of over 100 people, and it was perhaps the best talk-back experience that The Seldoms has had in twelve years. Within the thoughtful, generous audience comments, there was evidence



of strong engagement with the topic, with our material, and the continued development of *Power Goes*. The session helped to focus our attention back to some of our earliest intentions for the piece, which needed to be recovered.

The Forth Fund, in tandem with the tremendous support of the Creation Fund award, has advanced the full multidisciplinary expression of *Power Goes*. These kinds of resources and opportunities fuel performance work that — benefiting from extensive planning, sufficient funding, the partnership of presenter and artist, access to venue and technology — surpasses the artists’ own expectations as a platform is set to go beyond initial visions for a work, and to experiment, make and remake, question, assess and re-assemble. The entire team of *Power Goes* artists, numbering sixteen, understood what a unique opportunity we enjoyed during the week on the MCA Stage, and we pressed the edges of each day’s schedule to work as much material as possible and maximize our gains from our NPN-supported residency.

A last word about the “power” of the Creation Fund and companion Forth Fund awards, as they have expanded both the creation and profile of this project: In making our final application for National Dance Project funding (which we ultimately were awarded for our first time), we were able to name the National Performance Network support as a strength of the *Power Goes* project. That we were able to cite this evidence of recognition and momentum in our appeal to NDP certainly played in favor of *Power Goes* as a viable artistic project worthy of that prestigious national award. ■

For more about *Power Goes*: www.theseldoms.org

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National Performance Network
Visual Artists Network
PO Box 56698
New Orleans, LA 70156
504.595.8008 PHONE
npnweb.org WEB



Are You a Community-Engaged or Activist Artist/Organization Looking for Support?

The Rauschenberg Foundation has released a series of open calls for the first time in its Artist as Activist Program, comprised of three distinct grant opportunities: a Fellowship (due October 13), a Travel/Research grant (applications accepted on rolling basis until April 15, 2014), and a grant for Activist Organizations, by invitation only. Click here for more information:

www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/grants/art-grants/artist-activist

Surdna Foundation is issuing requests for proposals to individual artists of all disciplines, culture bearers and non-profit arts organizations whose projects are developed in response to communities' specific challenges. Deadline for submitting a proposal is November 12, with awards announced in April 2015. For more information, including a free webinar, go to: www.surdna.org/rfp

Thank You!

The National Performance Network (NPN) is proud to announce continued support from the Lambent Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation in the amount of \$100,000 for general operating support and NPN's Local Network that provides direct support to smaller organizations and artist-driven projects in New Orleans.