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ARTISTS ANNOUNCED FOR THE 2017 NEW GRIOTS FESTIVAL

From poetry to photography to improv, the growing festival celebrates the work of 10 emerging Black artists from the Twin Cities over two weekends.

July 6-16 | Dowling Studio

Download press images of artists in the festival.

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*)—The Guthrie Theater is proud to present the 2017 New Griots Festival, an event which aims to celebrate, advocate and advance the careers of emerging Black artists in the Twin Cities. In addition to performances by 10 emerging artists, running July 6-16 in the Dowling Studio, the festival offers free artist-taught classes for the community. Individual performance tickets are \$9 and are on sale now through the Box Office at 612.377.2224 or by visiting guthrietheater.org. Free class registration is also available by phone through the Box Office.

“We are extremely excited to share these voices with the Twin Cities community,” said New Griots Festival Co-Founder and Lead Producer Jamil Jude. “As a producer it is an honor to work with such adroit and clear artists,” added Associate Producer AsaleSol. “As we continue to seek opportunities to present the aesthetic diversity of Black artists in the area, we are thankful to provide space for these artists to take their rightful spot as the next generation of storytellers, as the names you need to know, and the voices of their community. It’s their turn now!”

The New Griots Festival has expanded significantly since its debut in 2015, increasing from 3 to 10 days, doubling the amount of performances and community classes, and adding a live “Watch me Work” component. This year’s festival will also include networking events and panel conversations that help provide context around the importance of the work of Black artists working locally and nationally.

The 2017 New Griots Festival lineup features a performance by dancer and vocalist Vie Boheme, improv by Blackout, music by Arthur "L.A." Buckner, work by playwright Antonio Duke, poetry by Keno Evol, poetry by April Gibson, work by writer Dame Jasmine Hughes, work by painter Shaina McCoy, a performance by aerialist Miss Coco Nostal'jah and photography by Isaac Sundberg.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

All performances are in the Guthrie’s Dowling Studio. Tickets are \$9 and seating is general admission.

Dancer/Vocalist/Performer Vie Boheme

[Volume 2] Viva:BLACK

Thursday, July 6, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Sunday, July 16, 2:30-3:30 p.m.

[Volume 2] *Viva:BLACK* is vocalist and dancer Vie Boheme's interdisciplinary one-woman show that aims to sift the elusiveness of Black Girl Magic. It is an evening of song, dance, poetry thematically presented through a series of vignettes. The show is historically charged, reflective of today's social political landscape and candidly shared.

Aerialist Miss Coco Nostal'jah

Stay?

Friday, July 7, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Wednesday, July 12, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Spend an evening with Miss Coco Nostal'jah and friends as they tell you a classic story with an aerial twist. Witness Don's love triangle through movement presentations of partnered balancing, dance and aerial circus arts. Open to all ages but not suitable for unattended minors.

Poet Keno Evol

The Woods, The Trap, The Break

Saturday, July 8, 1-2 p.m.

Saturday, July 15, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Where does trap music, black liberation studies and a social justice music movement meet? In this spoken word, hip hop dance, multimedia performance we will begin to find out. This performance event will dive into the intersections of black studies, the practice of modern escape routes in 2017 America and the joy and struggle of hip hop music. Come conjure alongside community as we experience new work, new questions and new answers.

Playwright/Performer Antonio Duke

The Death of Kings

Saturday, July 8, 2:30-3:30 p.m.

The Death of Kings is an intimate investigation into the life of George Jackson, a leader of the Black Panther movement.

The Fog

Friday, July 14, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

A cast of local actors will read Duke's new work, *The Fog*.

Painter Shaina McCoy

Return to: Love

Saturday, July 8, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 15, 1-2 p.m.

McCoy will discuss her process and share insights on some of her most recent artwork during her lecture-style presentation.

Improv/Theater Troupe Blackout

The Minority Report

Saturday, July 8, 9-10 p.m.

Saturday, July 15, 2:30-3:30 p.m.

The Minority Report is a comedy show that mixes improv, sketch, and sincere dialogue between the performers and audience. Bringing serious issues to comedic light, Blackout aims to engage the audience in an entertaining and insightful experience. We hope.

Photographer Isaac Sundberg

Shug's World

Sunday, July 9, 1-2 p.m.

Sunday, July 16, 1-2 p.m.

Prepare for a glimpse into the life of Sundberg's photography and identity with musical performances by Gym and Saint Laron, dance pieces by Colin Edwards and Canaan Mattson, wardrobe by Eye Crave and TEN Thrift, artwork by Bones and Fur Collective and music from Dj Cilantro.

Poet April Gibson

The Black Woman Press Conference: Dear Everybody Who Ain't a Black Woman

Sunday, July 9, 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 11, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Gibson will perform selections from her current project, a poetry collection titled *The Black Woman Press Conference*, along with a presentation on the process, wider purpose and ultimate goal of the book in the larger community. A discussion with the audience will follow.

TV Writer/Theater Artist/Performer Dame-Jasmine Hughes

ABB (Angry Black Bi&^%#\$)

Sunday, July 9, 7-8 p.m.

Saturday, July 15, 9-10 p.m.

For the woman who is neither INSECURE or an AWKWARD BLACK GIRL, *ABB (Angry Black Bi&^%#\$)* is the sum of ATLANTA + TWO BROKE GIRLS divided by two woke brown girls! *ABB* reflects the modern, unapologetic, and politically incorrect lives of EJ and Chesi, two temperamental codependent besties seeking to make strides in their respective fields (and lives) while challenging biases, managing micro aggressions and living unabashedly. *ABB* is a quarter-life crisis/coming-of-age story of an urban renaissance rapper and a nomadic free-spirit hipster, as they rely on friendship to navigate being displaced in a patriarchal society.

Musician Arthur "L.A." Buckner

The Drum Clinic: How do YOU improvise?

Sunday, July 9, 8:30-9:30 p.m.

Thursday, July 13, 7:30-8:30 p.m. (ASL/AD/OC performance)

Experience a discussion, display and live performance examples of different approaches in transforming imitation into improvisation.

FREE COMMUNITY CLASSES

Admission is free and reservations through the Guthrie Box Office (612.377.2224) are encouraged. All community classes are held onsite at the Guthrie Theater.

Viva:BLACK Yoga Workshop

Thursday, July 6, 5-6 p.m.

Instructor: Vie Boheme

Connect to your breath, strengthen your core and learn more about the relationship between yoga and movement. Learn a new way to anchor yourself as you pursue new knowledge.

Viva:BLACK Dialogue and Discussion

Friday, July 7, 5-6 p.m.

Instructor: Vie Boheme

[Volume 2] *Viva:BLACK* (Vie Boheme's solo performance) employs the work of numerous Black women performers and intellectuals. Watch video footage and discuss the impact and legacy of the women artists referenced in the show.

The Woods The Trap The Break: Writing Workshop

Friday, July 7, 6-7 p.m.

Sunday, July 16, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Instructor: Keno Evol

This workshop will focus on how black poetry has been used as a tactical tool to organize and to archive dreams, grievances and pathways to other worlds. Specific focus will be on the intersections between trap music, black fugitive planning and black social life. Participants will dive into the craft of writing and dreaming, discuss how poetry can be used to organize community, uplift volume in community and speak truth about power in 2017. Time will also be spent discussing what it means to prepare young people to not adapt to the world but to challenge the world with their intellect, courage and unique voice. Participants will also spend some time creating and sharing their own poetic work.

Yes, And!

Saturday, July 8, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Instructor: Kory LaQuess Pullam of Blackout

We as a people have spent our lives making something out of nothing. Come learn the fundamentals of improvisation with Blackout Founding Artistic Director Kory LaQuess Pullam. There are no wrong answers in this fun and exciting workshop.

Fightin' Words: Poetry in Times of Civil Unrest

Saturday, July 8, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Friday, July 14, 6-7 p.m.

Instructor: April Gibson

This class will focus on poets and poetry that demonstrate the ways in which writing can be a form of resistance and an advocacy tool for individual and collective social action. Students will read culturally relevant and responsive works and be provided with generative writing prompts.

Self-love through a Painter's Stroke

Saturday, July 8, 4-5 p.m.

Saturday, July 8, 5-6 p.m.

Instructor: Shaina McCoy

Participants will explore the idea of self-love through the expression of painting. While laying paint to the canvases in the form of a conversation circle, we will be able to speak on our thoughts of what it means to love ourselves, manifest those emotions, and let them flow visually from the paint brush onto a new foundation.

Solo: Rise Up

Sunday, July 9, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, July 12, 6-7 p.m.

Instructor: Antonio Duke

Antonio Duke will lead an acting class designed for solo performance, which will include community based and physical acting exercises.

The House of Atreus' Blues

Sunday, July 9, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 11, 6-7 p.m.

Instructor: Dame-Jasmine Hughes

In this performance-based workshop, the universal themes of Blues music and classical text collide. Discussions, scene work, and a final presentation will explore the dissatisfaction, segregation, self-assessment, individual expression, political isolation and humor that support two seemingly unrelated genres.

Buckets and Beatz Workshop

Thursday, July 6, 6-7 p.m.

Thursday, July 13, 6-7 p.m.

Instructor: Arthur "L.A." Buckner

Come and join the drum circle! Build confidence through improvisation, promote teamwork, increase fine listening skills and heighten rhythmic sensitivity. Yes, all of this and more can happen with two sticks and a bucket. For all ages and abilities.

Women Claiming Space

Saturday, July 15, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Instructor: Joy Dolo Anfinson of Blackout

The art of improvisation is heavily dominated by men and it can become difficult for women to be effectively represented on stage. Local powerhouse Joy Dolo Anfinson leads this workshop on how to own your presence onstage and improvise with fierce confidence.

Partnered Body Balancing Class

Saturday, July 15, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 15, 4-5 p.m.

Instructor: Miss Coco Nostal'jah

Join us for a fun, partnered, body balancing class for families, teens and adults. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

Shug's World: Deeper Thought

Saturday, July 15, 5-6 p.m.

Sunday, July 16, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Instructor: Isaac Sundberg

Learn about the many ways photographer Isaac Sundberg expresses himself and the different projects and mediums he uses.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Blackout is the premier Black comedy troupe of the Twin Cities. From top local venues to renowned international festivals, Blackout has performed and taught for thousands all across the globe. Whether it be improv or sketch, Blackout doesn't back down from battling the drama of the world with a fistful of funny.

Vie Boehme was born in Motown, developed in Pittsburgh and refined in Minneapolis. She is a former dance artist with TU Dance in St. Paul, Minnesota, a founding member of The August Wilson Center Dance Ensemble and a soul, funk, jazz vocalist, poet, choreographer, performance artist and vinyasa yoga instructor. Over the course of her career she has performed the works of Kyle Abraham, Camille A. Brown, Dwight Rhoden, Uri Sands, Darrell Grand Moultrie and Sidra Bell. Her latest single 'Take Cover' is available for purchase and live streaming on iTunes, Amazon.com and Spotify

Born and raised in Minneapolis, MN, **Arthur "L.A." Buckner**'s deep infatuation with music began at an early age. At age 3 he would often go an entire church service without taking his eyes off the drums. His father (baritone singer Art G. Buckner) took notice and shortly thereafter purchased his first drum kit. L.A. sets himself apart from other drummers and musicians with the skill to appropriately incorporate Latin, Blues, Pop, Hip-Hop, and R&B influences into whatever style of music is being played. His appreciation for simplicity complements his love of the groove. He's full of energy, humor, and has a hunger for excellence. L.A. earned his Master's Degree in Music Performance McNally Smith College of Music in St. Paul, MN.

Antonio Duke is inspired by various myths from the black spiritual canon that derive from the Yoruba, Santeria and Voodoo deities. He uses his mediums of acting, playwriting, hip hop dance, and spoken word poetry to bring them to the forefront of his work. In doing so he hopes to illuminate diversity within black mythos in order to hold a space where black spirituals may be celebrated. He is a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater B.F.A. Actor Training Program.

Keno Evol is the founder and executive director of BlackTableArts, an arts-based organization centered on conjuring other worlds through Black art by connecting creatives and cultivating volume in Black Life. Evol has taught at nineteen institutions across the state of Minnesota including *Black Voices*, at Washburn High School offered through TruArtSpeaks, a course centered on providing MPS students an opportunity to engage with black literature, theory and the craft of poetry. Evol won first Place in the 2017 Sonia Sanchez-Langston Hughes Poetry Contest and has received the Verve Grant, Beyond the Pure fellowship, has been published in Split This Rock, Radius Lit and Vinyl.

April Gibson is a poet, essayist, and educator whose work has appeared in Pluck!, Valley Voices, Tidal Basin Review, Literary Mama and elsewhere. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Chicago State University and has received a Loft Mentorship Series Award in Poetry, a Vermont Studio Center Residency, is VONA/Voices Writing Workshop participant, a fellow of The Watering Hole Poetry Retreat and a Callaloo Creative Writing Workshop fellow. Her chapbook, *Automation*, was published by Willow Books as part of their emerging poet and writer series. Her current project is a full-length poetry collection titled *The Black Woman Press Conference*.

Dame-Jasmine Hughes is an Alabama born, Mississippi Delta-raised, Tougaloo College cum laude graduate; product of the historically black boarding school Piney Woods, MFA graduate of California Institute of the Arts, mother and Ivey Award winning actress. Hughes creates process-based work that centers around authentic craftsmanship, global perceptiveness, catharsis and Afro-futurism. Her work has been showcased in Los Angeles, New York, Denver and the Twin Cities. The *Star Tribune* dubbed her a Twin Cities "rising star" for her work at theaters including Mixed Blood Theatre, Pillsbury House Theater, Penumbra Theater and Ten Thousand Things.

Shaina McCoy is a Minnesota native painter. McCoy paints with a delicate, yet heavy stroke that creates a timeless nostalgia with texture, color, body language, and faceless people of her past and present. Continuing to evolve, she plays with various textures and subject matter. Contact: shainamccoy.com

Miss Coco Nostal'jah is an aerial arts coach at Expertease Fitness, a certified group fitness instructor and a personal trainer. After attaining her Master's Degree, Miss Coco Nostal'jah went on to create, manage and facilitate youth programming for the YMCA and the YWCA. She discovered circus arts and has been training and performing for four years. She regularly performs in various events and creates workshops for people of all ages across the Twin Cities.

Isaac Sundberg is a photographer whose photos are celebrations mixing the aesthetics of urban upbringing and his eclectic experiences. Growing up in the Midwest, his definition of identity comes with some confusion, but being a South Minneapolis native and doing identity projects in New York City and San Francisco has helped Sundberg explore his intersectional reach.

ABOUT THE NEW GRIOTS TEAM

AsaleSol, Associate Producer. Founder of Sankofa Underground North (S.U.N.) Academy and a member of the dance ensemble BLAQ, AsaleSol comes to New Griots with a passion for Black arts and expression. As the Zimbabwean saying goes, 'if you can walk, you can dance, if you can talk, you can sing;' AsaleSol believes that each of us is capable of artistry, yet too often it goes undeveloped or unrecognized. Returning to theater after a long hiatus dedicated to Black youth and education, AsaleSol is excited to support the mission and vision of the New Griots Festival that seeks to both further develop and provide a platform for recognition of Twin Cities emerging Black artists.

Jamil Jude, Co-Founder and Lead Producer. Jude is a freelance director, producer, playwright and dramaturg. Self-identifying as an "Artist Plus," Jude feels most at home bringing socially relevant art to the community.

Jude is a participant in the Leadership U: One-on-One program, funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group. The program provides him a residency at Park Square Theatre, where he works as Artistic Programming Associate. Prior to that, he served as the National New Play Network (NNPN) Producer in Residence at Mixed Blood Theatre Company for three seasons. He remains an Affiliated Artist with NNPN. Before joining the staff at Mixed Blood, Jude served as a New Play Producing Fellow at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C.

Jude has helmed productions for D.C. area companies such as Olney Theatre and Forum Theatre, as well as various Twin Cities theater companies, including Park Square Theatre, History Theatre, Daleko Arts, Freshwater Theatre, Theatre in the Round, Stages Theatre Company and Lakeshore Players. Upcoming directing projects include Curious Theatre in Denver, CO and Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company in Atlanta, GA.

Salima Seale, Stage Manager. Salima Seale is a freelance stage manager based in the Twin Cities. She graduated from Macalester College with a BA in Theatre in 2014. Her most recent credit is *The Red Shoes* at Open Eye Figure Theatre. Seale spends her summers working with Penumbra Theatre Company's Summer Institute, a leadership development program that trains young people to use art to promote justice and equity in their communities. She is currently exploring ways to make theater production more accessible to Black youth. She has previously worked at Penumbra Theatre Company, Daleko Arts, Park Square Theater, Open Eye Figure Theater and Intermedia Arts, among others.

Josh Wilder, Co-Founder. Wilder is a playwright and actor hailing from South Philadelphia. His work has been developed at The Fire This Time Festival, Playwrights' Center, Pillsbury House+Theater, The History Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, The Drama League and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. His play *Leftovers* was a recipient of the 2014 Holland New Voices Playwright Award at The Great Plains Theatre Conference. Wilder is a 2014-2015 Jerome Fellow at The Playwrights' Center where he's currently developing, *The Dandelion Plays*, a trilogy set in inner-city Philadelphia. Training: BFA, Carnegie Mellon University.

THE NEW GRIOTS FESTIVAL is dedicated to celebrating, advocating, and advancing the careers of emerging Black artists in the Twin Cities. Founded in 2015 by Josh Wilder and Jamil Jude, the festival was created to connect emerging Black artists, of various artistic disciplines, to one another and highlight their achievements over the course of a weekend.

THE GUTHRIE THEATER (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) was founded by Sir Tyrone Guthrie in 1963 and is an American center for theater performance, production, education and professional training, dedicated to producing the great works of dramatic literature and to cultivating the next generation of theater artists. Under the leadership of Haj, the Guthrie produces a mix of classic and contemporary plays on three stages, and continues to set a national standard for excellence in theatrical production and performance. In 2006, the Guthrie opened its new home on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. Designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, the Guthrie Theater houses three state-of-the-art stages, production facilities, classrooms, full-service restaurants and dramatic public lobbies. guthrietheater.org

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