



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ARTSEMERSON ANNOUNCES ITS 2017/18 SEASON  
FEATURING THE RETURN OF THE 7 FINGERS AND STEP AFRIKA!  
PRODUCTIONS FROM CHILE, CAMBODIA, SYRIA, FRANCE & BELGIUM;  
AND THE WORLD PREMIERE OF ACCLAIMED AUTHOR  
CLAUDIA RANKINE'S *THE WHITE CARD***

**SEASON TICKET PACKAGES AND GROUPS OF 10+ ON SALE NOW**

*Email for more information, high resolution images, and interviews.*

**[Boston, MA—May 1, 2017]** ArtsEmerson, Boston's leading presenter of contemporary world theatre, proudly announces its 2017/18 Season, featuring 14 productions from eight countries for its eighth season. Performances take place in its two landmark locations: the Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre and the Emerson Paramount Center in Boston's Downtown Theatre District.

Ticket packages start at \$70, are on sale now, and may be purchased online at [ArtsEmerson.org](http://ArtsEmerson.org) or by visiting or calling the ArtsEmerson box office at 617.824.8400. Tickets are also available for groups of 10 or more for any performance during the season. Single tickets for each production will go on sale to the public at later dates.



*Reversible*



*In the Eruptive Mode*



*The Migration: Reflections On Jacob Lawrence*

ArtsEmerson's 2017/18 Season is dedicated to Ted Cutler (1930–2017), Trustee Emeritus of Emerson College and champion and grand supporter of ArtsEmerson, for his passionate enthusiasm and dedication to the performing arts; and for his vision, leadership and generosity that helped transform the College and its neighborhood into a vibrant center of arts innovation.

“ArtsEmerson audiences are going to recognize much of what they’ve come to rely on us for in this season,” shares Co-Artistic Director David Dower. “It’s international in scope and filled with the kind of events not offered anywhere else — genre-busting works that blend theatre and film, theatre and dance, theatre and music — in unexpected ways. Further, audiences will experience a mix of classic writers like Shakespeare, Shaw, Camus — along with fresh voices of Claudia Rankine and Guillermo Calderon. We’ll see returning favorites like *The 7 Fingers* and *Step Afrika!* as well as some of the world’s great artists who have not yet found a home in Boston. This season has our full range on display, and we’re excited to share it with our city.”

“Because we commit to ‘the world on stage,’ adds Co-Artistic Director P. Carl, “as well as the value that theatre belongs to everyone in Boston, this new season covers a diversity of stories that will invite city-wide conversations across our differences. Even after the curtain comes down, we plan to talk with our audience about culture and beauty and politics and the possibility for deeper human connection as the result of the power of art. We are particularly thrilled to have commissioned and developed Claudia Rankine’s new play, **The White Card**, her next contribution to the conversation on race in America. This world premiere will offer Boston an opportunity to go deep into the divide around race to create dialogue that seeks both to provoke and to heal.”

## **REVERSIBLE** (U.S. Premiere)

### **The 7 Fingers**

*Canada – Montreal*

SEP 6–24, 2017

Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre

*The mind-blowing circus troupe returns to Boston!*

In the summer of 2016, **Cuisine & Confessions** wowed Boston audiences nightly with *The 7 Fingers*’ trademark acrobatic and choreographic prowess combined with on-stage cooking. Now, the company returns with a whimsical and vibrant U.S. premiere where eight virtuosic performers travel through time and space to honor their elders. **Reversible** represents the best of contemporary circus by shining a spotlight on the poetry of the human form, linking every ending to a new beginning, and showing that our past is always present. Through an electrifying mix of theatre, illusion, dance, music, and acrobatics, **Reversible** is dedicated to former generations whose stories might hold the key to a better tomorrow.

Director: Gypsy Snider

Associate Director: Isabelle Chassé

Music Director: Colin Gagné with Sébastien Soldevila, Raphaël Cruz, Ines Talbi, and Dominiq Hamel

## **HOME**

### **Geoff Sobelle**

*United States – Philadelphia*

SEP 27–OCT 1, 2017

Emerson Paramount Center, Robert J. Orchard Stage

*A magical house party of the greatest proportion.*

On an empty stage, a house is conjured from thin air. People move in, move out, get evicted, burn it down, loot it, rent it, remodel it, get married and divorced in it, grow up in it, die in it, haunt it — and all the while, they live among the traces of residents present, past and future. Geoff Sobelle’s **HOME** is a house party of the greatest proportion, allowing everyone who ever lived there to transcend time and to share space. A magical, large-scale spectacle built from the ground up, **HOME** combines dance, illusion, live music, home-spun engineering and an inventive use of audience interaction to compose an experience that asks, *where* is home? If it is not a place, *what* is home? **HOME** explores — and explodes — the relationship between “house” and “home,” and it invites audiences to think twice about the physical and emotional bonds that connect us.

Created by: Geoff Sobelle

Directed by: Lee Sunday Evans

Scenic Design by: Steven Dufala

## **KISS**

**Guillermo Calderón**

**Produced by ArtsEmerson**

*Chile*

OCT 26–NOV 19, 2017

Emerson Paramount Center, Jackie Liebergott Black Box

*What you don’t know can hurt you.*

When a young, aspirational theatre troupe discovers and decides to perform what they believe is a Syrian soap opera, they come to realize just how much they got wrong. **Kiss** is a brilliant play-within-a-play that shows how misunderstanding cultural cues can reveal blind spots you never knew you had. **Kiss** dissolves cultural borders and asks audiences to question what they believe to be true of the complicated world around them. Told in a layered, self-referential style, Chilean playwright and director Guillermo Calderón (who brought *Neva* to ArtsEmerson in 2013) brings his masterful sensibility to this intense, tightly wound new production where naiveté can turn out to be the kiss of death.

Playwright: Guillermo Calderón

Director: David Dower

Scenery: Kris Holmes

Costumes: Tyler Kinney

Lighting: Scott Pinkney

Projections: Garrett Herzig

Sound: Arshan Gailus

## **GARDENS SPEAK**

**Tania El Khoury**

*Syria*

NOV 12–19, 2017

Emerson Paramount Center, Robert J. Orchard Stage (audience on-stage, curtain down)

*Put your ear to the ground. Those who resist are not forgotten.*

Across Syria, many gardens conceal the dead bodies of activists and protesters who took to the streets during the early periods of the uprising against the Ba’athist government in 2011. These domestic burials play out a continuing collaboration between the living and the dead — each providing safety, truth and a voice for each other. In **Gardens Speak**, Lebanese artist Tania El Khoury carefully reconstructs the oral histories of ten ordinary people and transforms Syrian statistics into universal, human stories via a stunning, full-body interactive experience. In a small, dimly lit room, audience members are assigned a name, guided to a grave and instructed to dig through soil to access oral histories of forgotten citizens. Each narrative has been carefully constructed with the friends and family members of the deceased to retell their stories as they themselves may have recounted it. A 40-minute experience with only 10 audience members admitted at a time, **Gardens Speak** was a sold-out experience at The Public’s *Under The Radar Festival* in New York.

Author: Tania El Khoury  
Production Manager: Jessica Harrington  
Set Design: Abir Saksouk  
Research Assistant & Writer (Arabic): Keenana Issa  
Calligraphy & Tombstones Design: Dia Batal  
Sound Recording & Editing: Khairy Eibesh (Stronghold Sound)

## **THE STATE OF SIEGE**

**Théâtre de la Ville**

*France*

NOV 9–11, 2017

Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre

*Stand up to the face of fear.*

Written by Nobel Prize-winning author Albert Camus, staged by leading avant-garde French director Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota and produced by the celebrated Paris theatre company Théâtre de la Ville, **The State of Siege** is set to take the country by storm this fall on its first visit to the United States. The rarely staged work, penned in 1948, weaves a tale of paranoia, endurance and political struggle, resulting in a dizzying modern metaphor. With a renowned ensemble working on an epic scale, **The State of Siege** (*L’État de siège*) explores how art can serve as a way to process – and to resist – human atrocities. What role can art play in the face of peril? Faced with imminent danger, can the human spirit remain focused on the beauty of life?

Produced by: Théâtre de la Ville  
Text written by: Albert Camus  
Assistant Director: Christophe Lemaire

Co-produced by: Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg  
Directed by: Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota  
Set Designer: Yves Collet

## **BANGSOKOL: A REQUIEM FOR CAMBODIA**

**Rithy Panh and Him Sophy**

*Cambodia*

DEC 19–20, 2017

Emerson Paramount Center, Robert J. Orchard Stage

*Survivors of the Khmer Rouge collaborate on a stunning musical experience that creates space to heal.*

**Bangsokol: A Requiem for Cambodia** is an extraordinary new composition fusing music, film, voice and movement. It is the first major symphonic work that addresses the traumas that occurred in Cambodia in the late seventies, and is the first collaboration between the Oscar®-nominated director Rithy Panh and lauded composer Him Sophy — both survivors of the Khmer Rouge and now at the forefront of Cambodia’s cultural renaissance. Anchored in “bangsokol” — a ritual for the dead or soon to be deceased — the performance intertwines traditional Khmer instrumentalists and vocalists with Western chamber orchestra and chorus to create something innately Cambodian but relatable to audiences everywhere. **Bangsokol** is an act of cultural renewal, aiming to return the arts to their place at the heart of Cambodian society. While the world continues to witness new genocides, wars and destruction, **Bangsokol** urges us to express our scars from the past in order to forge a new path forward.

Director/Stage Direction/Filmmaker: Rithy Panh  
Musical Director: Andrew Cyr  
Librettist/Text (US): Trent Walker  
Original Idea: Charley Todd

Composer: Him Sophy  
Staging: Gideon Obarzanek  
Ensemble: Metropolis Ensemble  
Commissioner: Cambodian Living Arts

## **IN THE ERUPTIVE MODE**

**Sulayman Al-Bassam Theatre**

*Kuwait*

JAN 24–28, 2018

Emerson Paramount Center, Robert J. Orchard Stage

*These are voices of the Arab Spring.*

In 2011, democratic uprisings erupted all over the Arab world. Citizens challenged their leadership and questioned regimes. **In the Eruptive Mode** presents six monologues of ordinary citizens — all women — caught in the violence and chaos of the Arab Spring. These visceral, poetic monologues with song capture unheard voices, each at their own precarious tipping point. Internationally acclaimed Anglo-Kuwaiti writer and director Sulayman Al-Bassam brought his inventive satire **The Speaker’s Progress** to ArtsEmerson in 2011. Now he returns with a powerful new production. Through voice, music and sound, **In the Eruptive Mode** embraces contemporary language and new dramatic forms to respond to the challenges that still reign across much of the Arab world. Raw, brutally satirical and entirely original: these are voices of the Arab Spring.

Written and Directed by: Sulayman Al-Bassam

Scenography/Lighting: Eric Soyer

Composer/Musician: Brittany Anjou

Actors: Catherine Gowl and Hala Omran

## **TORREY PINES**

**Clyde Petersen**

*United States – Seattle*

FEB 14–17, 2018

Emerson Paramount Center, Jackie Liebergott Black Box

*A queer coming-of-age story comes into hallucinogenic focus set to a punk-rock beat.*

Raised by a schizophrenic single mother fueled by political conspiracy and family dysfunction, award-winning filmmaker Clyde Petersen's adolescent years unfolded in a series of baffling and hallucinated events. In **Torrey Pines**, Petersen brings audiences along for the beautiful, confusing, heartbreaking and funny cross-county ride with stop-motion animation film set to the score of a live rock band on stage. Based on a true story, the production tells a trans-queer-punk coming-of-age story, rich with '90s pop-culture references in the likes of *Star Trek*, Nintendo and MTV. The Seattle band Your Heart Breaks performs the vivid score live in tandem with the film, with original music recorded in collaboration with members of The Moldy Peaches and Death Cab for Cutie.

Director: Clyde Petersen

Animators: Clyde Petersen & Chris Looney

Production Team: Aidan Baxter-Ferguson, Jack Carroll, Dena Zilber, Terrance Robinson, Merce Lemon, Zach Burba & Leah Gold

## **ADA/AVA**

### **Manual Cinema**

*United States – Chicago*

FEB 28–MAR 4, 2018

Emerson Paramount Center, Robert J. Orchard Stage

*The quiet lives of twins unfold a magical, silhouetted world.*

Delightfully gothic, beautiful and emotionally complex, **Ada/Ava** utilizes special effect techniques from the early age of cinema — shadow puppetry, live-action silhouettes and overhead projection — to conjure a magic spell of multimedia storytelling, complete with a live musical score. Driven by innovation, the masterful technicians of Chicago-based Manual Cinema are one of the hottest rising ensembles in America, with audiences marveling at their creations even as their methods are plainly revealed. Beside a lighthouse somewhere on the New England coastline, twin sisters tend to the tower's guiding light and to each other, until Ava unexpectedly dies. Entrenched in the patterns of a life built for two, Ada embarks on a journey to move beyond her grief and discover herself with the arrival of a traveling carnival. Here, the unrestrained imagination moves the melancholy act of mourning through a journey across the thresholds of life and death.

Created by: Manual Cinema

Directed by: Drew Dir

Sound Design/Original Score by: Kyle Vegter and Ben Kauffman

Designed by: Drew Dir, Sarah Fornace, and Julia Miller

Additional Drums, Synthesizer, and Piano by: Michael Hilger

## **THE WHITE CARD** (World Premiere)

**Claudia Rankine**

**Produced by ArtsEmerson**

**Commissioned by ArtsEmerson in association with American Repertory Theater (Cambridge, MA) and The Broad Stage (Santa Monica, CA)**

*United States – Boston*

Emerson Paramount Center, Robert J. Orchard Stage

DATES TBA

*From the author of 'Citizen' comes a new play exploring the state of our racial imagination.*

In this stunning world premiere by Claudia Rankine, **The White Card** unfolds with a masterful touch, raising uncomfortable questions about what — and who — are on display. Exploring contemporary headlines and cultural touchstones, **The White Card** refuses to remain “just a play,” safely entrenched on the stage. Like Rankine’s 2014 *New York Times* best-selling book of poetry entitled *Citizen*, this new play unpacks the insidious ways in which racism manifests itself in everyday situations, prompting the question, “Can American society progress if whiteness stays invisible?” In the elegant loft of a powerful, well-intentioned white couple in the New York City art world, a black artist named Charlotte Cummings arrives in the hopes of selling her new work. When the couple’s activist son joins them for dinner, tensions arise, truths are interrogated and the notion of intent — both conscious and unconscious — becomes paramount.

Playwright: Claudia Rankine

Director: TBA

Dramaturg: P. Carl

## **HAMLET / SAINT JOAN**

### **Bedlam**

*United States – New York City*

MAR 7–25, 2018

Emerson Paramount Center, Robert J. Orchard Stage

*He’s the prince. She’s the rebel.*

He is a dark, enigmatic prince obsessed with seeking revenge for his father’s death. She is a steadfast rebel who challenged the powers of the Church to restore France to greatness. Iconic figures from two great dramatic classics — Hamlet and Saint Joan — are brought vividly to life in two riveting, unexpectedly funny, stripped-down stagings by four actors from Bedlam, the acclaimed New York City theatre company, directed by Eric Tucker. Behold William Shakespeare and George Bernard Shaw’s most famous creations side by side, in repertory, in **Hamlet / Saint Joan**.

### **Hamlet**

Prince Hamlet is depressed. Having been summoned home to Denmark to attend his father’s funeral, he is shocked to find his mother already remarried — to his father’s brother, Claudius. Worse still, Claudius has had himself crowned king despite the fact that Hamlet is heir to the throne. No wonder Hamlet suspects foul play. Bedlam brings their unique performance style to Shakespeare’s greatest play — arguably the greatest play in the English language.

### **Saint Joan**

In this epic story, Shaw paints Joan of Arc not as a saint, witch or madwoman, but as a farm girl who is an illiterate intellectual, a true genius whose focus on the individual rocked the Church and State to their core. Four actors perform all 24 roles in Bedlam’s production of George Bernard Shaw’s **Saint Joan**, declared “Irresistible! Ferocious!” and “A force of nature!” by *The New York Times*.

HAMLET by William Shakespeare in repertory with SAINT JOAN by George Bernard Shaw  
Directed by: Eric Tucker  
Set Design: John McDermott  
Lighting Design: Les Dickert  
Costume/Sound Design: Eric Tucker  
Tour Produced in Association with Arktype / Thomas O. Kriegsmann

## **THE MIGRATION: REFLECTIONS ON JACOB LAWRENCE**

### **Step Afrika!**

*United States – Washington, DC*

MAY 3–6, 2018

Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre

*The Great Migration brought to life through an explosion of dance, drums and canvas.*

Step Afrika! triumphantly returns to Boston with **The Migration**, a multimedia powerhouse production that chronicles and celebrates the paths of the brave men and women who left the American South searching for better opportunities. In 2011, dance company Step Afrika! was granted exclusive access to painter Jacob Lawrence’s groundbreaking series about “The Great Migration,” and here they transform it into a textured, interdisciplinary movement piece with lightning-fast claps, intricate footwork, percussive chants and perfect synchronicity. The Great Migration of 1.6 million people from the South to the North in the twenties represented a quest for greater prosperity for African Americans. Jacob Lawrence depicted this historic transcendence of tragedy in his work *The Migration Series*. Step Afrika! brings Lawrence’s iconic paintings to life in their thrilling new show **The Migration** through African-American stepping, South African Gumboot, Western African dance, vocals, drumming and audience participation.

Company: Step Afrika!

Artistic Director: Mfoniso Akpan

Assistant Artistic Director: Christopher Brient

Production/Stage Manager: John Alexander

## **COLD BLOOD**

**Michèle Anne de Mey and Jaco Van Dormael**

*Belgium*

MAY 30–JUN 3, 2018

Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre

*A delightful new enchantment of stagecraft and cinema from the makers of **Kiss & Cry**.*

Is there life before death? That’s the big question posed by the surprisingly funny and whimsical new show from the troupe behind ArtsEmerson’s 2013 word-of-mouth phenomenon, **Kiss & Cry**. Utilizing that same theatrical magic — cinematic techniques, miniature sets, dancing hands and a poetic voice-over — **Cold Blood** cycles through a series of different lives (and deaths) in a hypnotic dream-like state. You’ll laugh, you’ll cry — and you’ll never look at your hands the same way again. Join us for a celebration of life, the senses, love and the final moments of light. Under the direction of Belgian choreographer and dancer Michèle Anne De Mey and the award-winning filmmaker Jaco Van Dormael, master artists use live film projection on stage to bring miniature worlds into full view of the audience. “Magic happens,” *Le Devoir* wrote in their review of **Cold Blood**, and it’s a good bet that anyone who witnesses this pure act of creation will agree.



Created by: Michèle Anne De Mey & Jaco Van Dormael & the Kiss & Cry collectif  
In Collective Creation with: Grégory Grosjean, Thomas Gunzig, Julien Lambert, Sylvie Olivé & Nicolas Olivier  
Executive Producer: Astragale asbl  
Associate Producer: Théâtre de Namur

### **ArtsEmerson 2017/18 Season Packages At-A-Glance**

ArtsEmerson offers four season ticket packages, giving access to the best seats at best prices before single tickets go on sale to the general public. Patrons may visit [ArtsEmerson.org](http://ArtsEmerson.org) or call the box office at 617.824.8400 for specific details.

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### **About ArtsEmerson**

ArtsEmerson is the professional presenting and producing organization of the Office of the Arts at Emerson College, and aims to address gaps in Boston's cultural landscape by putting the world on stage and inviting diverse audiences from across the region into its historic downtown venues. Founded in 2010 by Robert J. Orchard under the auspices of Emerson College, ArtsEmerson quickly established a reputation for putting great work from diverse cultures on its stages — work that emanates from the language of theatre, yet pushes the boundaries into dance, music, and opera. The organization is committed to building a cultural institution that embraces and reflects the changing demographics of the City of Boston. ArtsEmerson operates from the core belief that the arts are for everyone. In 2015, Orchard moved into the role of Creative Consultant. Currently ArtsEmerson is led by Co-Artistic Directors, David Dower and P. Carl, and Executive Director, David Howse. This shared leadership model reflects the organization's values — that multiple voices are essential to leading a 21st century arts organization. For more information, visit [artsemerson.org](http://artsemerson.org).

### **About Emerson College**

Based in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theatre District, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in the liberal arts, communication, and the arts. The College has approximately 3,500 undergraduates and 670 graduate students from across the United States and 50 countries. Supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a renowned faculty, students participate in more than 90 student organizations and performance groups. Emerson is known for its experiential learning programs at Emerson Los Angeles, located in Hollywood, and at its beautifully restored 14th-century castle in the Netherlands. Additionally, there are opportunities to study in Washington, DC, London, China, the Czech Republic, Spain, Austria, Greece, France, Ireland, Mexico, Cuba, England, and South Africa. The College has an active network of 37,000 alumni. For more information, visit [emerson.edu](http://emerson.edu).

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