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**ArtsEmerson Announces Its New
PUBLIC DIALOGUE SERIES:
*Naming Ourselves: Provocative Conversations on
Identity and Representation***

**Five Free Public Conversations
With Artists and Community Leaders
Emerson/Jackie Liebergott Black Box, Boston**

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

[BOSTON, MA – September 16, 2015] ArtsEmerson, under the leadership of Polly Carl, David Dower, and David Howse, announces a new Public Dialogue Series entitled **Naming Ourselves: Provocative Conversations on Identity and Representation**. The series, featured as stand-alone events not tied to a performance, will run throughout the 2015-2016 season and features five free public conversations surrounding current topics that explore different aspects of identity including the physical body, race, the art of listening, and more.

The free, open to the public events take place at the Emerson/Jackie Liebergott Black Box located in the Emerson/Paramount Center at 559 Washington Street in Boston’s historic theatre district. Complimentary admission may be reserved by calling 617.824.8400 or online at www.artsemerson.org.



Tangela Large
Actor, “Mr. Joy”



David Adjmi
Artist/Playwright



Meow Meow
Artist, “An Audience with Meow Meow”

“Our free Public Dialogue Series is in service to our organizational mission—to foster civic transformation through the shared experience of art and public dialogue,” shares ArtsEmerson Creative Director Polly Carl. “The series is aimed at connecting the work on our stages, our artists, our community partners, and our audiences through conversations that address the concerns and challenges of our contemporary moment.”

“As many of our audience members know, we regularly do talk-backs after our performances, this series is an opportunity to go deeper into conversation—to discuss where art intersects with the cultural questions and concerns of our current political moment,” says David Dower, Artistic Director.

According to Managing Director David Howse, “this will be the first of an ongoing series each year. We have so many great artists and community members we connect with during our season, we see this as the first of a regular series that brings the artist from our stages together with our local and national community—bringing the smartest minds to critical topics.”

NAMING OURSELVES: PROVOCATIVE CONVERSATIONS ON IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION

Dialogue One: Exploring the Difference between Real and Imagined Bodies on Stage

Tuesday, October 13, 7PM

We are living in a moment when bodies are at odds with identities—where Rachel Dolezal and Caitlyn Jenner create endless internet wars over what constitutes one’s real self. What can artists tell us about our cultural struggle to come to terms with the relationship between our embodied selves and our lived identities? We will talk to artists who put their bodies on the line—whether through inhabiting multiple characters, through exposing their innermost vulnerabilities, or through crossing gender lines—to consider how performance expands our sense of selfhood.

Moderator: Polly Carl, ArtsEmerson Creative Director and Director of HowlRound

Panelists:

Tangela Large, who will perform in Daniel Beaty’s one-person play **Mr. Joy** in September/October

David Adjmi, artist and playwright

Meow Meow, who performs in **An Audience with Meow Meow** in October

Dialogue Two: Interrogating Whiteness (Parts 1 & 2)

Journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates writes, “whiteness and blackness are not a fact of providence, but of policy”—that racism isn’t an ahistorical fact but a result of a “seizure of power” by whites. Whiteness’s hold on social, economic, and political privilege is on fragile footing as the echoing chants of BlackLivesMatter grow by the day and the Bree Newsome’s of the world dare to pull down the flags of white supremacy. How can art help us expose that whiteness is “not a fact of providence” and create new and more equitable narratives of race in America?

Interrogating Whiteness: Part 1

Wednesday, November 4th , 7PM

After the death of Trayvon Martin, Walter Mosley wrote in Newsweek, “. . . we must ask the taboo question: what is white? This term gained forceful meaning in America when Christian European men found themselves between the indigenous peoples (that they slaughtered) and Africans (whom they enslaved). These so-called white men’s ancestors didn’t consider themselves one pandemic race. To call a man a ‘white man’ is racist terminology in itself.” Join us as Mr. Mosley expands these ideas and interrogates the notion of Whiteness. The speech will be followed by a facilitated discussion.

Interrogating Whiteness: Part 2

Tuesday, February 9, 7PM

This dialogue will explore the themes of the ArtsEmerson/Company One co-production of *An Octoroon*, deemed by the New York Times as the play that “may turn out to be this decade’s most eloquent theatrical statement on race in America today.”

Dialogue Three: Curation and the Politics of Listening

Tuesday, April 5, 7PM

How do we choose what art an audience gets to see? How do we know what they will like, what we like, what will entertain and provoke, and what will sell tickets? How is our curatorial practice a reflection of our own identities and the identities of the audiences we imagine? Finally, how much of curatorial expertise comes from knowing and how much from listening to the communities we represent?

Dialogue Four: “Some Other Race”: Exploring the Diversity within the Latino Story

Tuesday, May 10, 7PM

Latinos are becoming a majority demographic in the US but yet still find themselves boxed into “some other race” on the US Census. How are Latinos updating our national narrative to be truly reflective of a changing America? How does the diversity inside of the Latino experience, whether Cuban, or Chicano, or South American, challenge and reflect the American cultural narrative? How do artists and communities create stories inside the breadth that is the Latino identity?

**dates and participants subject to change.*

About Dialogue One Participants

Tangela Large was born and raised in East Point, GA, and was most recently seen as Esther in Lynn Nottage’s *Intimate Apparel* (Chautauqua Institution). Other regional credits include *Serial Black Face* (Long Warf), *Mr. Joy* (City Theatre), *Orpheus Descending* (Intiman Theatre), *Pen/Man/Ship* at the (Magic Theatre), *Supporting Actress*. Tangela earned her MFA in Acting from Brown University in 2014.

David Adjmi’s plays include *Marie Antoinette*, *Elective Affinities*, *Stunning*, *The Evildoers*, and others. He recently finished a new play entitled *The Stumble* about the composer Oscar Levant, and is developing a new piece entitled *Stereophonic* with Daniel Aukin and Will Butler (Arcade Fire). David’s memoir *Save Us, Superman!* is forthcoming from Harper Collins, and a second play collection from TCG, *1789 / 1978*, will be published in 2015.

Meow Meow

Post-postmodern diva Meow Meow has hypnotized, inspired and terrified audiences globally. Meow Meow starred on London’s West End in Kneehigh Theatre and Michel Legrand’s *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, and in her own solo concerts at the legendary Apollo Theater. She had a sensational season of Meow Meow’s *Little Match Girl* at London’s Queen Elizabeth Hall and performed Jean Cocteau’s piece for Edith Piaf, *Le Bel Indifférent*, for the Greenwich Music Festival (United States). She has created original works for numerous international arts festivals and venues from Shanghai to Wroclaw, as well as performed everything from Schubert and Schumann with an orchestra, to touring with punk outfit Amanda Palmer and The Dresden Dolls. Named one of the Top Performers of the Year by *The New Yorker*, Meow Meow’s unique brand of

“kamikaze cabaret” and performance art exotica has been called “Sensational” (The Times UK), “cabaret diva of the highest order” (New York Post), “The Queen of Chanson” (Berliner Zeitung), and “a phenomenon” (Australian press). David Bowie, Pina Bausch and Mikhail Baryshnikov have curated multi-award winning Meow Meow’s solo works. For more information visit www.meowmeowrevolution.com.

Polly Carl is the Creative Director of ArtsEmerson where s/he co-artistic directs an annual season of international work for the downtown theaters of Emerson College. S/he develops, dramaturgs, and presents an eclectic array of work from diverse artists from around the globe. Operating from the core belief that theater is for everyone, Carl seeks to use the work of the theater in concert with opportunities for public dialogue to foster civic transformation through the shared experience of art. In addition, as a Distinguished Artist in Residence on the Emerson faculty, s/he has developed a creative producing curriculum for Emerson College students to fully explore the professional work of ArtsEmerson and HowlRound. Carl is also the Director and co-founder of HowlRound, a knowledge commons by and for the theater community. HowlRound is an online platform as well as an in-person convener of theater practitioners that explores key issues in the field and extends an open invitation for international participation. S/he previously worked as the Producing Artistic Director at the Playwrights’ Center in Minneapolis, and as the Director of Artistic Development for Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago. S/he holds a PhD in Comparative Studies in Discourse and Society from the University of Minnesota.

Participants in upcoming Dialogue Series events will be listed in further press releases.

About ArtsEmerson

ArtsEmerson is the professional presenting and producing organization of the Office of the Arts at Emerson College. Through its international programming and local community partnerships ArtsEmerson serves the city of Boston, the Emerson community (students, faculty and staff), and the global field of performance practice. Founded in 2010, the same year that the U.S. Census confirmed Boston as a majority-minority city, ArtsEmerson 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. For more information on ArtsEmerson, visit www.artsemerson.org.

ArtsEmerson’s History

Founded in 2010 by Robert J. Orchard, ArtsEmerson is designed to address gaps in Boston’s cultural landscape through international programming and inviting new audiences into Emerson College’s downtown venues. ArtsEmerson quickly established a reputation for putting great work from around the world on its stages—work that emanates from the language of theater, yet pushes the boundaries into dance, music, and opera.

ArtsEmerson’s first seasons focused on building a world-class cultural institution that achieved visibility and a leadership role in the city in short order. By 2012, *Boston Magazine* named ArtsEmerson the Best Theatre in Boston. By December of 2013, WBUR critic Ed Seigel cited in his annual “Best of” round-up, saying: “In four short years, [they] have established ArtsEmerson as one of the most important cultural institutions in New England.” In 2015, ArtsEmerson repeated as Boston Magazine’s Best Theatre in Boston, this time with a special citation for our dual focus on quality programming and deep community involvement. ArtsEmerson continues to evolve its practice on both pillars: artistic excellence and civic impact, committed to building an audience for the work that reflects the diversity of Boston’s demographics, and to establishing ArtsEmerson as an active civic partner in Boston.

In 2015 Orchard moved into the role of Creative Consultant. Currently ArtsEmerson is led by Artistic Director, David Dower, Creative Director, Polly Carl, and Managing Director, David Howse. This shared leadership model reflects the organization's values — that multiple voices are essential to leading a 21st century arts organization.

About Emerson College

Based in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theatre District, with sites in the Netherlands and Los Angeles, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in communication and the arts, a mission informed by liberal learning. The College has 3,750 undergraduates and 750 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 study and internship programs in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., the Netherlands, London, China and the Czech Republic. The College has an active network of 32,000 alumni who hold leadership positions in communications and the arts. For more information, visit emerson.edu.

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