OKWUI OKPOKWASILI 917-620-0895 okwuio@gmail.com

EXPERIENCE

Summer 2022

Inaugural Kravis Studio Resident Artist MOMA Performance Project in development

2021

Sex Ecologies Kunsthall Trondheim and Seedbox Trondheim, Norway Installation and Performance

Crossing the Line Festival Weeksville Heritage Center Installation and Performance Before the Whisper Becomes the Word on the way, undone

The Hammer Art Museum Los Angeles "Witch Hunt" Poor People's TV Room Solo

The New Museum "Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America" Poor People's TV Room Solo

Jacob's Pillow Swallow the Moon

River to River Festival Lower Manhattan Cultural Council **Procession**

The Highline on the way, undone

2020

Utterances from The Chorus

Danspace Project Platform Series

Co-Curator/Performer

A groundbreaking series in its tenth year, that pairs the Chief Curator and Executive Director of Danspace Project with a performing artist to develop an exhibition series and a publication shaped around a compelling point of inquiry. In this platform we considered how the practice of singing in a chorus might be instructive as a model of social relation, memory transmission and imagined futures. In partnership with Danspace staff, we commissioned performers, activists, choreographers, poets, visual artists and essayists to engage with us in this inquiry while designing a score for the creation of an improvisational chorus with the public.

2019

Day Pulls Down the Sky

Album

The release of an album of original songs, including songs from Bronx Gothic to Poor People's TV Room.

2019

Adaku's Revolt

Tilt Festival/FIAF/Abrons Art Center (New York)

A multidisciplinary performance work centering around a young black girl who resists normative standards of beauty to embrace the singular power of her un-straightened hair. She discovers mysteries within it.

2018-present

Sitting On A Man's Head

Berlin Biennale

Counter Current Festival 2019 (Houston)

Danspace Project (New York)

An improvisational durational practice with the public to build a "song" shaped around the question of "What do you carry, and how in turn does that carry you?" A select group of local artists work with my partner and I to serve as guides into the practice. The "song" is a sonic web that can build lyrical narratives while holding space for the cry, the laugh, the moan and silence. It is grounded in the desire to create a space that is one of generous and generative listening. Foundational movement within the practice is a slow and continuous walk.

Poor People's TV Room Solo

Lincoln Center Atrium (NYC)

Wiener Festwochen (Vienna)

Progress Festival (The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto)

"Still I Rise: Feminisms, Gender, Resistance" (Nottingham Contemporary, UK)

Creator/Writer/Performer

Based on texts from reports commissioned by the British Colonial government into the events that led to an uprising among women known as the Women's War of 1929 in Southeast Nigeria, over the course of 50 minutes this song should convey an insistence and an urgent call to be seen. It is a song written as speculative fiction, presenting itself as an anthem written by the women in the uprising of 1929 as they challenged a colonial system that rendered their bodies invisible and their voices mute. It is a song also written out of my desire to engage a sonic frequency that might serve to open a portal to those women in the past.

2015-2017

New York Live Arts

Randjelovic/Stryker Resident Commissioned Artist

A select commission by invitation to develop and premiere a new work at New York Live Arts. The work was *Poor People's TV Room*, the premiere of which marked the culmination of the residency.

2015-2017

Poor People's TV Room

Creator/Co-Writer/Choreographer/Performer

A multidisciplinary performance piece, developed in collaboration with Peter Born and three performers exploring the complexity of embodied relationships, doubling, broken histories and memory fragmentation among women of color.

April 2017

Nick Cave's Until

Jacob's Pillow/MassMOCA

Commissioned Performance

Creator/Choreographer/Performer

A performative response to Nick Cave's largest installation to date at MassMOCA.

2016-2017

651Arts

Artist Consultant

Doris Duke Charitable Fund

Building Demand Implementation Grant

Home in the Time of Brooklyn

Served to develop a creative think tank with emerging and mid-career cultural workers of color based in Brooklyn, to engender and strengthen a productive, collaborative relationship with 651 Arts.

June 2016

When I Return Who Will Receive Me?

River to River Festival

Creator/Writer/Choreographer/Performer

A site-based performance work with eight women that transformed Fort Jay, the oldest defensive structure on Governor's Island, into a shrine commemorating the embodied collective action of African and African American women.

2015

Bronx Gothic: The Oval River to River Festival

Creator/Choreographer/Performer

A site based durational movement score that served as an iteration of the solo work, "Bronx Gothic". The central design feature of the space was an elevated wading pool standing three feet off the ground that was filled with what appeared to be the soaked and discarded personal items of the characters flooded Bronx apartment floor. This was meant to be the psychic space of dreaming, where memory is recalled and reconfigured.

2014

Bronx Gothic

Danspace Project/PS 122 COIL Festival Creator/Choreographer/Writer/Performer

A multidisciplinary solo work concerned with the unruly and unbound adolescent feminine body under duress and in transition, experienced through a coming-of-age narrative of two young girls in the Bronx.

TOURS

Poor People's TV Room

American Dance Institute Commissioning Partner Rockville, MD
The Walker Art Center/OutThere Festival Commissioning Partner Minneapolis, MN
Experimental and Media Performing Arts Center at RPI Troy, NY
New York Live Arts NY, NY
CAP UCLA/RedCat Los Angeles, CA
Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, MA
Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, IL
Yerba Buena San Francisco, CA
Bryn Mawr Bryn Mawr, PA

Bronx Gothic

Extensive National and International Tour

Bronx Gothic Documentary

Full Frame Documentary Festival Durham, NC Film Forum, NYC Laemmle Theatres Los Angeles, CA More release dates can be provided upon request

Awards and Grants

UNC Creative Futures Fellow 2019-2022
MAP Fund 2019
Macarthur Fellow 2018
Doris Duke Artist Award 2018
Princeton University Hodder Fellow 2018
Alpert Award/Dance 2018
United States Artist Award in Choreography/Performance 2018
Creative Capital 2016
MAP Fund 2016
National Dance Project Production Grant 2017
Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Presidents Award
Bessie Award for Outstanding Production for Bronx Gothic 2014
Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grantee in Dance 2014
NYFA fellow in Choreography 2013
Bessie Award for Outstanding Production for Pent-Up: A revenge dance 2010

Education

Yale University, Bachelor of Arts 1996