

NEWS

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WALKER ART CENTER PRESENTS CHOREOGRAPHER RALPH LEMON'S WALKER-COMMISSIONED NEW WORK, *HOW CAN YOU STAY IN THE HOUSE ALL DAY AND NOT GO ANYWHERE?*

"One of the most adventurous artists working today."
—*Time Out* (New York)



Ralph Lemon, *How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?*
© Ralph Lemon. Photo courtesy the artist.

Minneapolis, August 27, 2010—Questions of transcendence and human connection lie at the heart of Ralph Lemon's newest work, *How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?* Inspired by Lemon's creative relationship with Walter Carter, a 102-year-old former sharecropper from the Mississippi Delta with whom Lemon worked periodically over eight years, the work explores the complexities of impermanence and time, loss, and the elusive but ever-compelling possibility of grace. This four-part multimedia work, commissioned by the Walker Art Center, includes original short films featuring Carter, as well as live performance by Lemon's stunningly powerful ensemble of six African American and African performers, all but one of whom appeared in *Come Home Charley Patton*. *How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?* will be presented in the Walker's William and Nadine McGuire Theater Thursday–Saturday, September 23–25, at 8 pm.

In a recent interview, Lemon called this new work "an attempt to share as much as I can about a very profound experience for me, an idea of love and loss and perhaps the offer of a component of grace. I'm asking, in a very severe way, where does this idea of the reality or the truth of something really engage the artificial? I'm trying to break down what I know of theater and dance, but to do it within those containers." At the same time, Lemon creates an undeniably intense, even visceral experience for the audience with a work that he views as a personal landmark. "It's not dancing, not choreography," he says. "At some point the audience stops seeing the form of it, or what they project they should be seeing, and they start to witness something else, which becomes very individual. The facade of the work is brutality, but the core is purifying." *How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?* bridges the personal and the universal, draws from myths and realities, and reminds us, as Lemon says, of "the special, ordinary, and inspiring human commonality of how one lives a life."

How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere? continues Lemon's relationship with the Walker that dates back more than 15 years. In 1995, Lemon dissolved his successful dance company, abandoning the familiarity of New York and his own creative process to embark on open-ended research that has taken him around the globe. Since then, he has evolved into a kind of modern-day choreographic contemplative, merging text, media, sound, and visual art with dance. The Walker supported Lemon's *Geography Trilogy* (geography.walkerart.org), a 10-year project that merged research and performance in exploring race, history, and memory, first in Africa (*Geography*, 1997); then Asia, tracing the Buddha's migration through India, Indonesia, China, and Japan (*Tree*, 2000); and finally the southern United States (*Come home Charley Patton*, 2004).



Ralph Lemon, *How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?*
© Ralph Lemon. Photo courtesy the artist.

Ralph Lemon/Cross Performance

"My creative process entails a vigorous collision of creative cultures and inspired conversations that dictate how the work is constructed, and how it will be shared with public audiences. I am always asking how can an intensive artistic research and immediate art-making process translate to the staged realm of a theater or gallery? This ongoing struggle between process and production creates a tension that is a vital element in all of my artistic work."

Ralph Lemon is Artistic Director of Cross Performance, a company dedicated to the creation of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary performance and presentation. Lemon's projects expand the definition of choreography by crossing and stretching the boundaries between Western, postmodern dance and other art forms and cultures. For each project, Lemon builds a team of collaborating artists—from diverse cultural backgrounds, countries and artistic disciplines—who bring their own history and aesthetic voice to the work. Projects develop organically, over a period of years, with frequent public sharings of work-in-progress, and the culminating artworks derive from the artistic, cultural, historic and emotional material uncovered in this rigorous creative research process.

In 2005, Lemon concluded *The Geography Trilogy*, which in addition to three evening-length dance/theater performances, included two Internet art projects; the publication of two books by Wesleyan University Press; and several gallery exhibitions. Other recent projects include (*the efflorescence of*) *Walter*, a mixed-media art installation exhibited in New York City, Minneapolis, and New Orleans; a three-DVD set of *The Geography Trilogy*; *Konbit*, a video collage about Miami's Haitian community; *Three*, a dance/film created with choreographer Bebe Miller and filmmaker Isaac Julien; and *Persephone*, a book with Philip Trager's photographs of Lemon's choreographic work, with text by Lemon and Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, and poems by Rita Dove and Eavan Boland. In 2010, Lemon curated *I Get Lost*, a performance and discussion series for Danspace Project, NYC.

Lemon is the recipient of a 2009 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, and a 2009 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Work. In 2006, he was one of 50 artists to receive the inaugural United States Artists Fellowship. He has also received a 2005 "Bessie" (NY Dance and Performance) Award in recognition of *The Geography Trilogy*; a 2004 NYFA Fellowship for Choreography; and a 2004 Fellowship with the Bellagio Study and Conference Center. In 1999, Lemon was honored with the CalArts Alpert Award in the Arts. Among his many teaching positions, Lemon was a 2009 Visiting Artist Fellow at Stanford



Ralph Lemon, *How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?*
© Ralph Lemon. Photo courtesy the artist.

University's Institute for Diversity in the Arts and has been artist-in-residence at Temple University in Philadelphia (2005-2006); George A. Miller Endowment Visiting Artist at the Krannert Center (2004); and a Fellow of the Humanities Council and Program in Theater and Dance at Princeton University (2002). From 1996-2000, he was Associate Artist at Yale Repertory Theatre.

Concluding Event

Meditation

Sunday, September 26, 11 am–5 pm

Free

Please join us for part four of Lemon's *How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?* This immersive light and film installation will transform the McGuire Theater into a gallery for one day.

Tickets to *How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?* are: Thursday, \$20 (\$16 Walker members); Friday–Saturday, \$28 (\$24), and are available at walkerart.org/tickets or by calling 612.375.7600. The McGuire Theater's Balcony Bar will be open at 7:30 pm and again after the performances.

Commissioned by the Walker Art Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts/University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and On the Boards. Support provided by the William and Nadine McGuire Commissioning Fund, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts.

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The Walker Art Center is located at 1750 Hennepin Avenue—where Hennepin meets Lyndale—one block off Highways I-94 and I-394, in Minneapolis.

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