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June 10–August 14, the Wexner Center for the Arts presents *Portal For(e) the Ephemeral Passage*, guest curated by jaamil olawale kosoko

The summer 2022 exhibition includes kosoko, nora chipaumire, Jennifer Harge and Devin Drake, Dana Michel, Jasmine Murrell, and Keioui Keijaun Thomas

Columbus, OH—April 27, 2022—For summer 2022, the Wexner Center for the Arts is working with Wexner Center Artist Residency Award recipient **jaamil olawale kosoko** to present the first exhibition curated for the center by an artist to receive the Residency Award. It's the culmination of the Wex's three-year collaboration with kosoko, which has already yielded a performance, educational programming, and an award-winning short film.

Portal For(e) the Ephemeral Passage, on view June 10–August 14, invites audiences to imagine new worlds through a summer of installations and interconnected events building on Black feminist knowledge, queer theory, and sacred rituals of intimacy and wellness. The interdisciplinary exhibition presents new projects by **kosoko, nora chipaumire, Jennifer Harge** (Wex Artist Residency Award recipient) and **Devin Drake, Dana Michel, Jasmine Murrell, and Keioui Keijaun Thomas**. ***Portal For(e)*** also consists of community events, a film series, performances, and an Instagram Live series. A preview party and dub night take place at the Wex on Thursday, June 9, kicking off a week of opening programs.

Centering collectivity and embodied practice, ***Portal For(e)*** draws influence from Black poets and theorists who have rendered it vital to 'confront lovelessness' (bell hooks), understand the 'uses of the erotic' (Audre Lorde), and survive the intersection of a body made of 'starshine and clay' (Lucille Clifton), all the while being marked by the 'hieroglyphics of the flesh' (Hortense Spillers). The myriad personal histories inspired by these thinkers serve to amplify the imaginative storytelling present within the Black visual performance artists featured in ***Portal For(e)***.

In kosoko's own words, "the chameleonic nature of this collective research has always been about exploring various worldings of freedom through performance and social practice. I have been drawn closer to artists who have inspired my thinking and exploration into the shapeshifting principles that Black queer people employ to survive and heal. If fugitivity can be defined as escape without exit, then ***Portal For(e)*** is Black admission with or without entrance."

The platform will present the world premiere of kosoko's first multichannel installation, ***Syllabus for Black Love***, featuring kosoko and **Jennifer Kidwell**, which was created with support from the Wex's Film/Video Studio and editor Alexis

McCrimmon. kosoko and McCrimmon previously collaborated on the Wex-supported film *Chameleon: A Visual Album*, which won the Grand Jury Prize for Best Experimental Short at the 2022 Slamdance Film Festival; it will be presented in The Box, the Wex's dedicated video space, June through August.

A robust calendar of related events offers new experiences not just for opening week, but through the run of the exhibition. Online, the center will host digital engagements on Instagram Live in a program entitled *Valences of the Algorithm*. A June film series, *Say Gay: LGBTQ+ Pride on Film*, celebrates LGBTQ+ pioneers including artists who have directly influenced olawale kosoko, such as Maya Deren and Shirley Clarke. And the Columbus arts community will participate through the return of *All Day Blackness*, a program spotlighting diverse Black creators curated by **Reg Zehner**, co-founder of verge.fm and the inaugural Wex Learning & Public Practice Path Fellow.

Related events

Summer Exhibition Preview Party: Thursday, June 9 | 4-7 PM

Guests can enjoy open galleries and **WiFM ZiFM dub night** with **nora chipaumire**, featuring dub music selected by a Columbus-based DJ and played on soundshitsystem, a monumental speaker system designed by Ari Marcopoulos and Kara Walker and constructed by Matt Jackson Studio.

Film Series: Say Gay: LGBTQ+ Pride on Film | June 11–30

Saturday, June 11 at 5 PM: *shape_SHIFT*, a program of shorts by Black queer artists.

Thursday, June 16 at 7 PM: *Meshes of the Afternoon* (Maya Deren, 1943) and *Portrait of Jason* (Shirley Clarke, 1967)

Thursday, June 23 at 7 PM: *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde* (Ada Gay Griffin/Michelle Parkerson, 1996).

Thursday, June 30 at 7 PM: *Queer Genius* (Catherine Pancake, 2019).

Performance: Saturday, June 11 | 8 PM

Keioui Keijaun Thomas will present *Come Hell or High Femmes: The Journey of the Dolls*, an in-gallery performance that will be livestreamed to audiences in the Performance Space and at wexarts.org.

Performance: Friday, June 17 | 6 PM

jaamil olawale kosoko, Nile Harris, and Everett Saunders will present *the hold*, an in-gallery performance that will be livestreamed to audiences in the Performance Space and at wexarts.org.

All Day Blackness: Saturday, June 18 | 11 AM–5 PM

Verge.fm cofound **Reg Zehner** curates a community-centered program of performance, conversation, and music that celebrates joy, pleasure, and Black people and culture.

More information on these and other events will be announced closer to the exhibition's opening.

Visitor Information

Portal For(e) the Ephemeral Passage will take place June 10–August 14, 2022, at the Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St. (at 15th Avenue) on the campus of The Ohio State University in Columbus.

Gallery hours are 11 AM–5 PM Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday; and 11 AM–8 PM Thursday–Saturday. Galleries are closed Mondays.

Info on campus COVID-19 safety guidelines, bus routes, parking, and more, as well as advance tickets, are available at wexarts.org/plan-your-visit or at (614) 292-3535.

Support

Exhibitions are made possible by **Bill and Sheila Lambert; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; Crane Family Foundation; and Mike and Paige Crane.**

Free Sundays are powered by **American Electric Power Foundation.**

[A current list of funders is available here.](#)

About the artists

[jaamil olawale kosoko](#) (b. Detroit, MI) is a multi-spirited Nigerian American author, performance artist, and curator of Yoruba and Natchez descent. Their Wex residency also supported *Chameleon (The Living Installments)*, which premiered virtually in April 2020. kosoko is the author of the new book *Black Body Amnesia: Poems and Other Speech Acts* (Wendy's Subway, 2022).

[nora chipaumire](#) (b. 1965, Mutare, Zimbabwe) is a contemporary artist, choreographer and performer who challenges—and embraces—stereotypes of Africa, Black performance and aesthetics, and contemporary dance. She is a four-time Bessie Award winner.

Devin Drake is a multimedia artist, designer, and documentarian. As the resident documentarian for Harge Dance Stories, she converts movement and choreographic research into digital storytelling.

[Jennifer Harge](#) (b. 1986, Saginaw, MI) is a choreographer, performance artist, and educator. She earned her MFA from the University of Iowa (Dean's Graduate Fellow) and a BFA from the University of Michigan. In 2014, she founded Harge Dance Stories as a container for choreographic research. Harge is a 2021–22 Wex Artist Residency Award recipient.

[Jennifer Kidwell](#) (b. 1978) is an Obie Award-winning performing artist. With Scott Sheppard, Kidwell created and performed in *Underground Railroad Game*. She is a graduate of Pig Iron Theatre Company's School for Advanced Performance Training. In addition to working with kosoko on *Syllabus for Black Love*, Kidwell will be in residence at the Wex this summer to develop a new performance work.

[Dana Michel](#) (b. Ottawa, Canada) is a choreographer and live artist. Her works interact with the expanded fields of improvisation, choreography, sculpture, comedy, hip-hop, cinematography, techno, poetry, psychology, dub and social commentary to create a centrifuge of experience. In 2018, she became the first-ever dance artist in residence at the National Arts Centre, Canada.

[Jasmine Murrell](#) (b. 1977, Detroit, MI) works have been exhibited nationally and internationally including at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Bronx Museum, the African-American Museum of Art, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art and Whitney Museum of American Art. She was a member of the artist collective HOWDOYOUSAYYAMINAFRICAN? (YAMS Collective).

Keioui Keijaun Thomas (b. Florida) earned her MA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her BFA with Honors from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. She is the inaugural winner of the Queer|Art 2020 Illuminations Grant for Black Trans Women Visual Artists and the Franklin Furnace Fund Recipient for 2018.

About the Wexner Center for the Arts

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and education programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance the understanding of the art of our time.