

ISHMAEL HOUSTON-JONES

Ishmael Houston-Jones is a Choreographer, Author, Performer, Teacher, and Arts Advocate.

Ishmael Houston-Jones' improvised dance and text work has been performed in New York City, across the United States, in Europe, Canada, Australia and Latin America.

Ishmael Houston-Jones' *Nowhere, Now Here* was commissioned for **Mordine and Company** in Chicago in spring 2001 and *Specimens* was commissioned for **Headlong Dance Theater** in Philadelphia in 1998. In 1997 he was the choreographer for **Nayland Blake's Hare Follies** at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. From 1995-2000 he was part of the improvised trio "*Unsafe/ Unsuided*" with **Keith Hennessy** and **Patrick Scully**. In 1990 he and writer **Dennis Cooper** presented *The Undead* at the Los Angeles Festival of the Arts. In 1989 he collaborated with filmmaker **Julie Dash** on the video *Relatives*, which was aired nationally on the PBS series *Alive From Off-Center (Alive TV)*. In January 2014 Houston-Jones and **Emily Wexler** premiered *13 Love Songs: dot dot dot* at the American Realness Festival.

In 1984 Houston-Jones and **Fred Holland** shared a New York Dance and Performance "Bessie Award" for their *Cowboys, Dreams and Ladders*. In 2011 he won a "Bessie Award" for the reimagining of *THEM*, his 1986 collaboration with **Chris Cochrane** and **Dennis Cooper**. *THEM* was presented at American Realness 2011 and consequently toured to Spring Dance (Netherlands), Centre Pompidou (Paris), REDCAT (Los Angeles), Tanz im August (Berlin), and TAP, Theatre a Poitiers (France).

COLLABORATORS

In addition to those listed above, major collaborators have been

- dancers **Steven Craig**, **Stanya Kahn** and **Dan Safer**;
- directors **Peter Brosius** and **Daniel Safer**;
- designers **Huck Snyder** and **John DeFazio**;
- photographer **Robert Flynt**;
- videographer **Cathy Weis**,
- and composers **King Britt**, **Chris Cochrane**, **Fast Forward**, **Dave Pavkovik**, **Chris Peck**, **Tom Recchion**, **Leslie Ross** and **Guy Yarden**.

• He has appeared in the work of **John Bernd**, **Ping Chong**, **DANCENOISE**, **Terry Fox**, **Beth Gill**, **Miguel Gutierrez**, **Lionel Popkin**, **Mike Taylor**, **Yvonne Meier**, and in the films *Brother from Another Planet* by **John Sayles** and *Circle's Short Circuit* by **Caspar Strache**.

TEACHING

Ishmael Houston-Jones is currently a part-time professor at Eugene Lang College, The New School of Liberal Arts;

He has also been a part-time professor at:

- New York University, Tisch School of the Arts, Experimental Theater Wing.
- University of the Arts, Philadelphia,
- Sarah Lawrence College.

And a guest teacher at:

- California Institute of the Arts,
- Hollins University, (Virginia),
- University of California, Los Angeles -- UCLA,
- Bennington College, (Vermont),
- University of Memphis,
- New York University, (Tisch School of the Arts, the Experimental Theater Wing and Playwrights Horizons),

- Wesleyan University, (Connecticut);
- the European Dance Development Center and the School for New Dance Development in Holland,
- La Escuela de Danza Nacional in Nicaragua,
- El Instituto de la Danza Moderna in Caracas, Venezuela,
- the School of the Art Institute of Chicago,
- the American Dance Festival at Duke University,
- the London International Summer School 2002, (Greenwich Dance Agency, Chisenhale Dance Space and Independent Dance),
- the Seattle Festival of Alternative Dance and Improvisation (SFADI),
- Movement Research, (New York),
- Moving On Center, (San Francisco),
- Urban Bush Women Summer Institute at Florida State University,
- and at numerous Performing Arts Festivals worldwide.

PUBLICATIONS

Houston-Jones' essays, fiction, interviews, and performance texts have been anthologized in the books:

- *Dance, Documents of Contemporary Art*, (White Chapel gallery, 2012);
- *Conversations on Art and Performance* (Johns Hopkins, 1999);
- *Footnotes: Six Choreographers Inscribe the Page* (G+B Arts, 1998);
- *Caught in the Act: A Look at Contemporary Multi-Media Performance* (Aperture, 1996);
- *Aroused, A Collection of Erotic Writing* (Thunder's Mouth Press, 2001);
- *Best Gay Erotica 2000* (Cleis Press, 2000);
- *Best American Gay Fiction, volume 2* (Little Brown, 1997);
- and *Out of Character: Rants, Raves and Monologues from Today's Top Performance Artists* (Bantam, 1996).
- He is a subject of the chapter "Speech as Act" in the book *Dances that Describe Themselves* by **Susan Leigh Foster** (Wesleyan University Press, 2002).
- and the chapter "Crossing the Great Divides" in the book *Taken by Surprise* by **Ann Cooper Albright** and **David Gere**, (Wesleyan University Press, 2003).
- His work has also been published in the magazines: Bomb, PAJ, Movement Research Journal; Contact Quarterly; Real Time; Mirage, FARM; and others.

FUNDING

The work of Ishmael Houston-Jones has been supported by awards, grants and fellowships from:

Doris Duke Impact Award
2015

Foundation for Contemporary Arts,
2013 Grant to Artists

Lower Manhattan Cultural Council,
2013 Grants to Artists Award residency

National Endowment for the Arts,

Choreographer Fellowships: 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991

New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award,
2011, in collaboration with Chris Cochrane and Dennis Cooper for *THEM*

New York Foundation for the Arts,
Choreographer Fellowship: 1985

New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award,
1984, in collaboration with Fred Holland for *Cowboys, Dreams and Ladders*

NEA, New York State Council on the Arts, Ford Foundation, and Art Matters, Inc.,
Project Grants

CURATING

Ishmael Houston-Jones recently curated *Platform 2012 Parallels* at Danspace Project; he has also served as curator for the following:

- He is the current DraftWork works-in-progress series curator for the Danspace Project New York,
- *Festival of New Swiss Dance* as part of New Europe 1999, The Swiss Institute, New York,
- Guest curator for Mad Alex Presents reading series, New York, 1998,
- *Dive In Festival of Dance Improvisation*, Danspace Project at , New York, 1993-95,
- Parallels Festival of New Black Dance, Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church, New York, 1982.

BOARDS

- From 1984 until 2009 Ishmael Houston-Jones served on the Board of Directors of the Danspace Project at Saint Mark's Church and was its president from 1999-2003.
- Board of Directors of Movement Research in New York, president 2006 - 2009.
- He is currently the Chair of the Board of Directors of Ashley Anderson Dances, Salt Lake City, UT.
- He served on the Board of Headlong Dance Theater in Philadelphia for 15 years.
- He is on the Artists Advisory Committee of Performance Space 122.
- He is on the Advisory Board of Moving on Center in San Francisco.

ARTS CONSULTANT

Ishmael Houston-Jones has served as a panelist for:

- the National Endowment for the Arts, (Choreography Fellowship and Inter-Arts),
- the New York Foundation for the Arts, (Choreography Fellowship),
- State Arts Councils for Ohio, Illinois, New Jersey, Maryland, and Massachusetts;
- the Pew Fellowship in the Arts, (Philadelphia),
- Urban Artist Initiative, (New York),
- Dance Theater Workshop, (New York),
- Arts International Inc, (New York),
- the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council,
- the Multi-Arts Production (MAP) Fund, (New York),
- New Steps Choreographers' Series, (New York),
- and others

OTHER

Ishmael Houston-Jones was the Coordinator for the Lambent Fellowship in the Arts of the Tides Foundation from 2002 - 2007. In this capacity he spearheaded and structured a program that awarded multi-year grants to individual visual and performing artists in metropolitan New York City. Fellowships totaling \$126,000 were awarded to six artists yearly.

A partial list of artists funded through this program headed by Ishmael Houston-Jones includes **Elana Herzog, Deborah Grant, Mary Ting, Nicolas Dumit Estevez, Bradley McCallum & Jacqueline Tarry, Emily Jacir, Yoko Inoue, John Jasperse, Cathy Weis, Sanford Biggers, Patty Chang, Yvonne Meier, Julie Atlas Muz, Sekou Sundiata (RIP), Ricardo Miranda Zuniga, Ivan Monforte, Miguel Gutierrez, Judi Werthein, Jennifer Monson, and Swoon.**