



Then a Cunning Voice and A Night We Spend Gazing at Stars
Quilt Installation by Emily Johnson/Catalyst and Maggie Thompson
September 5th - October 8th, 2017
Opening Reception: September 26th, 6-9pm
Firelighting and stories starting at 7pm in the amphitheater

Then a Cunning Voice and A Night We Spend Gazing at Stars is a large-scale performance gathering created by Emily Johnson, weaving together stories and performance with the exchange of ideas, the sharing of food, and the endurance of spending a night together outside under the stars and sky.

Then a Cunning Voice and A Night We Spend Gazing at Stars is an experiment in public visioning and futurity. It includes in equal measure: making quilts, performance, storytelling, dance, song, and community discussion.

The performance unfolds on 84 hand-made community quilts designed by textile artist Maggie Thompson. The quilts serve as audience seating, performance area, resting area, and "home" for the performance of *Then a Cunning Voice and A Night We Spend Gazing at Stars*. Inscribed with answers to the following questions, the quilts hold the visions and intentions of hundreds.

"What do you want for your well-being? For the well-being of your chosen friends and family? For your neighborhood? For your town, city, reserve, tribal nation, world?"

These questions have been asked over the past three years in cities, towns, reservations, farmer's markets, schools, museums, libraries—across the US, in Taiwan and Australia, and at Standing Rock and Women's Marches after the 2016 US election. Recording ideas in the moment of action, during workshops, or at marches, the quilts have become historical records of these significant events. They record visions, desires, and wants as they simultaneously express need and humanity. One student, a recent refugee seeking asylum in Australia, noted whilst stitching, "these quilts are like maps to possible futures."

Artistic Director: Emily Johnson
Quilt Design: Maggie Thompson
Quilt Project Manager: Yumi Tamashiro
Quilts hand-made by volunteers across the US, and in Taiwan and Australia

Emily Johnson/Catalyst acknowledges the creative and administrative contributions of Julia Bither, Ain Gordon, and Mary Jean Potamites.

www.catalystdance.com
www.makwastudio.com

Emily Johnson/Catalyst and Abrons Art Center pay respect to Lenape peoples and ancestors past, present, and future. We acknowledge that this exhibit presented by Abrons Art Center is situated in Lenapehoking, the Lenape homeland.

Emily Johnson is an artist who makes body-based work. Originally from Alaska, she is of Yup'ik decent and is based in New York City. Since 1998 she has created work that considers the experience of sensing and seeing performance. Her dances function as installations, engaging audiences within, through, and into a space and environment—relating to place via land, history, and role in community. Emily is trying to make a world where performance is part of life; where performance is an integral connection to each other, our environment, our stories, our past, present, and future. A 2015 Guggenheim Fellow, Johnson is the recipient of a New York Dance and Performance Award (Bessie) and a 2014 Doris Duke Artist Award. Her work is supported by Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, Creative Capital, MAP Fund, a Joyce Award, the McKnight Foundation, and The Doris Duke Residency to Build Demand for the Arts. Johnson was a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Minnesota 2013–2014 and an inaugural 2014 Fellow at the Robert Rauschenberg Residency. Johnson's written work has been published and commissioned by Dance Research Journal (University of Cambridge Press); SFMOMA; Transmotion Journal, University of Kent; Movement Research Journal; Pew Center for Arts and Heritage; and the recently published compilation *Imagined Theaters* (Routledge), by Daniel Sack. *Then a Cunning Voice and A Night We Spend Gazing at Stars* premieres in Lenapehoking (NYC) with PS122 on Randall's Island and will tour to Chicago, San Francisco, and Narm (Melbourne, Australia).

Maggie Thompson (Fond Du Lac Ojibwe) received her BFA in textiles at the Rhode Island School of Design in 2013. She is a working textile artist and designer based in Minneapolis and is an emerging curator of contemporary Native art at the Two Rivers Gallery in Minneapolis. As a textile designer she works with an intuitive hand to bridge multiple cultures gathered from her own life experiences. Deriving inspiration from the history of her Ojibwe heritage, she explores family history as well as themes and subject matter of the broader Native American experience. She utilizes a variety of weaving and knitting techniques, printed fabrics, and assemblage works as a way to contain memory, and reflect and convey difficult subject matter regarding identity. In college she used the opportunity to dig deeper into the notions of her identity by focusing on issues of cultural appropriation and Native authenticity through the rigid ideas of blood quantum and stereotyping. In doing so, she is able to rebuild her textured past and explore the history of her people through making.

Emily Johnson/Catalyst's *Then a Cunning Voice and a Night We Spend Gazing at Stars* is supported by a National Dance Project Touring Award from the New England Foundation for the Arts, MAP Fund, and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The world premiere is presented by Performance Space 122 with support from the Mertz Gilmore Foundation, the Jerome Robbins Foundation, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and New York State Legislature.

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