

A Pressing Conference

A conversation with Timothy Snyder, Mimi Onuoha,
and Reynaldo Piniella (Artist Campaign School)

Organized by Macon Reed

January 19, 2018, 7pm

A Pressing Conference brings members of the press, artists, historians, and organizers together to share tactics for survival and solidarity inside a brightly-colored, hand-made sculptural installation based on the White House press briefing room. In the format of a press conference, each invited participant responds to a lesson from Timothy Snyder's book *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons From The Twentieth Century*, followed by an open invitation for the press and public to ask questions and have a conversation about how to best move forward together in response to the current political climate.

A Pressing Conference will launch its series of four public press conferences, the first taking place at Abrons Art Center on January 19th at 7pm. For the inaugural "press briefing" in the series, Timothy Snyder, internationally acclaimed author and historian specializing in the history of the Holocaust, Central and Eastern Europe, will be present to frame the conversation and reflect on having written *On Tyranny* in response to the 2016 election, now that one year has passed.

Throughout history authoritarian states often begin their consolidation of power by discrediting the press and spreading propaganda to blur the "real" and "true," creating a sense of distrust and despondency. In the sea of troubling news and events, it can be easy to feel powerless but history shows that our everyday choices can have tremendous impact. *A Pressing Conference* will highlight the important histories of everyday people and events, offering tools for a future of continued resistance.

The sculptural installation and organizing of *A Pressing Conference* were completed by artist Macon Reed.



January 19th Speakers:

Timothy Snyder is one of the leading American historians and public intellectuals, and enjoys perhaps greater prominence in Europe, the subject of most of his work. He is the Housum Professor of History at Yale University and a permanent fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna. He is author of many award-winning books, all of which have been translated: *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons From The Twentieth Century*, and *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning*. His work has received the literature award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Hannah Arendt Prize, and the Leipzig Book Prize for European Understanding. Snyder was the recipient of an inaugural Andrew Carnegie Fellowship in 2015 and received the Havel Foundation prize the same year. He is a member of the Committee on Conscience of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, is the faculty advisor for the Fortunoff Collection of Holocaust Testimonies at Yale, and sits on the advisory councils of the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research and other organizations.

www.timothysnyder.org

Mimi Onuoha is a Brooklyn-based artist and researcher examining the implications of data collection and computational categorization. Her work uses code, writing, and sculptures to explore missing data and the ways in which people—particularly vulnerable populations—are abstracted, represented, and classified. Onuoha has been in residence at Eyebeam Art & Technology Center, the Data & Society Research Institute, Columbia's Tow Center, and the Royal College of Art. She has spoken and exhibited in festivals internationally, and in 2014 she was selected to be in the inaugural class of Fulbright-National Geographic Digital Storytelling Fellows. She currently is a contributor at Quartz, where she uses code and data to tell stories about the implications of emerging technologies. Onuoha earned her B.A. from Princeton University and her MPS from NYU Tisch's Interactive Telecommunications Program and currently a visiting faculty member at Bennington College.

www.mimionuoha.com

Abrons Arts Center's visual arts exhibitions are made possible through the generosity of the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation, Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Daniel J. and Edith A. Ehrlich Family Foundation, The Diller-von Furstenberg Family Foundation, the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Foundation, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, and other generous Henry Street Settlement funders.

Artist Campaign School recruits, trains, and mentors artists and arts administrators for elected office and is supported by Fractured Atlas and numerous other arts organizations. Lauren Ruffin, Vice President, External Relations of Fractured Atlas explained, "artists are exactly the kinds of people we need to run for office. Being an artist is all about creative problem solving, innovation, and collaboration- perfect skills for making change in local communities. When artists see something wrong in the world, they want to get involved and fix it. But when that something is politics, it's hard to figure out where to begin. So, we decided to join with other dedicated partners to launch 'Artist Campaign School' to support first time candidates who want to impact policy decisions which have direct implications for the arts and cultural community and shape the kinds of neighborhoods they live in."

www.artistcampaignschool.org

Reynaldo Piniella is an Afro-Latino actor, writer, director and activist from East New York, Brooklyn. He is a graduate of the Artist Campaign School. He is a contributing writer to Backstage Magazine and is passionate about bringing theater to underserved communities. Through his work on stage, screen and film, he hopes to shine a light on people and stories that are rarely seen in popular culture. Follow him on Instagram and Twitter @ReynaldoRey.

www.reynaldopiniella.com

Macon Reed is an artist working in sculpture, installation, video, radio documentary, painting, and participatory projects. Most recently, her practice has evolved towards creating immersive sculptural environments that serve as public sites for dynamic inter-community conversation and transformative ritual. Her work has shown at venues including PULSE NYC Special Projects, BRIC Media Arts, ABC No Rio, The Kitchen, Art F City FAgallery, Chicago Cultural Center, Mana Contemporary, Roots & Culture, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, ICA Baltimore, and Athens Museum of Queer Arts in Greece. Last year, Reed attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and completed a Research Fellowship at Eyebeam Center for Art+Technology. She is currently an artist-in-residence at Abrons Art Center and teaches art at Brown University. She understands her work as an act of creative resistance.

www.maconreed.com