



building a better fishtrap

conceived and
created by
Paloma McGregor

for more information including
partnerships and performance
opportunities, contact
info@angelpulse.org

history

Since 2011, Caribbean-born choreographer Paloma McGregor has been developing *Building a Better Fishtrap*, a performance project rooted in the vanishing fishing tradition of her 91-year-old father. The project examines what happens when you leave your ancestral home:

What do you take with you? Leave behind? Return to reclaim?

McGregor and her collaborators - from a grandfather in the Bronx, to dancers in a studio on Governor's Island - have spent the past few years exploring the body's capacity to carry place, memory and experience with it in ways that can transform objects, spaces, collaborators and audiences. Each iteration of the work is created using the Fishtrap Method. Like McGregor's father's practice of building traps, these creative Fishtraps are crafted using core physical elements and embodied practices that are customized according to how she visions the work functioning in each space it inhabits.



*building a better
fishtrap / part 1*

May 22 - 24, 2015

BAAD! Bronx Academy of Arts & Dance

The project's first major installment is a dance-theater work in which five dancers piece together a kaleidoscopic tale, bending time to allow the future to bring an offering to the present.

The work premiered at BAAD!, a longtime partner, and received development support from Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Dance Exchange, Jerome Foundation Travel & Study Grant, Foundation for Contemporary Art, iLAND, Earthdance, Wave Hill and Middlebury College.



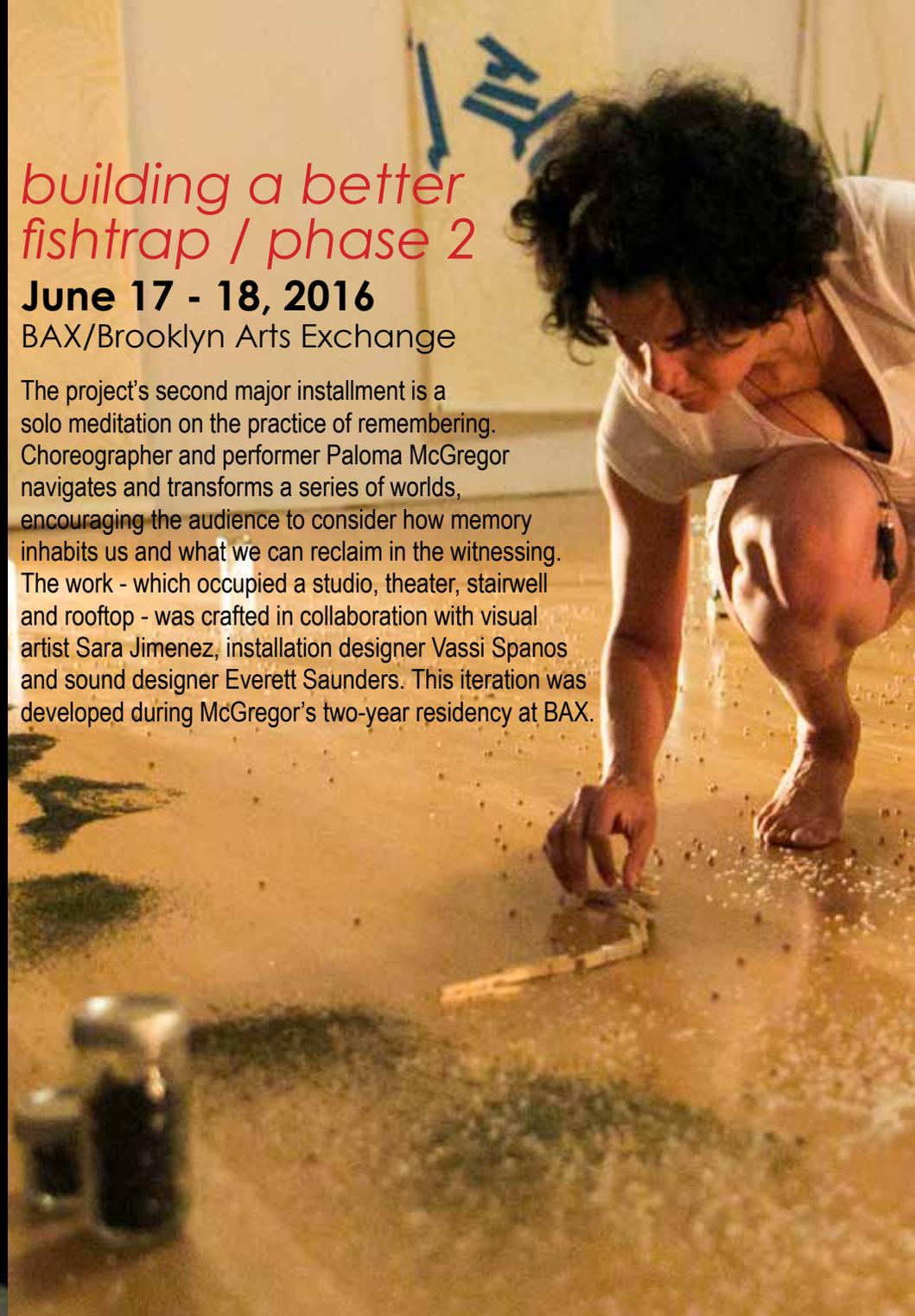
[WATCH VIDEO](#)

*building a better
fishtrap / phase 2*

June 17 - 18, 2016

BAX/Brooklyn Arts Exchange

The project's second major installment is a solo meditation on the practice of remembering. Choreographer and performer Paloma McGregor navigates and transforms a series of worlds, encouraging the audience to consider how memory inhabits us and what we can reclaim in the witnessing. The work - which occupied a studio, theater, stairwell and rooftop - was crafted in collaboration with visual artist Sara Jimenez, installation designer Vassi Spanos and sound designer Everett Saunders. This iteration was developed during McGregor's two-year residency at BAX.



[WATCH VIDEO](#)



*building a better
fishtrap / from
the river's mouth*

June 23, 2018

The Bronx River

Starlight Park, Concrete Plant Park
and Hunts Point Riverside Park

Residency support was provided by iLAND, Movement Research, BAX, Earthdance and Wave Hill; Funding to support the work's development and performance came from The MAP Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and New York Live Arts Live Feed; The work was also developed with support from the Urban Bush Women Choreographic Center Initiative, Bronx Council on the Arts, and the Movement Research Artist-in-Residence Program funded, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, by the Davis/Dauray Family Fund, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Harkness Foundation for Dance.

Building a Better Fishtrap / from the river's mouth is a performance ritual that honors and embodies the stories and spirit of the Bronx River. Created through collaboration with dozens of artists and community members, the work takes audiences by boat on a 1.5-mile stretch of the once embattled waterway; along the way, passengers encounter kaleidoscopic installations that draw from the river's rich past and present, as well as hopes for her future. The boats will be piloted by docents from Bronx-based partner organizations.

Three riverside parks in the South Bronx serve as the performance boundaries. They are part of the last decade of revitalization along the waterway and mark significant, locally-driven progress in cleaning up the beleaguered waterway. Hunts Point Riverside Park, at the south end of the installation, was one of the earliest wins for community organizers pushing for public access to the river – after more than 60 years in which industry monopolized the water's edge and turned the river into an open sewer. Starlight Park, on the north end, represents the most recent round of development allowing public access.

During the development process, McGregor and collaborators are conducting interviews with Bronx-based historians, artists and activists; engaging Bronx communities through artistic workshops that provide a platform to unearth their histories; and joining public environmental efforts on the river, such as water quality testing. This research – as well as the embodied experience of the river itself – will serve as the foundation for devising this live, interactive performance on and along the water.

press

Her Fishtrap

from *Contact Quarterly* by Ni'Ja Whitson | Winter/Spring 2017

"Fishtrap's audience becomes her ocean-bound garden, being toiled and rooted as the piece unfolds... The doing in this work is its magic. And McGregor does both the subtle and grand with such intention, the magic hypnotizes."

[Read the article](#)

Paloma McGregor Builds Her Net...For Us

from *InfiniteBody* by Eva Yaa Asantewaa | May 23, 2015

"As our loving storyteller, McGregor proffers not too much information, just enough - articles and spare gestures that suggest spearing, sorting, stirring; a wheel gently held aloft like a mystical symbol or used in the clever pantomiming of a family excursion; long spliced and braided cords that, when swept across the breadth of the space, evoke both the act of fishing and the foamy rush of Caribbean tide."

[Read the article](#)

Route and Wing: Urban Interventions in Montreal

from *Alternate Roots* by Ebony Noelle Golden | 2014

"The journey became a meditation, a walk back through time to locate her beginnings."

[Read the article](#)

A return to the Fishtrap

from *Dance Exchange* by Matthew Cumbie | March 19, 2014

"I can feel that movement and those ideas still living in my fascia and tissue and swirling around in my body. Almost like the ghost of dances past... In the pit of my stomach, that travels up my spine."

[Read the article](#)

building better partnerships and collaborations

Building A Better Fishtrap is a project of Angela's Pulse. Angela's Pulse creates and produces collaborative performance work dedicated to building community and illuminating bold, new stories. We provide a home for interdisciplinary collaborations that thrive on both politics and play, and we are committed to developing timely performance works that provoke, inform and inspire. Co-founded by Paloma and Patricia McGregor, Angela's Pulse was named for their mother Angela, an artist, teacher and activist who continues to inspire their work.

The newest iteration, *Building a Better Fishtrap / from the river's mouth*, is supported by MAP Fund, a LiveFeed Residency at New York Live Arts, and an Urban Bush Women Choreographic Fellowship, along with a collection of Bronx-based partner organizations including the Bronx River Alliance.



about the team



Paloma McGregor, Choreographer and Director

Paloma McGregor is a Caribbean-born, New York-based choreographer whose work centers Black voices through collaborative, process-based art-making and organizing. A lover of intersections and alchemy, she develops projects in which communities of geography, practice and values come together to laugh, make magic and transform. She has created a wide range of work, including a dance through a makeshift fishnet on a Brooklyn rooftop, a structured improvisation for a floating platform in the Bronx River and a devised multidisciplinary performance work about food justice with three dozen community members and students at UC Berkeley. Residencies include: 2016-18 NYLA Live Feed; 2014-16 BAX Artist in Residence; 2014 LMCC Process Space; 2013-14 NYU's Hemispheric Institute Artist in Residence; and 2013 Wave Hill Winter Workspace. Grants include: Surdna Foundation; Lambent Foundation Fund; MAP Fund; and Dance/USA - Engaging Dance Audiences. She also facilitates technique, creative process and community engagement workshops around the world. She toured internationally for six years with Urban Bush Women and two years with Liz Lerman/Dance Exchange, and continues to perform in project-based work.



Erica Saucedo, Project Manager for *Building a Better Fishtrap / from the river's mouth*

Erica Saucedo was born in Austin, Texas to Patricia and Edgar Saucedo. She is a movement artist, collaborating with visionaries Paloma McGregor, Johnnie Cruise Mercer, Indah Walsh, and is the co-founder of vis-à-vis dances—alongside partner, Kaitlyn Bishop. Erica serves the world by creating space for processes of reflection and expression, whether through art-making, administrative assistance, or facilitated engagement. She currently works as the Project Manager for Building a Better Fishtrap / from the river's mouth and is a Community Actionist with Gibney Dance's youth program, Hands are for Holding.

PURPOSE Productions, Marketing Manager

Founded by A. Nia Austin-Edwards, PURPOSE Productions supports artists and organizers in the manifestation of PURPOSE-full work that seeks to unify and develop our world community. Named after the Swahili translation of her name (Nia), PURPOSE grounds itself in principles of Kwanzaa, an African-American holiday celebrating fruits of ancestral, communal, and individual labor. Their support services vary from marketing to child care to production support all centered around making space for visionary folk to create their greatest work. PURPOSE has supported choreographers including Adia Tamar Whitaker, theater-makers including Ella Turenne, organizations including 651 ARTS, and initiatives including McGregor's Dancing While Black.



Visit us online at
angelaspulse.org/project/building-a-better-fishtrap
for a list of upcoming events.

Interested in bringing the *Fishtrap* to you?
Contact the Angela's Pulse team at
info@angelaspulse.org.

