THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART COMMISSIONS SIX INTERNATIONAL
CHOREOGRAPHERS TO PRESENT DANCE PERFORMANCES AT THE MUSEUM IN A
SERIES CO-ORGANIZED WITH RALPH LEMON

Some sweet day
October 15–November 4, 2012
The Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium, second floor

NEW YORK, October 16, 2012—Artist and choreographer Ralph Lemon has co-organized a
three-week program of dance performances by six internationally renowned choreographers for
The Museum of Modern Art. Commissioned by MoMA, Some sweet day is being presented in the
Museum’s Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium from October 15 to November 4, 2012. The
series showcases three pairings of six internationally renowned choreographers—Steve Paxton and
Jérôme Bel, Faustin Linyekula and Dean Moss, Deborah Hay and Sarah Michelson—each engaged
in an aesthetic, generational, and historical dialogue about dance. In bringing together
choreographers from different backgrounds and eras, Some sweet day demonstrates how the
current state of dance can engage with a variety of subjects such as aesthetics, gender, race, and
history. Concurrently—by putting a focus on choreography in an institution that traditionally
showcases static objects—the series explores the potentials and possibilities of the museum
space. The program is organized by guest curator and choreographer Ralph Lemon with Jenny
Schlenzka, Associate Curator, MoMA PS1, and Jill A. Samuels, Producer, Department of Media and
Performance Art, The Museum of Modern Art. It is presented as part of MoMA’s ongoing
Performance Program, organized by Sabine Breitwieser, Chief Curator, Department of Media and
Performance Art.

At the outset of the project, the six choreographers were faced with a set of curatorial
questions, and were asked to reflect on the potential forms of dialogue their works could enter
into within MoMA’s Marron Atrium, considering the Museum’s particular architecture, audience,
and relationship to modernism.

Some sweet day begins with two of Steve Paxton’s seminal postmodern works, Satisfyin
Lover (1967) and State (1968), which question the established parameters of dance, while also
addressing the artist’s fascination with the ideas of the pedestrian and the ordinary body. Some
sweet day also marks the New York premiere of State. These works are presented together with
French conceptual choreographer Jérôme Bel’s The Show Must Go On (2001), which in many
respects is a response to Paxton’s works, 35 years later and from a contemporary European point
of view. The Show Must Go On also presents a cast of New York City dance luminaries paired with
nonprofessionals.
The following two weeks feature newly commissioned works created specifically for the Marron Atrium, and begin on October 24 with a work called *What is Black Music Anyway.../Self-Portraits*, by Congolese dancer and choreographer Faustin Linyekula joined by Congolese composer/guitarist Flamme Kapaya and South African singer Hlengiwe Mshabang. Linyekula shares the week with the American experimentalist Dean Moss who will collaborate with visual artist Laylah Ali. The two join forces in the work, *Voluntaries*, which reexamines the legacy of John Brown, a white abolitionist who attempted an armed slave revolt in 1859, resulting in his capture and execution. Additionally, the week includes a two-day interstitial performance, *I Want My Spot Back*, by the American artist Kevin Beasley, an aural work that uses DJ mixing equipment and the sound of predominately black hip hop music to emphasize the body’s relationship to dynamic social conditions.

The final week features the pairing of Judson Dance Theater founding member Deborah Hay with Sarah Michelson. Hay will contribute a dance for 27 performers titled *Blues*. The work is inspired by a vision of making a dance for 11 African American dancers performing in the second floor atrium, while a group of 12 white American dancers are present in the Museum’s main lobby on the ground floor. The artist sees the choreography “as a way to ground the space in life.” Michelson will exhibit *Devotion Study #3*; her celebrated work *Devotion Study #1* was featured in the 2012 Whitney Biennial. The two iconic and rigorous dance artists are in a generational conversation on movement, space, and time.

On every Saturday of the series artists and curators will be present for responses. Each discussion will be led by a different respondent, among them Daphne A. Brooks (Princeton University), Douglas Crimp (University of Rochester), and Brent Hayes Edwards (Columbia University).

A discursive program with talk backs and conversations involving artists, curators, and critics will be organized in collaboration with Danspace Project, New York. Further details are below.

Admission to *Some sweet day* is free with Museum admission; no additional tickets are necessary. A complete schedule of performances is available below.

**ABOUT THE CHOREOGRAPHERS**

**Ralph Lemon** is a dancer, choreographer, writer, and visual artist. In January 2011, Lemon’s performance work was presented at The Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with the exhibition, *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*.

**Steve Paxton** (American, b. 1939) is regarded as one of the most significant choreographers of his generation. Paxton indelibly transformed the vocabulary of dance through his contributions to the Judson Dance Theatre in the 1960s, and in his development of Contact Improvisation in 1972, which was influenced by his studies in the martial arts and based on ideas of improvisation, gravity, and momentum between two bodies.
Jérôme Bel (French, b.1964) is a central figure in a group of contemporary European choreographers who set out in the early 1990s to fundamentally question the parameters of their own practice and of choreography more broadly. As a result, they produced highly conceptual and critical works that expanded the boundaries of what dance could be.

Choreographer and director Faustin Linyekula (Congolese, b.1974) creates arresting and thought-provoking performance works that reflect the sociopolitical history and cultural struggles of his native Democratic Republic of Congo.

American choreographer Dean Moss (b. 1954), works in the media of performance, dance, audio, and design in order to probe subjects of identity and perception. His most recent projects have focused on innovative audience participation and trans-cultural, cross-disciplinary collaborations.

Deborah Hay (American, b.1941) is widely considered to be one of the most influential and relevant choreographers working in experimental dance today. As a founding member of Judson Dance Theatre in the 1960s in New York, she took part in radically reshaping American dance by opening it up to other art forms and shifting it away from a spectacle and towards pedestrian movements.

The choreographic works of Sarah Michelson (British, b. 1964) are recognized for their ongoing and dynamic examination of the formal components and stylized tropes of dance. By rigorously dissecting the roles of the choreographer and the dancers, and by highlighting the architectural structure of the performance space, and the aesthetic possibilities of the scenography, Michelson explores existing tensions and the potential for new forms of contemporary dance to arise.

SPONSORSHIP:
Some sweet day is made possible by MoMA’s Wallis Annenberg Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art through the Annenberg Foundation.

Additional funding is provided by The Modern Women’s Fund.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE FOR SOME SWEET DAY:

**Week 1**
Monday, 10/15; Thursday, 10/18; Friday, 10/19

Wednesday, 10/17
1:00 p.m. Steve Paxton, *Satisfyin Lover* and *State*
4:00 p.m. Steve Paxton, *Satisfyin Lover* and *State*

Saturday, 10/20
1:00 p.m. Jérôme Bel, *The Show Must Go On*
3:00 p.m. Jérôme Bel, *The Show Must Go On*
4:00 p.m. Response by Steve Paxton, Jérôme Bel, Sabine Breitwieser, and Ralph Lemon

Sunday, 10/21
1:00 p.m. Jérôme Bel, *The Show Must Go On*
4:00 p.m. Steve Paxton, *Satisfyin Lover* and *State*
**Week 2**  
Wednesday, 10/24  
1:00 p.m. Faustin Linyekula, *What is Black Music Anyway.../Self-Portraits*  
4:00 p.m. Dean Moss and Laylah Ali, *Voluntaries*  

Thursday 10/25  
3:30 p.m. Kevin Beasley, *I Want My Spot Back*  

Friday 10/26  
3:30 p.m. Kevin Beasley, *I Want My Spot Back*  

Saturday, 10/27  
1:00 p.m. Dean Moss and Laylah Ali, *Voluntaries*  
3:00 p.m. Faustin Linyekula, *What is Black Music Anyway.../Self-Portraits*  
4:00 p.m. Response by Faustin Linyekula, Dean Moss, Laylah Ali, Daphne A. Brooks, and Brent Hayes Edwards  

Sunday, 10/28  
1:00 p.m. Faustin Linyekula, *What is Black Music Anyway.../Self-Portraits*  
4:00 p.m. Dean Moss and Laylah Ali, *Voluntaries*  

**Week 3**  
Friday, 11/02  
1:00 p.m. Deborah Hay, *Blues*  
4:00 p.m. Sarah Michelson, *Devotion Study #3*  

Saturday, 11/03  
1:00 p.m. Sarah Michelson, *Devotion Study #3*  
3:00 p.m. Deborah Hay, *Blues*  
4:00 p.m. Response by the Deborah Hay, Sarah Michelson, Douglas Crimp, and Jenny Schlenzka  

Sunday, 11/04  
1:00 p.m. Deborah Hay, *Blues*  
4:00 p.m. Sarah Michelson, *Devotion Study #3*  

**DANSPACE EVENT:**  
Conversations Without Walls  
Reflections on MoMA's *Some sweet day*  
Saturday, November 10, 2012, 1:30 p.m. Admission: $10 suggested donation at the door.  
In collaboration with The Museum of Modern Art, Danspace Project presents a conversation responding to Ralph Lemon's MoMA commissioned series *Some sweet day*. Danspace Project invites artists, curators, and scholars to respond to the aesthetic and historic dialogue proposed by *Some sweet day* performances. This conversation re-visits all six performances curated by Lemon discussing a wide range of responses including Judson’s influence and divergences after 50 years. Moderated by performance scholar Jenn Joy, Lemon is joined by Danspace Executive Director Judy Hussie Taylor, choreographer Luciana Achugar, Mellon post-doctorate fellow Noémie Solomon (McGill University, Montreal) and curators Sabine Breitwieser (MoMA), Jenny Schlenzka (MoMA) and Thomas J. Lax (The Studio Museum in Harlem) in discussion of the aesthetic and historic dialogue proposed by *Some sweet day* performances.  
Conversations Without Walls take place at Danspace Project inside of St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery.
Current and Upcoming Media and Performance Art Programs and Exhibitions:


Performing Histories (1) (September 12, 2012, to March 11, 2013) is the first of a two-part exhibition of media artworks that engage with history in various ways. The works on view have all recently entered the Museum’s collection and represent a wide range of perspectives.

Meta-Monumental Garage Sale (November 17 to 30, 2012), Martha Rosler’s first solo exhibition at MoMA, is a large scale-version of the classic American garage sale, in which Museum visitors can browse and buy second-hand goods organized, displayed, and sold by the artist.

Performing Histories (2) (April to October 2013) will present works by Wael Shawky (b. Egypt, 1971) and Chen Shaoxiong (b. China, 1962) and take place in the Media Gallery.

No. 37

Press Contact: Paul Jackson, (212)708-9593 or paul_jackson@moma.org

For downloadable high-resolution images, register at MoMA.org/press

#  #  #

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019, (212) 708-9400, MoMA.org

Hours: Wednesday through Monday, 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: $25 adults; $18 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; $14 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs).

MoMA.org: No service charge for tickets ordered on MoMA.org. Tickets purchased online may be printed out and presented at the Museum without waiting in line. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs).

Film and After Hours Program Admission: $12 adults; $10 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; $8 full-time students with current I.D. The price of an After Hours Program Admission ticket may be applied toward the price of a Museum admission ticket or MoMA Membership within 30 days.

MoMA/MoMA PS1 Blog, MoMA on Facebook, MoMA on Twitter, MoMA on YouTube, MoMA on Flickr