



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance (BAAD!) and 651 ARTS
Team up to Present the World Premiere of**

MBDance's Desire: A Sankofa Dream

**Created and Directed by Celebrated Choreographer
Maria Bauman-Morales**

**A Site Responsive and Interactive Work Designed as a Healing
Performance-Ritual for Black Queer Survival and Tailored
Specifically for Zoom Incorporating Dance, Original Text and
Installation**

Friday, January 22, 2021 and Saturday, January 23, 2021 at 7pm

(Brooklyn, NY – January 14, 2020) - Co-commissioned with the Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance (BAAD!), 651 ARTS - Brooklyn's premier institution for the African Diasporic performing arts - will co-present its first show of 2021 with the world premiere of MBDance's *Desire: A Sankofa Dream* on Friday, January 22nd and Saturday, January 23rd via Zoom at 7pm. Created and directed by celebrated choreographer **Maria Bauman-Morales**, *Desire: A Sankofa Dream* is a site responsive and interactive work designed as a healing performance-ritual built around Black queer survival techniques and tailored specifically for Zoom incorporating dance, original text and installation - pushing the boundaries of live, online artwork.

A singularly unique experience, *Desire...* provides both the methods and portals for witness-participants and artists to have agency throughout the piece and both alike practice imagining their best-case-scenarios in a porous and fantastical world of Black Queer shape-shifting unicorns. The experience makes it possible to practice the skills we need to imagine and create the world we want. Bauman-Morales says the piece is part scored improvisation, part choreography, part visual design and part choose-your-own-adventure.

“In the face of fascism and separation, I am preoccupied with how we can all practice being together, better. For *Desire...*, I've drawn inspiration from Black Queer survival technologies

such as place-making and family-building, creating our own lexicons and constantly divining ways to check in on one another,” said Bauman-Morales. “Part creation-myth and part dance, this work offers a kaleidoscope of choices for performance collaborators and witness-participants alike. We are called to practice checking in with our desires and gathering the courage to embody them, while respecting and allowing for the desires of our community-members. I’m thrilled that 651 ARTS and BAAD! believe in this kind of artwork because we at MBDance are values-aligned with both of the organizations and we respect them deeply.”

For *Desire: A Sankofa Dream*, Bauman-Morales has assembled a brilliant and accomplished group of performers including: **Audrey Elaine Hailes, Angie Pittman, Courtney Cook, Johnnie Mercer, Ziiomi Law, Wendell Gray II**, and dramaturg **Sharon Bridgforth**.

“Maria Bauman-Morales is one of the most exciting artists creating work today. She delves deeply into the human experience and delivers art that vibrates beyond our encounter with it,” said **Arthur Avilés**, BAAD!’s co-Founder and Artistic Director. “Partnering with 651 Arts is a joy and demonstrates the power of arts organizations of color joining hands to uplift an artist we treasure.”

“We are thrilled to partner with BAAD! and MBDance to present this work. Throughout this pandemic, as with other arts presenters, we have been trying to figure out how best to present work without being live and in person in order to reach audiences and to continue to provide a platform for the artists,” said **Monica L. Williams**, 651’s Chief Curator and Director of Programs. “*Desire: A Sankofa Dream* not only uniquely embraces the platform on which the art is being presented, but it also uses it to inform the art. It envelops the audience, or in this case the witness participants, into the work and creates a transformative experience. I’m so excited to see the response to the piece!”

Tickets for this show are \$5, \$10, and \$20 and are now on sale. For additional information, please visit one of the following:

www.baadbronx.org/

www.651ARTS.org.

www.desire.mbdance.net

About Maria Bauman-Morales and MBDance

Maria Bauman-Morales founded MBDance in 2009. MBDance creates honest and bold art from a sense of physical and emotional power, an insistence on equity, and a fascination with intimacy and relationship. In particular, MBDance centers the non-linear and linear stories and bodies of queer people of color, using dance as the wheel whose spokes are multiple other genres including visual art, text, and song.

After dancing with as well as serving as Director of Education Community Engagement and then Associate Artistic Director for Urban Bush Women, Bauman-Morales had been creating dance works as a freelance choreographer. She formed her company to further amplify her unique creative point of view and to support dancers in honing the particular blend of physical risk and athleticism, Capoeira-esque floorwork and spatiality, emphasis on race and equity, and willingness to investigate intimacy in various forms that Bauman-Morales’s work excels within.

MBDance recently premiered *(re)Source* for four sold-out nights via co-commission between The Chocolate Factory and BAAD! Among other honors, MBDance is a current BRIClab and Redtail Arts awarded resident company and Bauman-Morales is one of only a handful of choreographers across the nation who are honored as Urban Bush Women National Choreographic Center Fellows. MBDance has performed across the world, from NYC SummerStage to Singapore to the My Body My Space Festival in Mpumalanga, South Africa.

About BAAD (The Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance)!

BAAD! (The Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance) transforms the lives of women, people of color and the LGBTQ community through dance and the arts, education and culture. For over 20 years, BAAD! has been a home for the freedom of creative expression for artists and audiences and has presented annual multi-arts festivals and performances, in its theater and in the community, showcasing the work of emerging artists of color and inventive trailblazers at all levels of their creative development. BAAD!'s artist residencies nurture choreographers and artists in their creative process, and its educational opportunities range from innovative dance instruction for children to insightful artist-led community discussion series and workshops.

About 651 ARTS

Founded in Brooklyn, NY in 1988, the mission of 651 ARTS is to deepen awareness of and appreciation of contemporary performing arts and culture of the African Diaspora, and to provide professional and creative opportunities for artists of African descent.

651's signature programs have featured pioneering black choreographers from around the world including Germaine Acogny, Nora Chipaumire, Carmen de Lavallade, Diane McIntyre, Bebe Miller, Abdel R. Salaam and Jawole Willo Jo Zollar. As part of its commitment to the furtherance of conversations and celebration of Diaspora music, the institution has presented dialogues and performances by Somi, Hugh Masekela, and Grammy-winning artist Betty Carter, to name a few. Theatrical and text-based works by Anna Deavere Smith, Sekou Sundiata, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Ntozake Shange, Okwui Okpokwasili and Maria Bauman are representative of the hundreds of artists and productions featuring solo creations, collaborations, emerging artists, and works-in-development all produced by 651's visionary leadership in the field of Black performance.

651 ARTS' programs are made possible by gifts from generous individuals and grants from the Bay and Paul Foundations, Con Edison, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, Lambent Foundation, the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New York Community Trust, the Emma Sheaffer Charitable Trust, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, including Majority Leader Laurie A. Cumbo, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature

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