



PRESS RELEASE

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Will Rawls to deliver Regents' Professor Lecture on Feb. 16

The choreographer, filmmaker, writer, and 2020-2021 UC Regents' Professor will explore themes that inform his research into stop-motion filmmaking

(Los Angeles) UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance, an academic unit housed within the School of the Arts and Architecture, is proud to host choreographer, filmmaker, and writer Will Rawls who has been named 2020-2021 UC Regents' Professor in Dance. Rawls will teach two courses and deliver a virtual public lecture as part of this prestigious engagement with the University.

Established in 1952 by the Regents of the University of California, the Regents' Professor program brings to the University distinguished leaders who are not normally engaged in academic life with the aim of enriching instructional programs and learning environments while increasing students' exposure to a diverse range of successful professionals, artists, and others.

On Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., Rawls will deliver a virtual public lecture entitled, [*Stopping Dancing, or "Disnegatif,"*](#) in which he will share thoughts on dance, disjunctive time, and Black femme desire as they inform his research into stop-motion filmmaking. This event will include ASL interpretation.

Rawls is a multi-disciplinary choreographer working in dance, video, and installation across theaters, galleries, and museums. Over the last ten years, he has used performance as a vehicle for reformulating perceptions and embodiments of Blackness in contemporary life. Rawls is teaching independent studies to graduate students, and will also teach two undergraduate courses remotely.

"DANCE 117C: Choreography as Mediation" unpacks the idea of choreography and its relationship to dance, performance art, and media. Discussions and viewing assignments focus

on movement, video, duration, affect, language, identity, objects, and scores, among other topics. The course is an intensive laboratory for deepening a student's creative practice, and culminates in a series of choreographies created by the students to be staged remotely.

"DANCE C145/C245: Thick and Opaque: Writing on Dance" focuses on developing languages for describing how choreographers and performers give rise to novel and unfamiliar perceptions of the human. The classes are split between close readings of texts, in-class writing exercises, presentations, viewings of contemporary dance and performance, and critical essays.

"Dance is hard to capture in language, which is why it is one of the most under-published art forms in the world," Rawls said. "This class will teach us to write sensitively and sensuously with – and also even possibly through – the bodies that we are watching perform."

"I'm restless and idealistic so dance continues to be an enduring resource in my life. It drives my perception of the world as a fluctuating embodied experience. My choreography serves as a frame for this flux, lending form to time, meaning, desire, doubt, and resistance. To this day, choreography feels impossible and risky and therefore worthy of pursuit. Performance is where I'm asking others how we share and construct a vital, imaginary world together. I see it as part of our political process," Rawls writes in his artist statement.

"Will Rawls is at the vanguard of artists and public intellectuals who are able to mobilize conceptual playfulness, artistic chops, and critical inquiry all at once. Whether working as performer, filmmaker, writer, or lecturer, his pieces are animated by unexpected choreographic strategies. He has expanded the places and spaces where dance not only matters, but is vital," said Dan Froot, chair of UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance.

About Will Rawls

Rawls's choreographic work has appeared at Museum of Modern Art (2019), Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2018); Danspace Project, New York (2018); New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2018), Issue Project Room, Brooklyn (2018); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC (2018); Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Portland (2017); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2017); MoMA PS1, Long Island City, New York (2016); Abrons Arts Center, New York (2015); and Emily Harvey Foundation, New York (2012).

In 2016, Rawls co-curated *Lost and Found*, a six-week program of performances and artist projects at Danspace Project focused on the intergenerational impact of HIV/AIDS on dancers, women, and people of color.

Rawls' other works include *Cursor* at The Hessel Museum at Bard College; *Personal Effects*, a solo performance for Performa 10; and *Settlement House*, a choreographic installation for the 100th Anniversary of the Henry Street Playhouse and the Abrons Arts Center.

His writing has been published by *Artforum*, Danspace Project, the Hammer Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, Museu de Arte de São Paulo and les presses du réel. He is the former editor of *Critical Correspondence*, Movement Research's online publication, focusing on developments in contemporary dance practice and thought.

Rawls is a recipient of a United States Artists Fellowship, a "Bessie" New York Dance and Performance Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2021 Creative Capital Award, a United States Artists Award, a Foundation for Contemporary Arts grant, a Robert Rauschenberg Residency, and a Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University.

From 2006 to 2013, Rawls collaborated with Kennis Hawkins on the performance duo Dance Gang, working in public spaces and galleries, including MoMA PS1, dOCUMENTA (13), various Brooklyn parks and streets, ISE Cultural Foundation, Dance Theater Workshop, and Performance Space 122. As a dancer, he has worked with Jérôme Bel, Alain Buffard, Maria Hassabi, Noemie LaFrance, Nicholas Leichter, and Shen Wei Dance Arts. Rawls has also been an interpreter for Tino Sehgal and has re-performed works by Marina Abramović.

Rawls has been a guest artist at Bard College, Barnard College, Harvard University/Carpenter Center, Wesleyan University, Williams College, and a mentor for Colorado College's Department of Theatre and Dance. Rawls graduated with a B.A. in Art History from Williams College in 2000.

About the Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance

Defined by a dynamic blend of theory and practice, the Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance is led by a renowned faculty of scholars, activists, curators, filmmakers, and choreographers dedicated to critical cross-cultural analysis and art-making. The department is the place to make dances, explore digital media, curate exhibitions, become an arts activist, and develop scholarly expertise in culture and the arts. Multiple disciplines and artistic approaches are used to encourage students to position their work within broad social contexts. The path-breaking programs of the department are committed to academic excellence, diversity, freedom of expression, activism, and social transformation through the arts. To learn more, visit wacd.ucla.edu.

About the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture

The UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture plays a vital role in the cultural and artistic life of the campus and of the broader community. Guiding our mission is the belief that the arts are an essential part of the cognitive, critical, inquisitive life of a public research university, and that

the practice and presence of the arts are a cornerstone of the creative, forward-looking thinking that the 21st century demands. One of 12 prestigious professional schools at UCLA, the School of the Arts and Architecture offers leading programs in four degree-granting departments: Architecture and Urban Design, Art, Design | Media Arts, and World Arts and Cultures/Dance. The school also houses seven research centers, the Visual and Performing Arts Education Program, two internationally acclaimed museums — the Fowler and the Hammer — and one ground-breaking performing arts program — the Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA. This unique, rich array of research centers, museums, and performing arts programs broadens and enhances the experiences of our students and faculty. To learn more, visit arts.ucla.edu.