



Nick Cave Convenes Immersive Dance Celebration With Debut of Site-Specific Commission at Park Avenue Armory

The Let Go Marks Premiere of New “Up Right” Performance Presented in Dialogue with the Armory’s Historic Building



New York, NY – June 7, 2018 – Animating Park Avenue Armory with the sights, sounds, and movement of renowned interdisciplinary artist Nick Cave, *The Let Go* transforms the Armory’s Wade Thompson Drill Hall into a dance-based town hall that brings together visitors to participate in a collective act of catharsis. The Armory’s 2018 visual arts commission builds on Cave’s hybrid, multisensory practice with an ambitious project—encompassing performance, installation, dance-based encounters, and soundtracks by some of New York’s leading

DJs—that provides a backdrop for audiences to dispel negativity and uplift one another. On view June 7 through July 1, 2018, *The Let Go* features a series of soundsuits—wearable sculptures that create a second skin to conceal race, gender, and class, that come to life in a new “Up Right” performance conceived for the Armory’s historic interiors.

“In today’s tumultuous world, Nick’s artistic vision and desire to build understanding through dance are more vital than ever,” said **Rebecca Robertson**, Founding President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory. “By harnessing and cultivating the power of community, this commission serves as a spirited reminder of our shared humanity. We look forward to reconnecting audiences from across all five boroughs with the world of Nick Cave in his first major project to be mounted in the city since *HEARD•NY*.”

The Armory’s Drill Hall takes on a dance-hall atmosphere by immersing visitors within Cave’s newest installation, comprising two kinetic, 40-foot-tall, multi-colored Mylar sculptures referencing social justice issues that express the sense of freedom and self-expression one gets when they “let go” on the dance floor. Through a series of daytime happenings, visitors and community organizations such as yoga practitioners, hula-hoopers, church choirs, and student groups are invited to come together to express themselves through movement and work out frustrations to music curated by some of New York’s leading DJs, both as a recorded soundtrack and spun live from a sculptural DJ tower conceived by Cave. Participants are engaged by dancers leading games of Twister, Soul Train lines, a special line dance called “The Let Go” created for the installation, soundsuit invasions, and other dance-based encounters such as “chase,”: two ever-gliding curtains corral visitors and sweep across the dance floor. Renowned choreographer Francesca Harper,

together with Cave, have choreographed the dancers to engage visitors in the Drill Hall. Cave is also curating an evening of site-specific performative responses by Nona Hendryx, Helga Davis, Francesca Harper, and Reggie Gray and the D.R.E.A.M. Ring that takes place within the installation on June 26, 2018. In the head house, a site-specific presentation of Cave's Up Right soundsuits are on display in the Armory's historic period rooms. Composed of vintage objects including sequined garments and holiday decorations as well as synthetic hair, raffia, and hand-strung beads, the wearable sculptures evoke a multiplicity of meanings ranging from the spiritual to the carnivalesque.

On weekday evenings, Cave orchestrates a cast of dancers in his signature Up Right performances that activate the soundsuits and are accompanied by baritone Jorell Williams and Vy Higginsen's Sing Harlem Choir. "Practitioners" commence the ceremonies by transferring the soundsuits to the Drill Hall. There they will dress "initiates," a ritual act of disassembling and resculpting the soundsuits on the body, piece by piece. This physical transformation represents a cleansing of mind, body, and spirit that empowers the initiate to assert their selfhood and forge their own path. In a grand procession around chase, the initiates come together to perform new site-situated choreography by Francesca Harper that celebrates independence and self-determination.

"Throughout his career, Nick has challenged traditional conceptions of visual art to create new forms of expression that pervade the hearts and minds of audiences," said **Pierre Audi**, Artistic Director of Park Avenue Armory. "As an institution that embraces interdisciplinary concepts that defy expectations, it is fitting that we welcome Nick to our roster of artists who have drawn upon the unique setting of the Armory to develop new narratives in their work."

"*The Let Go* is a testament to Nick's unwavering commitment to uplifting communities and affecting change through art. His participatory performances have become some of the most beloved experiences to be found in the contemporary art landscape today," said **Tom Eccles**, curator of *The Let Go*. "It is exciting to bring his energy and aesthetic to the Armory, creating a project that includes all New Yorkers in its realization."

INSTALLATION DATES AND PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

The Let Go is on view at Park Avenue Armory June 7 through July 1, 2018. Up Right performances take place every Wednesday through Friday evening. On the weekends, the installation is transformed into a dance-based town hall during the daytime.

The Let Go

A New Commission by Park Avenue Armory

June 7 – July 1, 2018

Installation Hours:

Wednesday – Friday: 7:30 – 11pm

Weeknight installation hours include a special Up Right performance at 8pm

Tickets: \$35

Saturday-Sunday: 11am – 6pm

Live DJs 2:00pm–6:00pm

Weekend installation hours include activities and performances by various community groups.

Tickets: \$17 ; free for Armory members

DJ Lineup:

Saturday, June 9: Ana Matronic
Sunday, June 10: Johnny Dynell
Saturday, June 16: Joe Clausell
Sunday, June 17: JD Samson
Saturday, June 23: Noise Cans
Sunday, June 24: Sabine Blaizin
Saturday, June 30: Sammy Jo
Sunday, July 1: Tedd Patterson

Tickets may be purchased at armoryonpark.org or by calling (212) 933-5812.

Thompson Arts Center at Park Avenue Armory
643 Park Avenue at 67th Street, New York, NY

ARTIST TALK

Thursday, June 7 at 6pm
Tickets: \$15

Artist Nick Cave explores the inspiration, ideas, and creative development behind *The Let Go* with artistic collaborators Bob Faust, (Principal and Creative Director, Faust) Nona Hendryx (songwriter and musician), and Ahmaya Knoelle Higginson (Executive Music & Programming Director, The Mama Foundation for the Arts & Sing Harlem Choir). This talk is moderated by Armory Artist-in-Residence Malik Gaines (writer and artist).

THE FREEDOM BALL

Thursday, June 14 from 7pm-12am
Dress to Express Competition at 11pm
Tickets: \$25

Hosted by Matthew Placek
APPARATUS, House of Yes, Ladyfag,
Saada of Everyday People, Opening Ceremony, PAPI JUICE, and VISIONAIRE

Artist Nick Cave invites audiences to “dress to express” at The Freedom Ball, an evening of fashion, dance, and house music celebrating the power of collective community. Party-goers can let go to music by the legendary Marshall Jefferson in Cave’s monumental kinetic installation, which will take over the expanse of the Armory’s Drill Hall. The evening will feature a ball-style fashion contest hosted by a panel of leading tastemakers featuring \$20,000 dollars in prizes. The categories are as follows:

- State of the World: Express your views through your body politic
- Unlike Anything Else: Celebrate your beautiful difference and extraordinary self
- Dare-flair: Push your limits – werk the floor

ARTISTIC RESPONSES

Tuesday, June 26 at 7:30pm

Tickets: \$45

Songwriter and musician Nona Hendryx, vocalist and artist Helga Davis, dancer and choreographer Francesca Harper, and FLEXN dance pioneer Reggie Gray and his company of dance activists the D.R.E.A.M. Ring will respond to the installation in an evening of site-specific performative responses curated by Nick Cave.

ABOUT NICK CAVE

Nick Cave is an artist and educator working between the visual and performing arts through a wide range of media inclusive of sculpture, installation, video, sound, and performance. His solo exhibitions have toured globally from the United States through France, Africa, Denmark, Asia, South America, and the Caribbean. Cave also works as a professor at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and received his MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art and his BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute.

On view concurrently with *The Let Go* is a kaleidoscopic mural created in collaboration with artist Bob Faust for New York Live Arts created from a single Soundsuit image constructed entirely of woven bags collected from around the world. Cave is also debuting new work in two exhibitions related to *The Let Go* at Jack Shainman Gallery: *Weather or Not* (on view through June 23rd) and *If a Tree Falls* in November 2018. Recent exhibitions and projects include: *Nick Cave: Feat.* (The Frist Center for Visual Arts, 2018); *Nick Cave: Until* (Mass MoCA, 2017); *Nick Cave* (Telfair Museums, 2017); *Spotted by Nick Cave* (artspace 2016); *Nick Cave: Here Hear* (Cranbrook Art Museum, 2015); *Currents 109: Nick Cave* (Saint Louis Art Museum, 2014); *Nick Cave: Sojourn* (Denver Art Museum, 2013); and *HEARD•NY* in New York's Grand Central Terminal (2013).

EXHIBITION CREDITS

The Let Go is produced by the artist, Bob Faust and Park Avenue Armory, and curated by Tom Eccles.

ARMORY 2018 SEASON SPONSORSHIP

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Support for Park Avenue Armory's artistic programming has been generously provided by the Charina Endowment Fund, the Altman Foundation, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, The Emma and Georgina Bloomberg Foundation, the Marc Haas Foundation, The Kaplen Brothers Fund, the Juliet Lea Hillman Simonds Foundation, the Leon Levy Foundation, the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, and the Isak and Rose Weinman Foundation.

ABOUT PARK AVENUE ARMORY

Part palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory fills a critical void in the cultural ecology of New York by enabling artists to create, students to explore, and audiences to experience, unconventional work that cannot be mounted in traditional performance halls and museums. With its soaring 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall—reminiscent of 19th-century European train stations—and an array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory offers a platform for creativity across all art forms. Together, these and other spaces within the historic building utilized for arts

programming comprise the Thompson Arts Center at Park Avenue Armory, named in recognition of the Thompson family's ongoing support of the institution.

Since its first production in September 2007, the Armory has organized and commissioned immersive performances, installations, and cross-disciplinary collaborations in its vast Drill Hall that defy traditional categorization and challenge artists to push the boundaries of their practice. In its historic period rooms, the Armory presents small-scale performances and programs, including its acclaimed Recital Series, which showcases musical talent from across the globe within the intimate salon setting of the Board of Officers Room; and the new Artists Studio series in the newly restored Veterans Room, which features innovative artists and artistic pairings curated by Jason Moran that harken back to the imaginative improvisation of the original group of designers who conceived the space. The Armory also offers robust arts education programs at no cost to underserved New York City public school students, engaging them with the institution's artistic programming and the building's history and architecture.

Programmatic highlights from the Armory's first 10 years include Bernd Alois Zimmermann's harrowing *Die Soldaten*, in which the audience moved "through the music;" *the event of a thread*, a site-specific installation by Ann Hamilton; the final performances of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company across three separate stages; *WS* by Paul McCarthy, a monumental installation of fantasy, excess, and dystopia; an immersive *Macbeth* set in a Scottish heath and henge by Rob Ashford and Kenneth Branagh; a profound and radically inclusive staging of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* staged by Peter Sellars and performed by Sir Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker; Louis Andriessen's *De Materie* in a highly imaginative staging by director Heiner Goebbels that included floating zeppelins and a flock of 100 sheep; *Circle Map*, two evenings of immersive spatial works by internationally acclaimed composer Kaija Saariaho performed by the New York Philharmonic with mise-en-espace by Armory Artistic Director Pierre Audi; Taryn Simon's *An Occupation of Loss*, a monumental work with 30 professional mourners from around the world that blended sculpture, sound, architecture, and performance in an exploration of the boundaries of grief between living and dead, past and present, performer and viewer; Julian Rosefeldt's *Manifesto*, a multi-channel cinematic installation featuring Cate Blanchett; eight-time Drama Desk-nominated play *The Hairy Ape*, directed by Richard Jones and starring Bobby Cannavale; *Hansel & Gretel*, a new commission by Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, and Ai Weiwei that transformed and activated the Drill Hall to explore the meaning of publicly shared space in the era of surveillance; and Pierre Boulez's masterwork *Répons*, performed twice each evening by Ensemble Intercontemporain and IRCAM under the baton of Matthias Pintscher with the audience changing seats in-between to get a new sonic perspective.

Concurrent with its artistic program, the Armory has undertaken an ongoing \$215-million revitalization of its historic building, designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron. www.armoryonpark.org.

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Media Contacts

For more information or to request images, please contact Resnicow and Associates:

Juliet Sorce, jsorce@resnicow.com or (212) 671-5158

Chelsea Beroza, cberoza@resnicow.com or (212) 671-5160

Stephanie Yeo, syeo@resnicow.com or (212) 671-5161