

# FRINGE ARTS

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**Images available upon request**

## **FringeArts announces curated programming for 2015 Fringe Festival, featuring international superstars and Philadelphia favorites**

*Tickets on sale now for 19th annual festival of risk-taking performance, September 3-19*

PHILADELPHIA — Tickets are on sale now for FringeArts Curated programming in the **2015 Fringe Festival**, presenting arts innovators from all over the globe and advancing Philadelphia's dialogue with the international arts movement from September 3<sup>rd</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>. The 2015 Fringe Festival is supported by Presenting Sponsor The Knight Foundation, with additional support from Lead Sponsor PNC Arts Alive.

Last year's Festival launched the grand opening of La Peg at FringeArts, a full-service bar and French-inspired brasserie by Philadelphia chef/restaurateur Peter Woolsey. FringeArts' permanent waterfront location and collaboration with La Peg has cemented its position as Philadelphia's home for contemporary performance. In its first year of year-round operations onsite, FringeArts has presented dozens of artists on its mainstage, La Peg stage, and even outside in its European-style beer garden with the spectacular backdrop of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge.

The 2015 Fringe Festival explodes into every nook and cranny of Philadelphia from September 3<sup>rd</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>. Performances take place in a variety of locations; some familiar, like the Painted Bride Performing Arts Center, and some unfamiliar, like a duo of repurposed armories. FringeArts' waterfront location, however, will remain the anchor of the Festival, staging late night programming every night and providing a place for audiences and artists to socialize and talk about their experiences with the day's Festival shows.

"We've learned a lot about this space over the last year," says President and Producing Artistic Director Nick Stuccio. "During the Festival, we'll be using it as it has been designed to be used. We're sending artists out to have adventures all over the city, but this building will be the epicenter of Festival energy."

FringeArts continues to strengthen Philadelphia's relationship with the international world of art-making by presenting titans of experimental performance such as **Jo Strømgren Kompani** and **Joris Lacoste** and putting them in dialogue with Philadelphia-based visionaries like **Pig Iron Theatre Company** and **Lightning Rod Special**. **Thaddeus Phillips** of **Lucidity Suitcase Intercontinental** and **David Zambrano** perfectly illustrate the Festival's connection to the international world of art-making. The former is a Philadelphia-based artist that uses his international travels as source material for his original devised theater and the latter is a choreographer "committed to art as a cultural exchange, developing a creative

process in a world without borders.” Beyond national borders, **Pieter Ampe’s** *Still Standing You* strives to shatter other borders, rooted in gender, masculinity, sexuality, and friendship.

“The Festival is an opportunity to look beyond the boundaries of our city and see what’s happening around the world,” continues Stuccio. “We’re curious about what artists are saying about the places in which they live, and through that process of sharing and exchanging, we learn about our world and ourselves.”

Even in light of a permanent home, the Fringe Festival’s tradition of bringing theater to the most unlikely of places perseveres. The two Fringe Festival centerpieces - **Toneelgroep Amsterdam’s** *After the Rehearsal/Persona* and **Lucinda Childs’** seminal collaboration with **Frank Gehry** and **John Adams**, *Available Light* – will be presented in Philadelphia’s historic Drexel and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Armories, respectively. Even theaters are being treated as site-specific locations: **Ant Hampton** invites fifteen audience members at a time into the enormous Merriam Theater in *The Extra People*, and takes them on a physical journey through its darkest corners, with only a flashlight to light their way.

FringeArts Curated programming is central to the 2015 Fringe Festival, in which hundreds of artists fill Philadelphia’s public and private spaces with original art, in the true spirit of the international “fringe” movement. This 17-day celebration of art-making offers an unparalleled opportunity to see a cross-section of the world’s greatest arts experimenters at one time, in one city. The Fringe Festival attracts tens of thousands of attendees each year, hungry for artistic experiences that break the mold, push boundaries, and advance the international conversation surrounding performance.

**Tickets to FringeArts Curated programming are on sale at [FringeArts.com](http://FringeArts.com) or via phone at 215-413-1318. All Festival shows will be on sale by August.**

## **2015 FRINGEARTS CURATED PROGRAMMING OVERVIEW**

### **THEATER**

[ 2015 FRINGE FESTIVAL CENTERPIECE ] Art and reality, illness and normality: two Ingmar Bergman screenplays – ***After the Rehearsal/Persona*** (September 3–5) – are reimagined brilliantly for the stage by celebrated Dutch director **Ivo van Hove** and set designer **Jan Versweyveld**. This theatrical diptych, with each play delving into the messy lives of theater artists, features deeply emotional and physical performances to match the layered psychological drama of Bergman’s texts.

In ***After the Rehearsal*** director Hendrik Vogler organizes his life within the confines of the theater. His life is his work: rehearsals like notes in his diary, performances his autobiography. All emotions are submitted to his control. Yet life and reality cannot be kept at bay: love, birth, decay, and death seep into his sanctum in the persons of Anna, his former lover and star actress, and Rachel, her daughter and his current star.

In ***Persona*** an actress falls mute during a performance of *Electra* and has not spoken since. As if a short circuit has gone off in her brain, she cannot distinguish between the roles she plays in real life and the ones she plays on stage. But does she have a condition or is she merely assuming another role? The star-struck nurse who cares for her idolizes the actress at first, only to develop a deep resentment towards a

woman for whom real emotions and experience serve only as research. *Persona* is played out in hospital and beside a lake, represented by a 10,000 gallon, full-stage pool of water.

*FringeArts' presentation of After the Rehearsal/Persona has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.*

[ THE NARCONOVELA MOVES FROM TV TO STAGE ] **Alias Ellis Mackenzie** (September 11-13, 15-19), by **Thaddeus Phillips** and **Lucidity Suitcase Intercontinental**, brings audiences back in time to the 1980s with the infamous American drug runner Barry Seal, Colombian drug lords, CIA agents, and fixers via the actors who play them on a modern day TV show. A theatrical adventure that exists between myth and history, reality and make-believe, is another mind-bending meld of stage design, action, and storytelling from director–performer Thaddeus Phillips. The “War on Drugs” is retold by way of a television production soundstage—replete with the lighting, booms, cranes, cameras, sets, and props that seek to recreate the “reality” of the past.

*Alias Ellis Mackenzie* follows the potentially real adventures of the American pilot Barry Seal—drug runner, informant, and Iran-Contra Affair player— and his relationship with Colombian drug lords, nefarious co-pilots, clandestine runways, his family, and the DEA, FBI, CIA and three US presidents. *Alias Ellis Mackenzie* is performed in English and Spanish with English subtitles.

*Alias Ellis Mackenzie has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.*

[ TRIAD OF WORKS FROM NORWEGIAN RENAISSANCE MAN ] World-renowned choreographer, theater director, and playwright **Jo Strømgren** returns to FringeArts with three diverse and boundary-breaking shows.

He reinvents a classic in **A Doll's House** (September 4-6), Henrik Ibsen's most famous play about trust and kinship, debt and lies, envy and love, with a raucous cast of Philadelphia and New York actors. Taking respectfully irreverent liberties with the script, pared down to essence and eliminating archaic language, this *Doll's House* revels in its emotional and moral battles in their full glory. As the actors enter the miniature house, they can barely stand without clashing against the ceiling, let alone inhabit the space together. As actors emerge from the cramped set and enter the open stage, their feelings of restriction and claustrophobia evolve from physical to metaphorical.

In **The Border** (September 9-12) a man and a woman, each lacking in social grace and neither understanding the other's language, share an office in the northernmost diplomatic outpost of the world. Soon their workplace veneer of mutual respect crumbles into a territorial war of procedure and power. But with the discovery of an emotional addition to each other, *The Border* becomes a complicated love story that explores the challenge inherent in connecting to another human being.

Strømgren's triptych concludes with **There** (September 9-12), Jo Strømgren Kompani's most popular show, featuring former Soviet Union dissidents stranded on a journey between East and West. In an interzonal holding area with wooden shipping crates – perhaps a warehouse, perhaps the hull of a ship – they wrestle, they dance, they sing, they yearn for what they've lost. By turns Vaudevillian, poetic, and balletic, *There* is a work of dance-theater about choosing the unknown or going back to what you came from.

[ LOCAL WORLD PREMIERE ] Philadelphia's own **Lighting Rod Special** answers the question "How do we teach troubling histories to young people?" with a delightfully cheeky answer: "By even more troublesome methods!"

**Underground Railroad Game** (September 2-6, 10-13) is a delirious, funny, and taboo-smashing work about race relations in America. It takes audiences through time from a modern-day middle school lecture to pre-Civil War times. Along the way this fluid duet moves through a host of comedic and tragic scenarios as it confronts and confounds thorny issues of race and the perverse narratives created to soften history. Audiences will watch reenactment culture gone awry, a romantic comedy with hipster racists, an irreverent take on the politics of the "n-word," the sexual allure of the Civil War, troubling middle school curricula, white saviors and magical Negroes, and a time traveling romance between teachers who harbor a racially exoticized attraction.

[ TWO PHILADELPHIA FAVORITES TEAM UP ] Fringe favorite **Pig Iron Theatre Company** teams up with one of the country's most exciting bands, Philadelphia-based **Dr. Dog**, in an utterly unique collaboration. Inspired by Dr. Dog's newest album, Pig Iron has created a theater piece by the same name – **Swamp is On**. This remarkable play, told in Pig Iron's uniquely playful voice, is followed by a live concert by **Dr. Dog** themselves.

**Swamp is On** (September 9-12) tells the story of Phrases, who leads a dull existence. One morning while driving to work he hears an ad on the radio for the Psychedelic Swamp. Dreaming of a better life, Phrases drives his car into an oncoming train. He finds himself being transported into a land of wonder and mystery: The Swamp. Phrases records the sounds of the Swamp onto a cassette tape and sends the tape to Dr. Dog.

A handful of scientists have searched for The Psychedelic Swamp for years, trying to interpret messages from The Swamp and from Phrases. These scientists, The Pig Iron Psychedelic Signals Auxilliary, join forces with the Dr. Dog Pop Detachment, to decode the tape and spread the message of Phrases. A government agency interferes with the scientists and tries to shut down their facilities—and this concert—in an effort to keep the truth about The Swamp from reaching humanity.

## **DANCE**

[ 2015 FRINGE FESTIVAL CENTERPIECE ] Lucinda Childs, one of the most celebrated choreographers of the modern era, revives **Available Light** (September 10-12), her seminal 1983 collaboration with composer John Adams and architect Frank Gehry. Within the large, open confines of the Drexel Armory the Gehry-designed set is built anew, with two industrial platforms for dancers (three on top, eight on the bottom), along with chain link fencing, and a lighting design that plays off the natural surroundings of the space. The music by John Adams was inspired by the variations of natural light on a landscape. Created on synthesizers played by Adams, along with some ghostly horns, the score exists only as a recording (not to be played live) with all its sonic dynamics becoming carefully crafted arrangements.

**Available Light** is about space, time, and the interaction of dance, light, sound, and architecture. Movements and patterns are exchanged between the dancers of the upper level and the bottom level in a choreography that continually evolves at subtly shifting angles at exquisitely arranged intervals. The full effect is that of a complete work of art, beyond a singular viewpoint, a deeply realized artistic encounter that creates a world of its own and is a joy for the senses.

*FringeArts' presentation of Available Light has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.*

[ ESSENCE OF SOUL ] **David Zambrano**, a highly regarded experimental choreographer and improviser, is known for bringing wildly unique, high intensity movement out of his dancers' bodies. In ***Soul Project*** (September 18-19), an international cast of virtuosic dancers performs a series of mesmerizing dance solos to live recordings of classic soul songs—from Aretha Franklin to James Brown.

Each night the order of the solos and their location in the space changes, as a dancer will create a “center stage” wherever he or she decides to. Throughout the performance, audiences roam freely, get up close to the cast, and witness the dance from the angle of their choosing. The experience is intimate—you can feel every tremble and sigh of the dancers' bodies—and communal, a shared experience in the discovery of sublime expression.

[ BROMANCE ] Two dancers – **Pieter Ampe** and **Guilherme Garrido** – play out scenes of male friendship, machismo, and the naked male body in this mischievous dance, a kaleidoscopic view of friendship—rife with tensions and aggressions, clumsy desires of harmony and virtue, whispered tunes of togetherness and solitude. ***Still Standing You*** (September 9-11) is a daring, hilarious dance work that travels from the aggressive to the intimate, and the forms two bodies create.

With a dance idiom entirely their own Pieter and Gui shamelessly, and mischievously, seek out what they mean to each other. Are they friends, partners, lovers, rivals or even enemies? The only instrument they can use is their own body, the irony of their displays of muscle, the intensity of their boyish friendship, the capacity to turn one's limitations into virtuosity and the ability to combine all this into a dynamic performance in which ruggedness, anger, and love are entwined in one great physical and all-encompassing embrace.

## **INTERDISCIPLINARY**

[ THE MUSIC OF WORDS ] ***Suite n°2*** by **Encyclopedie de la Parole** and **Joris Lacoste** (September 15-16) is a choral work for five solo voices. The performers sing a selection of words from sound recordings collected from a variety of sources from political speeches to bad TV to radical poetry and street conversations. The five voices in *Suite n°2* repeat passages from the recordings exactly as they were spoken—mimicking inflection, rhythm, hesitation, and breath. These words are woven into a score and the resulting music includes complex harmonies, drama, humor, and a sense of mischief. As the performers sing, transcribed excerpts of the recordings are projected above them.

A virtuoso choral presentation of the spoken word presenting many languages (with English supertitles) takes audiences on a procession of words that dance, words that decide, threaten, condemn, that join ranks and separate, words that crumble and rise from the dust, naked words, and words dressed in Versace.

*Suite n°2* demonstrates that the ways in which words are spoken are more meaningful than the meaning of the words themselves.

[ WATCHERS BECOME THE WATCHED ] **Ant Hampton's *The Extra People*** (September 17-18) asks an audience of fifteen people, each wearing a pair of headphones, to sit in a nearly empty theater, watching another fifteen audience members perform onstage. Soon, they replace those on stage, only to discover that a new audience occupies in the seats they left behind. Now they are being watched. And so it

continues and, following instructions piped through their headphones, they begin to move throughout different zones of the theater, which is dormant, empty, and unlit save for their flashlights.

They're cast—along with everyone else in the audience—as an extra. But an extra for what? Are they in a play, is it for a film, or are they like a temporary worker just performing the tasks you're told to without explanation? The audience will notice that their instructions differ from everyone else's. Highly realistic recordings create an audio landscape so complete that the audience will begin to mistrust the reality of their surroundings. The only thing keeping them safe in a once familiar world becomes a computer-generated voice, telling them what to do.

### **AFTER HOURS AT FRINGEARTS**

FringeArts brings the Festival home every night with an exciting line-up of performers co-curated by Philadelphia's own **King Britt** and **Kate Watson-Wallace**. Featured performers include poet/musician/performer **Saul Williams**, rapper and songwriter **Spank Rock**, and Florida-born producer/singer **Helado Negro**. A full line-up and ticket information will be released by the end of July.

"We wanted to bring the energy of Fringe Festival after-parties into the new space," King Britt says of his and Watson-Wallace's curation. "We carefully selected acts that represent a global celebration of music and art, while simultaneously inviting audiences to see and hear through a different lens."

The Beer Garden at La Peg will be a staple of the Festival, providing an opportunity for low-key socializing between audiences and artists.

### **FEASTIVAL**

The seventh annual **FEASTIVAL**, a benefit for FringeArts, will be held during the 2015 Fringe Festival, date and location to be announced. The 2015 event will feature a culinary feast from dozens of the city's top chefs, with live performances by Festival artists and silent and live auctions. Past culinary contributors have included El Vez, Morimoto, Verdad, and Zahav. Says FringeArts Board President **Richard Vague** of the annual event, "World-class cities need world-class culture. FEASTIVAL celebrates both our artistic and culinary scenes — two great economic engines that push Philadelphia forward." For invitations, announcements and other updates, visit [phillyfeastival.com](http://phillyfeastival.com).

### **PROGRAM INFO/TICKETS**

The 2015 Fringe Festival runs September 3rd – 19th, 2015. Tickets for most shows are priced between \$10 and \$29; some shows are free. Students and Festival-goers age 25 or younger receive \$5 off tickets to all shows priced above \$10 and pay \$15 for tickets to FringeArts Curated shows. Discounted tickets are available to Members. Members save 30% on all shows (including year-round programming), can exchange tickets, receive admission to exclusive artist receptions and other special events, and enjoy priority seating at select performances. Groups of 10+ save 25%.

Tickets to the FringeArts Curated shows are on sale at [FringeArts.com](http://FringeArts.com) or via phone at 215-413-1318. Tickets to all other 2015 Fringe Festival shows will go on sale by the end of July.

## **ABOUT NICK STUCCIO**

FringeArts President and Producing Director Nick Stuccio's career in the arts began with an intensive study of classical ballet at Skidmore College, where he also earned a degree in biology. His dedication to the form led to an apprenticeship with the Pennsylvania Ballet and eventually a position as a corps member with the company, where he danced for eight years. At the Ballet, Stuccio danced under the artistic direction of Ricky Weiss, Christopher d'Amboise and Roy Kaiser.

Stuccio retired as a dancer and began producing full-time in 1995. He co-founded the Philadelphia Fringe Festival (now FringeArts) in 1997 and that same year was named "Person of the Year" by *Philadelphia Weekly*. He was included in *Philadelphia Magazine's* 2000 edition of "People to Watch," as well as *Philadelphia Magazine's* 2009 and 2014 "Power Issue" rankings of the city's most influential people. His many production credits include co-founding *Shut Up and Dance*, the popular annual benefit that showcases work choreographed and performed by dancers of the Pennsylvania Ballet to benefit the Metropolitan Aids Neighborhood Nutrition Alliance (MANNA). Stuccio was also the original curator of the Wilma Theater's *Dance Boom* series, serving in that role from 2002 to 2005. In 2005, Nick was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts by the University of the Arts.

## **ABOUT FRINGEARTS**

FringeArts is Philadelphia's home for contemporary performance, presenting progressive, world-class art that stretches the imagination and boldly defies expectation. FringeArts' center on the Delaware River waterfront offers a year-round series of innovative dance, theater and music performances. And for 17 days each fall, the organization fills every nook and cranny of the city with contemporary performances during the annual Fringe Festival. FringeArts believes in art-making that inspires new ideas, engages artists and audiences in unique ways, and advances the global dialogue about art. For more information, visit [fringearts.com](http://fringearts.com).

**A full schedule of additional Festival events, performance dates, times and locations will be announced soon. Visit [FringeArts.com](http://FringeArts.com) for up-to-date Festival information.**

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**To request photos, interviews and more information please contact:**

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# 2015 Fringe Festival Fact Sheet

Show	Artist	Location	Date	Time	Price
<i>After the Rehearsal/Persona</i>	Toneelgroep Amsterdam	23rd Street Armory	Sept. 3	8:00pm	\$35
			Sept. 4	8:00pm	\$35
			Sept. 5	8:00pm	\$35
<i>Alias Ellis Mackenzie</i>	Lucidity Suitcase Intercontinental	Prince Theatre	Sept. 11 (preview)	8:00pm	\$20
			Sept. 12	2:00pm/8:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 13	3:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 15	7:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 16	7:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 17	7:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 18	8:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 19	2:00pm/8:00pm	\$29
<i>A Doll's House</i>	Jo Strømgren Kompani	FringeArts	Sept. 4 (opening*)	7:00pm	\$45
			Sept. 5	2:00pm/7:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 6	2:00pm	\$29
<i>There</i>	Jo Strømgren Kompani	FringeArts	Sept. 9	6:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 10	9:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 11	6:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 12	5:00pm	\$29
<i>The Border</i>	Jo Strømgren Kompani	FringeArts	Sept. 9	9:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 10	6:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 11	9:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 12	2:00pm	\$29
<i>Underground Railroad Game</i>	Scott Sheppard and Jenn Kidwell in association with Lightning Rod Special	Christ Church Neighborhood House	Sept. 2 (preview)	7:00pm	\$20
			Sept. 3 (preview)	7:00pm	\$20
			Sept. 4	8:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 5	8:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 6	4:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 10	7:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 11	7:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 12	7:00pm	\$29
<i>Swamp is On</i>	Pig Iron Theatre Company/ Dr. Dog	Union Transfer	Sept. 9	8:00pm	\$30
			Sept. 10	8:00pm	\$30
			Sept. 11	8:00pm	\$30
			Sept. 12	8:00pm	\$30
<i>Available Light</i>	Lucinda Childs/Frank Gehry/John Adams	Drexel Armory	Sept. 10	8:00pm	\$39
			Sept. 11	8:00pm	\$39
			Sept. 12	8:00pm	\$39
<i>Soul Project</i>	David Zambrano	Christ Church Neighborhood House	Sept. 18	8:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 19	8:00pm	\$29
<i>Still Standing You</i>	Pieter Ampe and Guilherme Garrido   CAMPO	Painted Bride Performing Arts Center	Sept. 9	7:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 10	7:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 11	7:00pm	\$29
<i>Suite n°2</i>	Encyclopédie de la Parôle   Joris Lacoste	Christ Church Neighborhood House	Sept. 15	7:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 16	7:00pm	\$29
<i>The Extra People</i>	Ant Hampton	Merriam Theatre	Sept. 17**	6:00pm-11:00pm	\$29
			Sept. 18**	5:00pm-10:00pm	\$29

\*Ticket price for Opening Night of A Doll's House includes a pre-show cocktail hour and after party with drinks and hors d'oeuvres

\*\*Audiences for The Extra People will be admitted 15 at a time in 30 minute increments between 12pm and 6pm. Runtime is 1 hour.

The 2015 Fringe Festival is made possible with the generous support of Presenting Sponsor The Knight Foundation with additional support from Lead Sponsor PNC Arts Alive