



For Immediate Release



Will Rawls, *I make me [sic]*, 2017. TBA Festival. Photo © Maggie Heath

WILL RAWLS *Uncle Rebus*

A choreographed meditation on storytelling and the limits of written speech

July 10–12, 2018, 6–8pm

On the High Line at 17th St | Free and Open to the Public

New York, NY (June 29, 2018) – Presented by Friends of the High Line, High Line Art is pleased to present *Uncle Rebus*, a performance by choreographer Will Rawls. *Uncle Rebus* will take place July 10, 11, and 12 from 6 to 8pm each evening, on the park at 17th Street, in the Sunken Overlook. The performance is organized by Melanie Kress, High Line Art Associate Curator. *Uncle Rebus* is performed by Trinity Bobo, Stanley Gambucci, and Jasmine Hearn, with costumes by Eleanor O’Connell.

Will Rawls is a choreographer, writer, and lifelong performer based in Brooklyn, New York. His practice combines dance with other media to investigate the poetics of blackness, ambiguity, and abstraction. His inquiries into bodily experiences and humanity aim to redraw notions of power and form.

HIGH LINE ART



Rawls's performance for the High Line, *Uncle Rebus*, is a choreographed meditation on Uncle Remus, the fictional narrator of the 19th-century Southern folklore compilation, *Brer Rabbit Tales*. Invented by white Southern folklorist and author, Joel Chandler Harris, Uncle Remus was a composite identity based on Harris's account of African-American oral cultures on the plantations where Harris served as an apprentice. *Uncle Rebus* utilizes the keyboard Rawls created for a previous performance, *I make me [sic]*, expanding on that storytelling trope by recounting stories from *Brer Rabbit Tales*. The stories are distilled to selected sentences, spelled out in arrangements of letters and punctuation marks via the large-scale keyboard of removable characters. Dancers manipulate the keyboard, toying with the symbols to crack open their calcified meanings. The performance works to destabilize the fictional dialects of Harris's imagination, exploring the limits of linguistic sense and written speech.

"Will Rawls's performance *Uncle Rebus* is a potent reminder and dexterous unpacking of the legacies of language and cultural mythmaking in America," said Melanie Kress, High Line Art Associate Curator. "We're thrilled for this opportunity to present his work to our myriad audiences on the High Line."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Will Rawls (b. 1978, Boston, Massachusetts) lives and works in New York. Rawls has presented his work at Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, Portland, Oregon (2017); The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York (2017); MoMA PS1, Queens, New York (2016); ImPulsTanz, Vienna, Austria (2016); Performa 15, New York, New York (2015); and The Chocolate Factory, New York, New York (2013). He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship (2017); Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Residency (2017), and Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant (2015). In 2016, he collaborated with Ishmael Houston-Jones to co-curate the Danspace Project *Platform 2016: Lost and Found*, which focused on the intergenerational impact of the AIDS epidemic on dancers, women, and people of color. For this project, he helped organize performances, reconstructions, discussions, and co-edited the catalogue *Lost and Found: Dance, New York, HIV/AIDS, Then and Now* (2017). His writing has been published by *Artforum*, *Triple Canopy*, *les presses du réel*, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Hammer Museum.

ABOUT HIGH LINE ART

Presented by Friends of the High Line, High Line Art commissions and produces public art projects on and around the High Line. Founded in 2009, High Line Art presents a wide array of artwork including site-specific commissions, exhibitions, performances, video programs, and a series of billboard interventions. Curated by Cecilia Alemani, the Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art, and produced by Friends of the High Line, High Line Art invites artists to think of creative ways to engage with the uniqueness of the architecture, history, and design of the High Line and to foster a productive dialogue with the surrounding neighborhood and urban landscape.

Lead support for High Line Art comes from Amanda and Don Mullen. Major support for High Line Art is provided by The Brown Foundation, Inc. of Houston, and Charina Endowment Fund. High Line Art is supported, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the New York City Council, under the leadership of Speaker Corey Johnson.

For further information on High Line Art, please visit art.thehighline.org.



ABOUT FRIENDS OF THE HIGH LINE

Friends of the High Line raises nearly 100% of the High Line's annual budget. Owned by the City of New York, the High Line is a public park programmed, maintained, and operated by Friends of the High Line, in partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.

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