
THE SHED **Press Release**

THE **BLOOMBERG** BUILDING
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New York, NY 10001

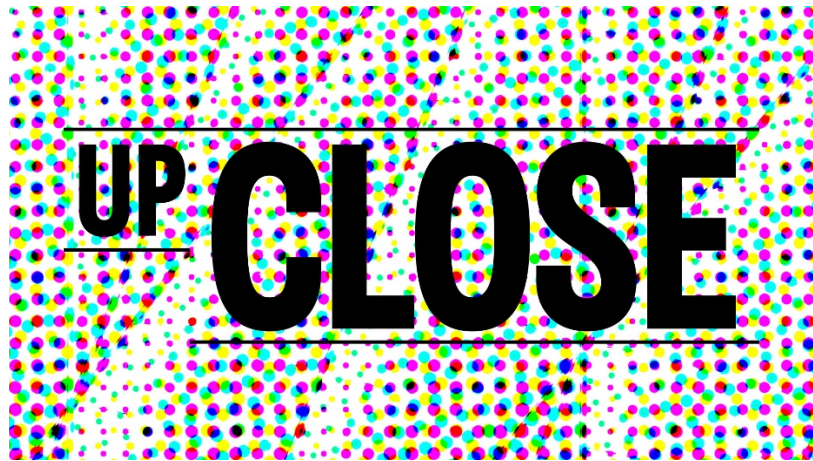
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The Shed presents “Go Off! Joy in Defiance” on a Digital Dance Floor, Featuring DJ April Hunt and Rashaad Newsome with Legendary Monster Mon_Teese and Precious

The Fifth *Up Close* Commission premieres on Sunday, June 14 at 6 PM EST



New York, NY June 8, 2020 - DJ **April Hunt** and artist **Rashaad Newsome** premiere their new project ***Go Off! Joy in Defiance*** as the fifth commission of The Shed’s ***Up Close*** series on **Sunday, June 14 at 6 pm EST**.

Go Off! Joy in Defiance is a celebration of Black queer sonic, visual, and performative traditions. The two-part project begins with a prerecorded video piece on The Shed’s Instagram and Facebook accounts ([@theshedny](#)), website ([theshed.org](#)), and [YouTube channel](#) and concludes with a live DJ set on The Shed’s Instagram Live.

The prerecorded video opens with a memorial to a fraction of the countless Black lives that have been lost at the hands of systemic racism across the world before compiling and layering performances recorded by each of the artists across different social media platforms in an effect similar to a palimpsest.

In the video, April is joined in the video by performers, including kiki scene icon **Justin Gomez**, also known as **Legendary Monster Mon_Teese**, and ballroom commentator **Precious**. Connected by the rhythmic beat of Hunt's set, Newsome, Monster, and Precious each add to the video, taking the event from Instagram and Snapchat to Facebook Live.

The virtual turn-up shifts from parties on a dance floor punctuated by neon lights and colors to a digital space of mesmerizing visual effects. As the video concludes, a digital dance floor opens with a live-streamed DJ set for the audience to join the artists in joyful defiance of systems of oppression. When the story of this celebration flows into the Instagram Live after-party, the artists welcome viewers to join the digital dance floor as *Go Off!* reimagines what a social experience can be in this moment of sheltering in place and reliance on social media. The artists play with the transitions and interruptions that happen as they move from one digital platform to another. And, they share radical joy as a form of defiance of oppressive systems that are crumbling around us.

To set the tone ahead of the Sunday, June 14 premiere, DJ April Hunt created *BLACK JOY In Defiance*, her latest Soundcloud project for the audience to listen to [here](#). *Go Off!* is part of April Hunt's latest project, [POCC \(People of Color Create\)](#), a new virtual home for POC creative practitioners that connects them with the community in a powerful way.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

April Hunt

April Hunt is a DJ and community-builder who uses music and media platforms as a tool for recognition and celebration. In 2011, she founded sparkplugPR, an agency that spreads awareness of projects with an emphasis on

creatives of color. Since then, sparkplugPR has evolved into Mixtape, a catalyst for high-level creative happenings IRL and virtually where she often provides soundscapes. As a DJ, she has performed at a number of cultural spaces and venues including Aspen Art Museum, MoMA, the Guggenheim, The Shed, the Standard, and International Center of Photography, among many others. She weaves genres of house, hip hop, experimental R&B, and vintage soul. On January 11, 2020, April Hunt was a featured DJ at Meet at The Shed, a free daylong open house with exhibitions, performances, gallery tours, and food trucks.

Rashaad Newsome

Rashaad Newsome is an interdisciplinary artist whose work blends several practices, including collage, sculpture, film, photography, music, computer programming, software engineering, and performance. Using the diasporic traditions of improvisation and collage, he pulls from the world of advertising, the internet, and Black and queer culture to produce counter-hegemonic work that exists between social practice, abstraction, and intersectionality. His work reclaims the Black body, celebrates Black contributions to the artistic canon, and creates innovative and inclusive forms of culture and media. Newsome has exhibited and performed in galleries, museums, institutions, and festivals throughout the world, and his work is in numerous public collections.

Precious

Precious is a key figure in the ballroom and kiki scenes and has been commentating performances and balls since 2008. Through experiences in these scenes, Precious has found a sense of belonging to an energetic community of free-spirited people.

Legendary Monster Mon_Teese

Justin Gomez, also known as Legendary Monster Mon_Teese from the Royal House Of LaBeija, has been in the ballroom scene for 19 years. Gomez is a professional dancer, vogue coach, and choreographer, born and raised in Brooklyn. He became known within the ballroom scene for a dramatic vogue femme style and has found an escape from bullying and other challenges through dance.

ABOUT UP CLOSE

The Shed is committed to expanding the scope of how a cultural institution can serve its communities, a mission that is even more critical while distanced from one another. To creatively engage artists and audiences in this moment of great uncertainty and upheaval, *Up Close* launched in April 2020 and continues every other Sunday with intimate performances, conversations, curated playlists, and other forms of original content that explore what it means to make art right now.

Up Close has premiered commissioned works by **The HawtPlates** on April 19, **Reggie ‘Regg Roc’ Gray** and the **D.R.E.A.M. Ring** on May 3, and a collaborative music-ritual created by **Troy Anthony** and **Jerome Ellis** on May 17. The latest commission, *What Connects?*, a collection of poems and artwork by **Nova Cypress Black**, **Tasha Dougé**, and **Gabriel Ramirez**, teaching artists from The Shed’s *DIS OBEY* program for young writers and activists, premiered on Sunday, June 7. *What Connects?* is a collection of poems and images that critique the inequities on display in America’s management of and response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Artists in upcoming installments, many of whom The Shed showcased in its 2019 season, include **Justin Allen**, **S*an D. Henry-Smith**, and **Yulan Grant** on June 28; **Kiyan Williams** on July 12; **Tomás Saraceno** on July 26; and **Tony Cokes** on August 9.

Up Close is organized by Solana Chehtman, Director of Civic Programs, with Adeze Wilford and Alessandra Gómez, Curatorial Assistants; Justin Wong, Civic Programs Coordinator; and Lily Wan, Digital Content Producer. The Shed’s multidisciplinary commissioning program is developed by Artistic Director and CEO Alex Poots with the senior program team, including Emma Enderby, Chief Curator; Tamara McCaw, Chief Civic Program Officer; Madani Younis, Chief Executive Producer; and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Senior Program Advisor

ABOUT THE SHED

Located on Manhattan’s west side, The Shed commissions original works of art, across all disciplines, for all audiences. From hip hop to classical music, painting and sculpture to literature, film to theater and dance, The Shed brings together leading and emerging artists and thinkers from all disciplines under one roof. The building—a remarkable movable structure designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Lead Architect, and Rockwell Group, Collaborating Architect—physically transforms to support artists’ most ambitious ideas. Committed to nurturing artistic invention and bringing creative experiences to the broadest possible audiences, The Shed, led by Artistic Director and CEO Alex Poots, is a 21st-century space of and for New York City.