
THE SHED Press Release

THE **BLOOMBERG** BUILDING
545 West 30th Street
New York, NY 10001

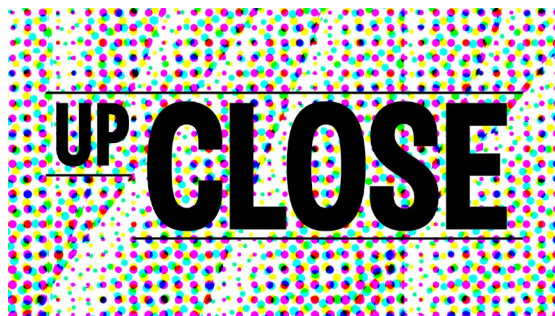
The Fourth Installment of *Up Close* features **DIS OBEY** teaching artists Nova Cypress Black, Tasha Dougé, and Gabriel Ramirez

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What Connects?, a collection of poems and images of protest arising out of COVID-19, premieres on Sunday, May 31 at 6 PM EST



New York, NY, May 22, 2020 - In ***What Connects?***, Nova Cypress Black, Tasha Dougé, and Gabriel Ramirez, teaching artists from The Shed's **DIS OBEY** program for young writers and activists, present commissioned artworks that critique the inequities on display in America's management of and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *What Connects?* will premiere on **Sunday, May 31 at 6 pm ET** on The Shed's Instagram (@theshedny) and website (theshed.org)

For all three artists, this time has been one of reflection on the overlapping emotional, personal, social, and economic effects of the crisis. Working in **DIS OBEY**'s spirit of protest through creative action, they draw attention to the impact of our society's reactions to the virus on Black and Brown communities and lives, raising questions about false narratives of capitalism and who or what is considered essential or expendable.

In ***no apologies for my delayed response***, Nova Cypress Black presents recordings of five poems written on different days of April's National Poetry Month during New York's stay-at-home order. Each presented unedited as first written, the poems react to emotions, headlines, and the empty niceties of workplace culture (like email salutations hoping "all is well") to evoke the longing, loneliness, and loss brought on by the city's lockdown, as well as the economic stresses and abuses of capitalism's unrelenting drive to productivity.

Tasha Dougé’s sculptural collage *Broken Hands of Time* criticises capitalism for using time as an instrument to further its own agenda, a fact illuminated by this moment of disruption. One side of the collage showcases images of the joys set aside, the ancestors who disobeyed inhumane societal constructs, and a glimpse of something reimaged; the other side explores the who, what, when, where, and why of what is considered essential to society. Through found images, Dougé advocates for abandoning this capitalist narrative that takes advantage of Black and Brown workers’ lives to keep our economy afloat, asking instead what better future we can create.

In the poem “**Undiagnosed Unknowns**,” Gabriel Ramirez shares his personal and wide-ranging perspective on the COVID-19 crisis. The poem turns attention from Ramirez’s emotions, memories, and experience of illness to biased policing, the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black people, and fear as the poet lives it, ultimately offering solace in the practice of gratitude, poetry, and care.

ABOUT DIS OBEY

Programmed in collaboration with creative advisor Kameelah Janan Rasheed for participants ages 16 to 19, The Shed’s *DIS OBEY* program provides space to explore protest and creative action through writing, storytelling, and visual art workshops. With guidance from acclaimed writers and artists, young participants create original work that examines identity, personal narrative, historical acts of protest, and self-determination.

Last year, *DIS OBEY* culminated in *POWERPLAY*, a presentation of stories of individual power and collective action through hip hop, spoken word, music, dance, and moving images. Presented in The McCourt during The Shed’s inaugural season, young performers explored power: how it can be taken away, how we decide we deserve it, and how we can create power for ourselves. An anthology of work created by *DIS OBEY* students and teaching artists is available at theshed.org.

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

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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.

The first three installments were performances in isolation by **The HawtPlates**, **Reggie ‘Regg Roc’ Gray** and **the D.R.E.A.M. Ring**, and a collaborative music-ritual created by **Troy Anthony** and **Jerome Ellis**.

Artists in future installments, many of whom The Shed showcased in its 2019 season, include **DJ April Hunt** and **Rashaad Newsome** with **Legendary Monster** and **Precious Ebony** on June 14; **Justin Allen**, **S*an D. Henry-Smith**, and **Yulan Grant** on June 28; **Kiyan Williams** on July 12; and **Tomás Saraceno** and **Tony Cokes** (dates to be announced).

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.