



Camille A. Brown's INK to Continue Peak Performances' 2017-18 'Works by Women' Season



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Peak Performances continues its acclaimed 2017-2018 season of works by women with ink, from award-winning choreographer and TED Fellow [Camille A. Brown](#), February 1-4, 2018, at the Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University.

Performed by [Camille A. Brown](#) & Dancers, ink, co-commissioned by Peak Performances and developed in part through a residency at the Alexander Kasser Theater, is the final installation in Brown's dance trilogy about culture, race, and identity, which began with 2012's Mr. TOL E. RAnCE and continued in 2015 with BLACK GIRL: Linguistic Play.

Celebrating the rituals, gestural vocabulary, and tradition of the African diaspora, ink reclaims the narratives of African Americans through self-empowerment, Black love, brotherhood, exhaustion and resilience, community and fellowship. It depicts the pedestrian interactions of individuals and relationships as grounds for accessing one's innate super powers and finding liberation. The musical landscape embodies its own storytelling by mixing the percussive sounds of traditional African music with blues, hip-hop, jazz, and swing, and choreography drawn from an amalgam of modern, hip-hop, ballet, tap, and African-American social dance aesthetics.

The first piece within Brown's trilogy, Mr. TOL E. RAnCE, deconstructed stereotypes about black men that have been perpetuated throughout American performance history, focusing on "the mask" of survival and W.E.B. DuBois' idea of "double consciousness," as experienced by black performers. For BLACK GIRL: Linguistic Play, Brown turned away from the examination of stereotypes and focused on a vision of tenderness and cultural specificity; the choreography used childhood games, particularly those played by Black girls, as a foundation for empowerment and self-discovery. Writing about BLACK GIRL: Linguistic Play at [The Joyce Theater](#), Time Out New York called it "arguably the best thing that has ever happened on, and to, the Joyce stage. This work is audacity personified."

In ink, Brown, whose choreography is currently on display on Broadway in the revival of *Once on This Island*, applies her spirited, playful, and incisive style to capturing gesture as it is informed by the varied cultures and movements emerging from African diasporic experiences. Brown spent over a year working with performers to devise the piece, giving herself the time to develop a keen understanding of the gestural individuality of everyone in her company, exploring their range of cultural histories and dance trainings. In the new work, these gestures,



ranging from theatrical to everyday, display the coded language that carries the essence of African Diasporic mythologies, folklore, tall tales, and rituals.

In a video made with the National Center for Choreography, Brown emphasizes that she "encouraged the dancers and instructors to give their stories; your body has all this information." She describes herself as "more of a director guiding them, and less of a choreographer telling them exactly how to do it. We're finding it together."

The theatricality and musicality of Brown's work here forms a motional, flexible portrait of intertwined identities, scattered by innumerable forces of oppression and erasure, and evolving over time.

ink includes dancers [Camille A. Brown](#), Beatrice Capote, Kendra "Vie Boheme" Dennard, Timothy Edwards, [Catherine Foster](#), Juel D. Lane, and Maleek Washington, musical director/drummer [Allison Miller](#), pianist/composer [Scott Patterson](#), violinist [Juliette Jones](#), and percussionist Wilson R. Torres. Collaborators also include dramaturgs [Talvin Wilks](#), [Daniel Banks](#), and [Kamilah Forbes](#), scenic & lighting designer [David L. Arsenault](#), sound designer [Justin Ellington](#), costume design/stylist [Mayte Natalio](#), production stage manager Robert McIntyre, and production manager [Lauren Parrish](#).

Performances of ink will take place at the Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University (1 Normal Ave, Montclair, NJ), Thursday, February 1 and Friday, February 2 at 7:30 pm; Saturday, February 3 at 8:00 pm; and Sunday, February 4 at 3:00 pm. A community discussion - where audience members can join choreographer [Camille A. Brown](#) and the company of ink to continue the dialogue about identity initiated through the performance - will directly follow the Saturday, February 3 performance. Tickets, affordably priced at \$20 (and free for Montclair undergraduates), be purchased at www.peakperfs.org or 973.655.5112.

[Camille A. Brown](#) is a prolific choreographer making a personal claim on history through the lens of a modern Black female perspective. She leads her dancers through excavations of ancestral stories, both timeless and traditional, that illustrate stories which connect history with contemporary culture. She is a 2017 Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellow, four time Princess Grace Award winner (2016 Statue Award, 2016 Choreographic Mentorship Co-Commission Award, 2013 Works in Progress Residency Award, 2006 Choreography Award), 2016 Jacob's Pillow Dance Award recipient, 2016 Guggenheim Fellowship recipient, 2015 USA [Jay Franke](#) & David Herro Fellow, 2015 TED Fellow, 2015 Doris Duke Artist Award recipient, and was nominated for the 2015 [Lucille Lortel](#) "Outstanding Choreographer" Award (Fortress of Solitude). Her company, [Camille A. Brown](#) & Dancers, received a 2014 Bessie Award for Outstanding Production for the work Mr. TOL E. RAnCE and most recently were nominated for a 2016 Bessie Award for Outstanding Production for the work BLACK GIRL: Linguistic Play. Ms. Brown's work has been commissioned by [Alvin Ailey](#) American Dance Theater, Philadanco!, Complexions, and Urban Bush Women, among others. Her theater credits include Broadway revival Once On This Island, Broadway's A Streetcar Named Desire, Fortress of



Solitude, Stagger Lee, Cabin in the Sky, [Jonathan Larson](#)'s tick, tick...BOOM!, starring Lin Manuel Miranda, the musical BELLA: An American Tall Tale, among others. ink is the final installation of the company's dance theatre trilogy about culture, race and identity. Initiatives: The Gathering; BLACK GIRL SPECTRUM (BGS)| Publication: Cover of Dance Teacher Magazine (August 2015) | Program: Co-Directed (with Moncell Durden) Social Dances: Jazz to Hip-Hop at Jacob's Pillow in 2015 | Public Speaker: 2015 TED Conference, 2016 TEDxBeaconStreet, 2016 TEDxEsteeLauderCompanies. Ms. Brown's TED-Ed talk A Visual History of Social Dance in 25 Moves was chosen as one of the most notable talks of 2016 by TED Curator, [Chris Anderson](#), and has over 15+ million views on Facebook and counting. More at www.camilleabrown.org.

Peak Performances is a program of the Office of Arts and Cultural Programming at Montclair State University and has been honored by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts with an Arts Citation of Excellence and Designation of Major Impact. Programs in this season are made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts; the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The [Andrew W. Mellon](#) Foundation.