

Monday, June 8, 2020: Online!

Nia Witherspoon's

**THE
DARK GIRL
CHRONICLES:

A CYCLE**



part of our Monthly Storytelling Series



COMMUNITY & ARTIST ENGAGEMENT

Our monthly storytelling series is all about community engagement. We believe that stories impact change, that we better our world by coming together to learn about our shared and unique experiences. While we may be forced physically apart for some time to come, we are very much together in spirit.

As you can imagine, many of our artists are struggling now more than ever. If you are in a position to help, please consider “tipping” our presenting artists and others you may know through their Venmo and PayPal accounts. Our artists have also provided suggested organizations to support in the fight for justice. Your Eventbrite donations will be shared equally among our presenting artists, the Jean Moye “Dark” Fund for Black Women/Femmes + TGNC Artists, and Undiscovered Works. Nia has eloquently stated exactly what we all feel: “Black Artists continue to do anti-racist labor without compensation, or with very low compensation, including into this moment, so supporting this project is supporting in real time Black life. And Black Lives who affect other Black Lives.”

Tonight’s Artists & Partner:

Nia Witherspoon:

Venmo @Nia-Witherspoon

Linda LeBeija:

Paypal.me/LINDALABEIJJA

The Jean Moye Fund for Black Women/Femmes, +TGNC Artists:

<http://artistservices.bax.org/jean-moye-dark-fund-black-womenfemmes-tgnc-artists/>

Suggested Organizations:

Black Visions Collective:

<https://www.blackvisionsmn.org/>

Navajo Nation Covid Relief Fund:

<http://www.nndoh.org/donate.html>

TGI Justice Project:

<http://www.tgijp.org/>

Suggested Resources:

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund

<https://www.naacpldf.org/>

The Bail Project

<https://bailproject.org/>

ABOUT TONIGHT

There is so much we could say about the current state of the world, including how not new any of this actually is, but what we do well is offer you stories and storytellers who say it all best.

We are honored tonight to offer a presentation from the extraordinary **Nia Witherspoon** on her *Dark Girl Chronicles* project, which places stories of Black women warriors against state violence in the context of Yoruba and other African indigenous sacred stories, along with multidisciplinary artist and educator **Linda LaBeija** whose work explores the complexities of living as a transgender woman of color in today's America.

TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

Linda LaBeija is a multidisciplinary artist, teacher and curator from the Boogie Down Bronx of New York. Through workshop facilitation and communal performances, her work explores the complexities of living as a transgender woman of color in today's America. Born out of the Iconic House of LaBeija in the underground New York City Vogue Ballroom scene, Linda's work has been articulated in both *AFROPUNK* and *The Fader*. She has been featured in *The New Yorker*, *Timeout New York* and *W Magazine*. She has curated performances through The Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance, La Mama Experimental Theater, New York Live Arts and VICE. She can also be seen in the feature film *Pariah* directed by Dee Rees and in the FX series *Pose* produced by Ryan Murphy. Currently, her work can be found archived at the Brooklyn Museum in the *Nobody Promised You Tomorrow: Art 50 Years After Stonewall* Exhibit. lindala.world

Nia O. Witherspoon is a black queer writer/director, vocalist/composer, and cultural worker described as “especially fascinating” by *Backstage Magazine*. Witherspoon's work creates contemporary ritual-space immersed in the meta-physics of blackness, desire, and diaspora. A resident at Brooklyn Arts Exchange and HERE Art Center, Witherspoon is a recent awardee of Creative Capital and Jerome Fellowship. Past awards: New York Theatre Workshop's 2050 Playwriting/Directing Fellowship, BRIC's Premiere Residency, a NYFA “Made in NY” Women's Film, TV, and Theatre Fund grant, Astraea Foundation's Global Arts Fund Grant, Lambda Literary's Emerging Playwriting Fellowship, and a Mellon Dissertation Fellowship, among others. Her works, *MESSIAH*, *The Dark Girl Chronicles*, *YOUMINE*, and *SHE* have been developed or featured at BRIC, La Mama ETC, HERE, NYTW, National Black Theatre, BAAD, Dixon Place, The Fire This Time Festival, Judson Church, and Movement Research, among others. Witherspoon holds a PhD from Stanford University, and is currently the Multimedia Writer-in-Residence at Fordham University. niawitherspoon.com

NON-PROFIT PARTNER OF THE MONTH

THE JEAN MOYE “DARK” FUND FOR BLACK WOMEN/FEMMES + TGNC ARTISTS

As part of our Monthly Storytelling Series, we raise awareness of and funds for a local non-profit, the community-based organizations that keep our New York neighborhoods thriving. Our partner this month: **The Jean Moyer “Dark” Fund for Black Women/Femmes + TGNC Artists.**

“If the Black Woman was free, it would mean everyone would have to be free.”

–Combahee River Collective

As Black, Women/Femmes + TGNC Folks, we are discouraged from dreaming. We are not encouraged to experience VULNERABILITY, WONDER, or our own selves as MANIFESTATIONS OF THE DIVINE. It is not safe.

The Jean Moyer “Dark” Fund speaks to this very particular condition of need, and eases that unsafety, just a little bit. The account is to be used not only as an emergency account, but as a savings account for Black Women/Femme + TGNC artists to have more space to dream, take risks, and use our divine imaginations. As Adrienne Maree Brown has famously said, “This world is a product of a white supremacist imagination.” It would follow that THE IMAGINATIONS + DREAMS OF BLACK WOMEN/FEMMES + TGNC FOLKS WILL BE THE ONES TO EVOLVE HUMANITY.

Named for Ms. Witherspoon’s great-grandmother, Willie “Jean” Moyer, who was herself a writer and in alignment with Adrienne Maree Brown’s emergent strategy principle, “Small is good, small is all,” this fund will start first with the inner circle of Black women, femmes, and TGNC artists who have poured essential life energy into THE DARK GIRL CHRONICLES, PRIESTESS OF TWERK, and MESSIAH. These are the artists who have made incredible sacrifices to be available to these works which reimagine a world in which Black Women/Femmes + TGNC folks are sacred.

The second tier of this funding will be donated to a combination of street runs, and organizations that already have a legacy of supporting Black Women/Femmes + TGNC folks, and are mobilizing special projects in light of COVID-19, i.e. Audre Lorde Project, Black Women’s Blueprint, Black Mama’s Bailout, Decrim NY, and the Anti-Violence Project.

The third tier of funding will go towards the formation of a residency to support the long-term sustainability and creative visioning of Black Women/Femmes + Trans folks.

The Fund is sponsored through BAX (Brooklyn Arts Exchange). You can learn more and donate at:

<http://artistservices.bax.org/jean-moye-dark-fund-black-womenfemmes-tgnc-artists/>

ABOUT UNDISCOVERED WORKS & YOU

Are you a creative artist looking for an opportunity to share new work? We'd love to consider including you in our monthly series! Please contact us at leaha@undiscoveredworks.org.

Undiscovered Works is dedicated to supporting artists as they develop plays, music, monologues, comedy, and film. Our monthly storytelling series presents work in all stages of development, bringing together voices from across our community. Our ensemble-based Off and Off-Off Broadway productions bring to light the social issues of our times, all the while entertaining and inspiring dialogue.

Our Next 2nd Monday: July 13, 2020 @ 7:30 PM

Featuring selections from Rona Siddiqui's vaudevillian musical *Salaam Medina: Tales of a Halfghan*, Katherine McDowell's short play *Order Number 2377*, and more soon to be announced!

And since it looks like we're going to dwell in this strange new world together for some time to come, we're keeping the storytelling going all summer long - 2nd Monday of the month on Zoom. Please be sure to sign our mailing list and visit us at www.undiscoveredworks.org for all the 411 on our monthly storytelling series and upcoming productions.



While we are not able to gather together in person tonight, New York's arts community remains committed to being a source of support for all of us as we navigate a new reality we'd hoped we'd only ever know through novels and history books. We normally gather at Dixon Place's lounge, a staple of the downtown theatre scene for over three decades, where we remind you to stay hydrated and know that every dollar you spend at the lounge goes directly back into supporting the thousands of artists Dixon Place hosts every year. Well, it's more important than ever to stay hydrated and Dixon Place needs our support more than ever to open its doors to all of us as soon as it becomes safe to gather again.

Please, if you're able, consider making a donation - perhaps the cost of that drink:

<https://shop.vendini.com/dixonplace/product-details/donation/054d4ca95ace388c1932e38137522652>