
THE SHED Press Release

THE **BLOOMBERG** BUILDING
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The Shed Announces Winter/Spring 2022 Season

Featuring work from **Anonymous Club** (led by **Shayne Oliver**), **Claudia Rankine**, **Tomás Saraceno**, **Wu Tsang**, and **Jane Wagner**; directors **Taibi Magar** and **Leigh Silverman**; and New York theatrical debut by **Cecily Strong**

The Bushwick Starr Has Month-long Residency



NEW YORK, NY, October 12, 2021—**Alex Poots**, Artistic Director and CEO, today announced five new commissions by pioneering artists from across the performing arts, visual arts, and pop culture for The Shed’s winter/spring 2022 season. After more than a year of reduced operations due to the Covid-19 pandemic, The Shed welcomes audiences for new productions, exhibitions, and experiences that further its mission of producing and presenting innovative art and ideas, across all forms of creativity.

"We remain committed to supporting a diverse range of artists to create, produce, and present new work that speaks to the urgent issues of our time, such as climate change, race, identity, community, and the power of artistic invention," said Alex Poots. "Earlier this year, we presented some of New York City's first indoor performances with audiences, followed by a summer of new work by a wide range of emerging local artists, all free to the public. Now, as we look to the fall and next year, we continue our dedication to the city's revival."

The Shed’s winter/spring season begins in late December with a new production of **Jane Wagner**’s iconic, one-woman play, *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life*

in the Universe, in its first New York staging in two decades. This revisited existential comedic masterpiece of American culture is directed by **Leigh Silverman** and features **Cecily Strong** in her New York theatrical debut in the role originated by **Lily Tomlin**.

This season features two commissions that were postponed from 2020 due to the pandemic: **Claudia Rankine**'s new play, *Help*, and the monumental exhibition *Particular Matter(s)* by **Tomás Saraceno**. The subject of these shows could not be more relevant. In March, Rankine's *Help*, directed by **Taibi Magar**, boldly addresses the many facets of white male privilege. This fall, in anticipation of *Help*, The Shed will stream a free, encore presentation of *November*, a 2020 film adapted from the play, directed by **Phillip Youmans**.

Opening in February, *Tomás Saraceno: Particular Matter(s)* explores climate change and climate inequity in three of The Shed's four program spaces, offering a large-scale sensory experience. Also in February, **Anonymous Club**, the creative studio led by designer **Shayne Oliver**, brings three distinct cultural events to The Shed's Griffin Theater during New York Fashion Week, celebrating the vibrant culture that the collective has worked to define and redefine with their family of artistic collaborators through music, fashion, and performance. In April, The Shed presents a new work by **Wu Tsang** to be announced.

As part of its commitment to collaborating with local organizations, The Shed is hosting The Bushwick Starr in a residency this month during which their artistic teams will develop two projects for their upcoming season: Hillary Miller's *PREPAREDNESS* and Ellpetha Tsivicos and Camilo Quiroz-Vazquez's *QUINCE*. "In this past year we've continued to learn the importance of partnering and collaborating with like-minded companies to pool our resources to serve artists," said **Noel Allain**, Bushwick Starr's Artistic Director and Co-Founder. "We're very grateful to The Shed for opening the doors of their beautiful facility to host us and these artists in a time of need."

The Shed's multidisciplinary commissioning program is developed by Artistic Director and CEO Alex Poots with the senior program team, including Chief Curator Emma Enderby, Chief Civic Program Officer Tamara McCaw, and Chief Executive Producer Madani Younis, with Senior Program Advisor Hans Ulrich Obrist.

Tickets for *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* go on sale on November 5 (member presale begins November 2). Sales dates for the rest of the season will be announced later this year. Visit TheShed.org for more information.

WINTER/SPRING 2022 COMMISSIONS

The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe

By Jane Wagner, Directed by Leigh Silverman, and Starring Cecily Strong

December 21, 2021 – February 6, 2022

The Griffin Theater

Jane Wagner's iconic play, *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, is revisited in a new production starring Cecily Strong (Saturday Night Live, Schmigadoon!) in her New York theatrical debut. Directed by Tony-nominated Leigh Silverman (*The Lifespan of a Fact*, *Violet*), the ever timely one-woman play explores American society, art, power, and the feminist movement through a comedic and quick-witted investigation. Lily Tomlin, who originated the role, serves as executive producer with Wagner. The creative team includes set design by Christine Jones and Mary Hamrick, costume design by Anita Yavich, lighting design by Stacey Derosier, sound design and composition by Elisheba Ittoop, and choreography by James Alsop.

Tomás Saraceno: Particular Matter(s)

February 9 – April 17, 2022

The McCourt, and Level 2 and Level 4 Galleries

Through floating sculptures, interactive installations, and an artistic process that centers collaboration, artist Tomás Saraceno proposes a conversation between human and nonhuman lifeforms that have been disregarded in the Capitalocene era (our devastating geological epoch defined by the effects of capitalism on the earth), such as the air, spiders and their webs, and impacted communities. In a call for environmental justice, Saraceno's artistic collaborations renew relationships with the terrestrial, atmospheric, and cosmic realms, particularly as part of his community projects, *Aerocene* and *Arachnophilia*. *Particular Matter(s)*, the artist's largest exhibition in the US to date, brings this layered approach together, celebrating the complexity of our collective existence while looking for ways to live together differently. The exhibition features new and existing works in The Shed's two galleries and a large-scale, immersive commission that cultivates "arts of noticing" in The McCourt, The Shed's largest space. The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue and a robust public program in partnership with The Earth Institute, Columbia University.

***HEADLESS: THE GLASS CEILING* by Anonymous Club**

February 10 – 12, 2022

The Griffin Theater

In February, Anonymous Club, the creative studio led by designer Shayne Oliver, brings three distinct nights of cultural events to The Shed's Griffin Theater during New York Fashion Week, celebrating the vibrant culture the studio has worked to define and redefine with their family of artistic collaborators through music, fashion, and performance over the years. Anonymous Club is a creative studio formed through mentorship and collective experimentation that creates radical art and artifacts designed to upend tradition, infiltrate the mainstream, and remake

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pop culture in its image. Each night will be dedicated to a distinct facet of Anonymous Club through the concept of “headlessness,” a term coined by Oliver that embodies being over-the-top, or extravagant.

***Help* by Claudia Rankine, Directed by Taibi Magar**

March 15 – April 10, 2022

The Griffin Theater

After closing during previews in March 2020 due to the pandemic, The Shed presents the world premiere of *Help*, a new play by acclaimed author and poet Claudia Rankine (*Just Us*, *Citizen: An American Lyric*) directed by Obie Award-winner Taibi Magar (*Is God Is*, Soho Rep). Derived from Rankine’s deep inquiry and ongoing investigation into white male privilege, *Help* features the Narrator who recounts Rankine’s real-life conversations with white men that take place in transitional spaces like airports. As the stories unfold through monologues and staged scenarios, *Help* explores how these conversations can go right, wrong, or raise new questions. The creative team includes set design by Mimi Lien, choreography by Shamel Pitts, and lighting design by John Torres.

A new work by Wu Tsang

April 15 – 17, 2022

The Griffin Theater

Filmmaker and visual artist Wu Tsang presents a new work in The Griffin Theater. Additional details are to be announced.

FALL 2021 PROGRAMMING

Ian Cheng: Life After BOB

On view through December 19

Level 4 Gallery

Ian Cheng: Life After BOB is an episodic anime series that imagines a future world in which our minds are co-inhabited by AI entities. Bridging the artist’s interest in both open-ended simulation and the capacity of cinematic storytelling to evoke deep psychological truths, *Life After BOB* asks: How will life lived with AI transform the archetypal scripts that guide our sense of a meaningful existence? This exhibition invites audiences to watch the large-scale experience of the 48-minute narrative anime and then explore the *Life After BOB* world through interactive “World Watching.” Ian Cheng’s *Life After BOB: The Chalice Study* is co-commissioned by The Shed (New York), Luma Foundation, and Light Art Space (Berlin).

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DRIFT: Fragile Future

Soundtrack by ANOHNI

On view through December 19

Level 2 Gallery and The McCourt

Presented by Superblue and The Shed

In *Fragile Future*, multidisciplinary artists DRIFT transform The Shed with sound, movement, and film in experiential installations that play on our senses and compel us to imagine alternative solutions for a positive future. Featuring a soundtrack created by ANOHNI, the exhibition's installations—from multitudes of shimmering lights that traverse the gallery like glowing seeds caught in the wind to massive concrete blocks, or *Drifters*, that magically float on air—offer a hopeful atmosphere for imagining a different world. On select dates, *Drifters* becomes a surreal immersive performance that spans The Shed's four-story-high, 17,000-square-foot McCourt space.

Up Close

Launched in April 2020, *Up Close* is an online series that invites artists and creative thinkers to contribute new digital artworks and discussions exploring what it means to think about the world and make art right now. *Up Close* comes to an end this fall with the final commission by artists **Salome Asega** and **Keenan MacWilliam** premiering on October 19. *Hey Mary!* explores the cultural significance of hand-clapping games through a simple online visual sequencer where audiences can create their own hand-clapping choreography by dragging and dropping animations of each motion into a sequencer interface. The game will be accompanied by a video, edited documentation of a past hand-clapping performance on the High Line spearheaded by the artists in collaboration with Wide Rainbow and The Marching Cobras, as well as a conversation between the artists and an expert in Black girl musical play.

***November* by Claudia Rankine**

Directed by Phillip Youmans with stage direction by Taibi Magar

Streaming free at TheShed.org, November 1 – 14

Phillip Youmans's film *November*, commissioned and produced by The Shed in association with Tribeca Studios, is an artistic response to Rankine's original stage play *Help*. It centers on the Narrator, portrayed by five actresses (**Zora Howard, Tiffany Rachelle Stewart, Crystal Dickinson, April Matthis, Melanie Nicholls-King**) who present Rankine's real-life conversations with white men she encounters in transitional spaces like airports. Filmed live in The Shed's McCourt space and on location in New York City in fall 2020, the Narrator discusses how our civic and social structures are dominated by white men as the work sets out to create a shared sense of reality. As Rankine asks, "A reality in which there is agreement not in how to respond but in what we see is happening. If it's raining, can we all agree it is raining?" Vignettes of Black life complement this reckoning.

Ticketing and General Information

Tickets for *Ian Cheng: Life After BOB* and *DRIFT: Fragile Future* are on sale now. Tickets for *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* go on sale on November 5 (member presale begins November 2); sales dates for the rest of the winter/spring season will be announced. For additional information, visit TheShed.org or call (646) 455-3494.

Cedric's at The Shed, a bar from Danny Meyer's Union Square Hospitality Group, is open Wednesday to Sunday from 11 am to 8 pm. McNally Jackson at The Shed, an arts-focused bookshop, will reopen in the upcoming weeks.

In accordance with the New York City mandate, exhibition visitors 12 years and older must be vaccinated against Covid-19, and visitors two years and older must wear a mask. Proof of vaccination is required and may include CDC Vaccination Card (or photo), NYC COVID Safe app, New York State Excelsior Pass, NYC Vaccination Record, or an official immunization record from outside NYC or the US. Read more details at NYC.gov. Safety guidelines for performances will be announced.

Winter/Spring 2022 Artists Bios

Anonymous Club is a creative studio led by Shayne Oliver (founder of Hood By Air), working in the idioms of fine art, installation, performance, music, and product. Anonymous Club creates radical art and artifacts designed to upend tradition, infiltrate the mainstream, and remake pop culture in its image.

Taibi Magar is an Egyptian American, Obie-winning director based in New York and a graduate of the Brown / Trinity MFA program. Her New York credits include *Is God Is* (Soho Rep); *Underground Railroad Game* (Ars Nova), *Master* (The Foundry); and *Blue Ridge and The Great Leap* (Atlantic Theatre Company). Magar has directed regionally for A.R.T. (Boston), Seattle Rep, the Guthrie, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Chautauqua Theatre, the Alley, TUTS Houston, Trinity Rep, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Playmakers Rep, and Shakespeare & Company, and internationally for Hamburg Festival, Edinburgh Fringe, Soho Theatre, and Malthouse Theatre (Melbourne). Magar has also developed work with The Public Theater, New York Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, and Theatre for a New Audience. She has received a Stephen Sondheim Fellowship, an Oregon Shakespeare Festival Fellowship, a Public Theater Shakespeare Fellowship, and the SDC Breakout Award 2019. Upcoming work includes *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992* (The Signature Theatre).

Shayne Oliver was born in Minnesota and spent his early childhood in Trinidad and Tobago before moving to Brooklyn during his formative years and founding Hood By Air in 2006. Over the past decade, Oliver has become known for his distinctive take on street culture, playing with the ideas of power, race, and gender to become one of the most prominent designers working today.

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Claudia Rankine is the author of five books of poetry, including *Citizen: An American Lyric* and *Don't Let Me Be Lonely*; four plays including *The White Card*, which premiered in February 2018 (ArtsEmerson/ American Repertory Theater) and was published by Graywolf Press in 2019; as well as numerous video collaborations. Her recent collection of essays, *Just Us: An American Conversation*, was published by Graywolf Press in 2020. She is also the co-editor of several anthologies including *The Racial Imaginary: Writers on Race in the Life of the Mind*. In 2016, Rankine co-founded The Racial Imaginary Institute (TRII). Among her numerous awards and honors, Rankine is the recipient of the Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry, the Poets & Writers' Jackson Poetry Prize, and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Lannan Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, United States Artists, and the National Endowment of the Arts. A former Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, Claudia Rankine is a professor of creative writing at New York University.

Tomás Saraceno is an Argentine-born, Berlin-based artist who has worked with local communities, scientific researchers, and institutions around the world, including the communities of Somié, Cameroon; Salinas Grandes, Argentina; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Max Planck Institute; and Nanyang Technological University, among others. He has lectured at institutions worldwide, and directed the Institute of Architecture-related Art (IAK) at Braunschweig University of Technology, Germany (2014 – 16); and held residencies at Centre National d'Études Spatiales (2014 – 15), MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (2012 –), and Atelier Calder (2010), among others. He has been the subject of solo exhibitions at museums and institutions internationally, including Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2018); Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires (2017); K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Ständehaus, Dusseldorf (2013); Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2012); and Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin (2011). Tomás Saraceno has participated in numerous festivals and biennales, including the 17th Biennale Architettura (2020), the 58th Biennale di Venezia (2019), and the 53rd Biennale di Venezia (2009). For the 2020 project *Fly with Aerocene Pacha*, 32 world records were set with *Aerocene*, marking the most sustainable flight in human history. Saraceno lives and works in Berlin.

Leigh Silverman's Broadway credits include *Grand Horizons* (2ST; Williamstown Theater Festival), *The Lifespan of a Fact* (Studio 54), *Violet* (Roundabout; Tony nomination), *Chinglish* (Goodman Theatre; Longacre), and *Well* (Public Theater; ACT; Longacre). Recent Off-Broadway credits include *Soft Power* (Public Theater; Ahmanson Theater/Curran Theater; Drama Desk nomination), *Tumacho* (Clubbed Thumb), *Hurricane Diane* (New York Theatre Workshop; Two River Theater), *Harry Clarke* (Vineyard Theatre/Audible, Minetta Lane; Lortel nomination), *Wild Goose Dreams* (Public Theater; La Jolla Playhouse), *Sweet Charity* (New Group), *On The Exhale* (Roundabout), and *The Outer Space* (Public Theater). Encores include *Bring Me to Light*, *Violet*, *The Wild Party*, and *Really Rosie*. Silverman received 2011 and 2019 Obie Awards for Sustained Excellence. Upcoming projects include *Suffs* (Public Theater).

Cecily Strong is best known for her work as a cast member on *Saturday Night Live*, where she returns for her tenth season. Strong received back-to-back Emmy nominations in 2020 and 2021 for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series for her work on *SNL*. She has entertained viewers with her standout “Weekend Update” character, Cathy Anne, Michael Che’s wacky chain-smoking neighbor who offers her opinions on current events. Her recurring character Gemma, a British “singer” with various boyfriends, also quickly became a fan favorite. She has earned rave reviews for her notable Judge Jeanine Pirro, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, and Melania Trump impressions. Strong has co-hosted “Weekend Update” alongside both Seth Meyers and Colin Hanks. Most recently, Strong starred on Apple TV+’s 2021 hit musical series, *Schmigadoon!*, on which she also serves as a producer. Her memoir, *This Will All Be Over Soon*, was released in summer 2021. In Chicago, Strong improvised regularly at iO and served as an understudy for the Second City Main Stage and E.T.C. shows. She performed as a member of the Second City national touring company and has also appeared at the Chicago SketchFest, Chicago Just for Laughs, the New York Sketch Fest, and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Strong has appeared in the films *The Female Brain* and Paul Feig’s reboot of *Ghostbusters*, as well as Melissa McCarthy’s *The Boss*, *The Bronze*, and *The Meddler*. Additionally, Strong headlined the 2015 White House Correspondents’ Dinner. Strong was raised in Oak Park, Illinois, and has a BFA in theater from the California Institute of the Arts.

Wu Tsang is an award-winning filmmaker and visual artist who combines documentary and narrative techniques with fantastical detours into the imaginary. Tsang is a 2018 MacArthur “Genius” Fellow and her projects have been presented at museums, biennales, and film festivals internationally. She has won numerous awards and grants including a 2016 Guggenheim fellowship (film/video), 2018 Hugo Boss Prize, and Rockefeller Foundation grant. Tsang received a BFA (2004) from the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and an MFA (2010) from University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). Currently, she is a director-in-residence at Schauspielhaus Zürich.

Jane Wagner, a distinguished American playwright, has won numerous awards, including two Peabodys, four Emmys, a Writer’s Guild Award for her work in television and the seldom-given NY Drama Critics’ Circle Special Award for her Broadway success, *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*. Wagner made her writing debut with the acclaimed CBS teleplay entitled *J. T.* and her book of the same title. In 1970, Wagner began working with Lily Tomlin on an Edith Ann album, *Edith Ann: And That’s the Truth* (1971), which began an award-winning, creative alliance that has lasted for nearly 50 years. They went on to cowrite and produce two more Grammy-nominated albums, *Modern Scream* (1975) and *On Stage* (1977). Together, Wagner and Tomlin also produced six television specials as well as three animated specials that starred the precocious Edith Ann. In 1977, Wagner wrote and directed *Appearing Nitely*, a one-woman show in which Tomlin made her Broadway debut. Wagner subsequently wrote the screenplay for the movie *The Incredible Shrinking Woman*. In 1985, Wagner brought *The Search* to

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Broadway, where it became one of the most acclaimed plays of the 1985 – 86 Broadway season. The hardcover edition of *The Search* became the first play in 20 years to appear on the *New York Times* bestseller list. In 2013, Harper Collins issued a new release of the book to celebrate 25 years in print. Wagner has also written and executive-produced the narration for the Emmy-winning HBO documentary *An Apology to Elephants*. In 2019, Lincoln Center honored Wagner and Tomlin with a retrospective of their careers, *Two Free Women*. Together they founded the Los Angeles LGBT Center’s Lily Tomlin/Jane Wagner Cultural Arts Center. In 2020, Wagner was honored with the prestigious Lambda Literary Visionary Award, for her “innovative and barrier-breaking work.” Wagner’s continuing career in writing, drawing, art, text, photos and videos can be found at LilyTomlin.com. On New Year’s Eve 2013, she married her long-time partner, Lily Tomlin.

Support

The creation of new work at The Shed is generously supported by the Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Commissioning Fund and the Shed Commissioners. Major support for live productions at The Shed is provided by the Charina Endowment Fund. The Bloomberg Building is configured with a state-of-the-art fiber network and infrastructure to connect people to new cultural experiences, and a superior Wi-Fi service for audiences, artists, and staff. Providing The Shed with infrastructure and technical capability at an unprecedented scale is Altice USA, The Shed’s exclusive connectivity provider.

M&T Bank is The Founding Bank of The Shed and is the exclusive financial services supporter for live performance commissions as part of a multiyear partnership. M&T is proud to continue supporting our shared commitment to our communities and the belief that creative arts should be accessible to all. For The Shed’s winter/spring 2022 season, M&T Bank will be supporting *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, *Help, Up Close*, and *November*. Support for *November* is also provided by the Ford Foundation.

Production and exhibition support for *Life After BOB* at The Shed provided in part by the VIA Art Fund.

DRIFT: Fragile Future is supported as part of the Dutch Culture USA program by the Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York. Special thanks to DRIFT Technology partner *Drifter: SkySpirit*.

Membership at The Shed is supported by United Airlines.

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About The Shed

The Shed is a new cultural institution of and for the 21st century. We produce and welcome innovative art and ideas, across all forms of creativity, to build a shared understanding of our rapidly changing world and a more equitable society. In our highly adaptable building on Manhattan's west side, The Shed brings together established and emerging artists to create new work in fields ranging from pop to classical music, painting to digital media, theater to literature, and sculpture to dance. We seek opportunities to collaborate with cultural peers and community organizations, work with like-minded partners, and provide unique spaces for private events. As an independent nonprofit that values invention, equity, and generosity, we are committed to advancing art forms, addressing the urgent issues of our time, and making our work impactful, sustainable, and relevant to the local community, the cultural sector, New York City, and beyond.

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