

# The Shifting Cornerstone

a performance installation

August 16-17, 20-24, 2008

12pm-5pm (ongoing)

Direction: **Joanna Haigood**  
Set Design: **Wayne Campbell**  
Sound: **Shamsher Virk**  
Photography: **John Kent**  
Poster Printing: **Erik Reinecke /@ Signs & Graphics**  
Onsite Assistant: **Claire Willey**  
YBCA Technician: **Guy Brenner**  
Performance: **Paul Benney, Robert Henry Johnson, Sheila Lopez, Amara Tabor Smith, Raissa Simpson, Dwayne Worthington**

Change is inevitable. It comes whether you expect it or not, and is the fundamental force that defines the character of history. It is a shift in context, a shift in how we perceive the very foundation of place.

This city block now occupied by the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts has seen dramatic change over the past few hundred years. From marshland to coal yards to market place to rubble to apartments to pawn shops to resident hotels to parking lot to art center, each moment catalogued somewhere and meaningful to someone. Joseph Beuys expanded the notion of art with his idea of social sculpture in which society itself is considered part of a large work of art. Every action or gesture is a creative act, whether it is the planting of a tree or the utterance of a word. It is consciousness that clarifies the moment of this creation, this new art, and connects it to the rest of life. It is a continuum, always changing and transforming. This powerful idea has always appealed to me. Here at Mission Street and Third, this shift in history has created a place with many different realities, a place where invisible events strongly shape the visible present.

With The Shifting Cornerstone I try to honor it all. I have taken Beuys' idea and included the historical realities of this site to offer a layered perspective of our every day experience. By establishing a window through the barrier between the present and the past, the place where memory and imagination meet, I invite you to participate in the shaping of this very moment.

— Joanna Haigood

Joanna has a powerful idea about the detectable persistence of history dwelling in the present. I enjoy trying making things that work with her ideas somehow. For The Shifting Cornerstone, I conceived a narrative of permeable barriers, between past and present, between the life on the street and life inside buildings, between the chaos on the sidewalk and the order of a choreographed performance. I hope my little collection of props act as a catalyst so performer and audience alike can shift between these mini- worlds. And the props shift, and tell their little stories too. For example, the empty frame on wheels; it looks like it belongs somehow to one of the buildings nearby, maybe the museum. But the poor thing has been put on the street, with a "free" sign on it. If a cornerstone can shift, so can the scene inside the frame, I suppose. And the box of live grass? It is looking for a home. This spot on Third Street was once a shoreline marsh. Maybe that long dead grass is a distant relation to the live tuft in the box. For an extra layer, I appropriated the Center ad kiosks and placed in them large text-less prints of the performers in character, shot in the performance area. Maybe this will add a little ambiguity to the mix. This is an installation piece, sort of interactive, too. So be sure to circulate around the performance to shift your viewpoint and create your own unique composition of all the parts.

— Wayne Campbell

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## Biographies

**Joanna Haigood (Director)** relocated to the San Francisco Bay Area from New York in 1979 and co-founded Zaccho Dance Theatre. Her work has been commissioned by Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Dancing in the Streets, Walker Arts Center, the Exploratorium Museum, the National Black Arts Festival, Lines Contemporary Ballet, Axis Dance Company, Festival d'Avignon and Festival d'Arles in France, among others. Her work is also in the repertory of the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago. Ms. Haigood has been awarded fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the James M. Irvine Foundation. She also received the Cal Arts/Alpert Award in Dance in 1999 and United States Artist Award in 2007. Ms. Haigood has taught at the National des Arts du Cirque in France, the Laban Centre in England, Spelman College, the Institute for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford University and the University of California at Davis. She currently teaches at the SF Clown Conservatory.

**Wayne Campbell (Set Design)** has been lucky enough to have been collaborating as designer and rigger with Joanna Haigood for over ten years. Recent work with her includes *Invisible Wings*, Aug 07, Jacob's Pillow; *Departure and Arrival*, May 07 SFO International Terminal; *Dances around the House*, Dec 05, at the San Francisco Exploratorium; *Ghost Architecture*, Feb 04, at the YBCA Forum. Recent work with others includes rigging for Matthew Barney *Drawing Restraint* show, June 06, SFMOMA; and rigging design and execution for a MythBuster's episode involving climbing a 300 foot glass building using suction cups.

**Shamsher Virk (Sound)**, originally from Victoria, Canada, was drawn to San Francisco because of its vibrant performing arts scene. Using his training in Human Ecology as a guide, he creates work that is interdisciplinary in nature. Through sound art, video projection, participatory performance, text, taste, touch, and smell, Virk's work begins in the head and quickly enters the heart. His recent work includes "Dairy Diary," a 2007 installation exploring Mexican migrant labor on a Massachusetts dairy farm. His sound design was featured in Zaccho Dance Theatre's Arts Education performance "The History of the Voting Rights Act" at Project Artaud Theatre, May 2008.

**Paul Benney (Performer)** has been performing with Zaccho Dance Theater since 1992. He directed OnSite Dance Co. with Jessica Lutes from 1990 - 2002. Currently he lives in Brooklyn, N.Y. and teaches Recreational Arts at St. Ann's School.

**Robert Henry Johnson (Performer)** is a native San Franciscan. He is a member of the first graduating class of San Francisco School of the Arts, and has studied dance with San Francisco Ballet School. He has performed with Oakland Ballet, ODC/San Francisco, Bayerisches Staatsballett, Winifred R. Harris' *Between Lines* and Citicenter Dance Theatre. He is the recipient of two Izzie Awards for Best Individual Performance. In 1993, he formed the Robert Henry Johnson Dance Company, which has performed through the nation to critical acclaim. The award winning choreographer's work has been mounted on Ballet British Columbia, Bayerisches Staatsballett, Oakland Ballet, Santa Barbara Dance Theater, Lines Ballet Pre Professional Program and Oregon Ballet School. This is Robert's fourth project with Zaccho. His repertory with the company includes *The Transporter* (2004), *Ghost Architecture* (2004), *Departure and Arrival* (2007) and *Invisible Wings* (1998). In addition to his dancing and choreography, he is an accomplished playwright. His play *The Othello Papers* will premiere in the African American Shakespeare Company's 2009 season. He currently writes for *The Western Edition Paper* in San Francisco.

**Sheila Lopez (Performer)** comes from a background in dance with a focus on improvisational dance/theatre. She graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in dance. She is an arts educator who values, as a life long pursuit, her continued education in the arts. She is also a licensed massage therapist. Lopez has been a member of Zaccho Dance Theatre since 1985 with whom she has performed and toured throughout the USA and France. She has been the recipient of Marin Arts Council and Rockefeller grants for her developmental performance work in the community. In addition to her performance work she has been working with the youth of the Bay Area since 1980 both privately and through the school system. She works as not only a director/choreographer of student generated developmental work, but also as an inspirational, innovative and highly respected teacher of movement, improvisation, and advanced ensemble theatre work. She was a guest artist with The Conservatory Theatre Ensemble at Tamalpais High School in California from 1993-2007. She and her students at ETC have garnered praise and awards at regional high school theatre festivals throughout California.

**Raissa Simpson (Performer)** is an independent dancer, choreographer and A.D. of Push Dance Company. An award-winning dancer, she worked & toured extensively with Robert Moses' *Kin* (2002-2007) including prestigious tours to Jacob's Pillow, Bates Dance Festival & City Center New York. As a guest artist she has performed with numerous companies including her work with Zaccho Dance Theatre's *Departure & Arrival* (SFIAF) & *Invisible Wings* (Jacob's Pillow '07). She has been on the faculty of San Francisco Dance Center, City Dance Studios, and Santa Clara Ballet. Raissa holds her BFA from SUNY Purchase and has trained at Dance Theatre of Harlem, San Jose Dance Theater & the Paul Taylor School. She master taught at UC Santa Cruz and Berkeley High School among many others. Ms. Simpson was recently featured in *Dance Spirit Magazine*, the *Village Voice* and *The New York Times*. Her work was curated at the Black Choreographers Festival, Cowell Theater, American Cancer Society, and 418 Project in Santa Cruz. Since its formation in 2005, Push Dance Company has received critical acclaim as well as the 2007 "Peoples Choice Award", from San Jose State University.

**Amara Tabor-Smith (Performer)** is a San Francisco Native and Oakland resident who started her career in dance working with the Ed Mock Dance Company. In addition to Zaccho Dance Theater, she has worked with other local dance companies such as Anne Bluethenthal and Dancers, Priscilla Regalado, Kendra Kimbrough Dance Ensemble, and Pearl Ubungen Dancers and Musicians. Amara is the former Associate artistic director and dancer with The Urban Bush Women Dance Co. in NYC. As a choreographer she has created work for artists such as Aya de Leon for her performance piece, "Thieves in the Temple" and most recently, choreographed "Throwing Bones" for Sojourn Theater in Portland, Oregon. In addition to dance, Amara has worked extensively in theater with artists such as Herbert Siquenza, Anna Deveare Smith, The SF Mime Troupe and most recently toured internationally with Marc Bamuthi Joseph in his Dance Theater piece, "Scourge". Amara is the artistic director of Deep Waters Dance Theater in and was a 2007 recipient of the CHIME Mentorship Exchange grant.

**Dwayne Worthington (Performer)**, a Paterson New Jersey native, hails from Durham, North Carolina. Dwayne received his MFA in dance from California State University Long Beach and his BFA from North Carolina School of the Arts. He has worked with such Bay Area artists as Robert Moses, Yannis Adoniu, and Joanna Haigood. He has also been a company member of Nicholas Leichter Dance. Dwayne has had the great pleasure of working with such choreographers as Betty Jones, Sherone Price, Lynn Jackson, Mark Dendy, and Dominique Boivin.

**Zaccho Dance Theatre** creates and presents performance work that investigates dance as it relates to place. Artistic Director Joanna Haigood's creative work focuses on making dances that use natural, architectural and cultural environments as points of departure for movement exploration and narrative. Haigood's innovative work involves in-depth research into the history and the character of sites, often involving local communities in the creative process, and typically integrates aerial flight and suspension as ways of expanding performers' spatial and dynamic range. Zaccho Dance Theatre's home is San Francisco's Bayview Hunters Point where Zaccho manages a large studio that is utilized for rehearsal, performances, and educational activities for youth and adults. For over 19 years, Zaccho's Youth Performing Arts Program has served 100-150 children annually by offering free in-school and after-school classes and performance opportunities to students 7-17 years old. [zaccho.org](http://zaccho.org)

Joanna Haigood, *Artistic Director*; Jennifer Ross, *Executive Director*; Lizzy Spicuzza, *Youth Performing Arts Program Manager*; Shamsher Virk, *Office Manager*; Mary Soulis, *Grant Writer*; Ann Berman, *Finance Officer*

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Zaccho Dance Theatre  
1777 Yosemite Avenue, Studio 330 -- San Francisco, CA 94124  
415.822.6744