

Lionel Popkin

The Oedipus/Antigone Project



Photo: Nichola Goode

"By turns comical, creepy, and uncanny... The whole dance is like that: disquieting, the cliché pushed past the literal."

— Brian Siebert, *The New Yorker*

The Oedipus/Antigone Project traces a tale between lands, between two plays, taking up an undocumented journey between Thebes and Colonus to ask ‘what happens to us when we are in between homes?’ Lionel Popkin’s new evening-length choreo-play documents the emotional landscape between two of Sophocles’ famous theatrical myths. In *Oedipus the King*, Oedipus leaves his homeland (Thebes), into exile for his incestuous crime. Many years later his loyal daughter/sister Antigone joins him in the wilderness and together they wander, "hungry, with bare feet, ... through wintry rain and scorching heat," (Sophocles, *OC*) and eventually they arrive in Colonus and find a respite of sorts (which is where Sophocles’ play *Oedipus at Colonus* begins). *The Oedipus/Antigone Project* examines what it is to exist between places, how migration impacts a wandering body and how we navigate ourselves away from and toward homes.

Popkin blends unexpected humor and resonant physicality to craft multimedia performance works that have been called “a zenith of corporeal possibilities” (The Los Angeles Times). ‘The O/A Project’ evokes an elliptical narrative; interweaving topographical maps, complex shadow play, personal and performative immigrant legacies, and resilient dancing to question contemporary notions of displacement, exile and homeland.

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The Artists:

Performed by **Barry Brannum** and **Lionel Popkin** with **Meena Murugesan**

Live video design by **Meena Murugesan**

Original score by **Aaron Drake**

Costume and set by **Marcus Kuiland-Nazario**

Lighting by **Chris Kuhl**

Lionel Popkin is a choreographer/performer who values bodily experience as the primary way we orient to our world; seeking hybridity over homogenization and the gloriously confused over the need for oversimplification. Popkin blends unexpected humor and resonant physicality to craft worlds that, according to The Washington Post, have “a flair for originality that periodically has you realizing that you are smiling to yourself in the dark,” and approaches dance-making in a way that is “as farcical as it is dead serious” (NYT) and “by turns comical, creepy, and uncanny” (The New Yorker). From 2004-2013 Popkin’s work looked at the cross-cultural conversation between his post-modern training and the imagery and iconography of the Indian subcontinent that surrounded his youth. Recent work has focused on the more intimate familial world, questioning conceptions of home from the point of view of the itinerant, the domesticated, and the mobilized.

Popkin tours and performs his projects throughout the United States and abroad, including at Danspace Project, Abrons Arts Center, Dance Theater Workshop, The Getty Center, REDCAT, The Skirball Cultural Center, Jacob's Pillow Inside/Out Series, ODC, The Place Theater in London, and the Guongdong Modern Dance Festival in Guongzhou, China. Lionel has received grants from multiple sources including the National Performance Network's Creation Fund, the National Dance Project Touring Subsidy, the Center for Cultural Innovation, the Puffin Foundation, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and the Durfee Foundation. As a dancer, Popkin performed throughout the U.S. and Europe in the companies of Trisha Brown, Terry Creach, and Stephanie Skura. Popkin is a Professor at the UCLA Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance and is a certified teacher of Skinner Releasing Technique.

Media

Video trailer linked [HERE](#).

Full length linked [HERE](#).

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