

# WESTBETH VIEW

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L TO R BACK: Joan Davidson, *President Emeritus, J.M. Kaplan Fund*; Alastair Macaulay, *Chief Dance Critic, The New York Times*; Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, *Founder and Chair of HLPC*; Mikhail Baryshnikov, *Artistic Director, Baryshnikov Arts Center*; Patricia Jones, *Westbeth Interim Executive Director*; Laura Kuhn, *Director, John Cage Trust*

L TO R FRONT: Gus Solomons Jr., *Performer, Mentor, Writer*, Richard Kostelanetz, *Artist, Author, and Critic*; Ken Tabachnick, *Executive Director, Merce Cunningham Trust*

# Renowned Choreographer and Dancer Merce Cunningham Celebrated at Westbeth with a Cultural Medallion.



CHOREOGRAPHER MERCE CUNNINGHAM WAS CELEBRATED ON SEPTEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup> BY WESTBETH, THE MERCE CUNNINGHAM TRUST, AND THE HISTORIC LANDMARKS PRESERVATION CENTER (HLPC) WITH A COMMEMORATIVE CULTURAL MEDALLION INSTALLED AT THE BETHUNE STREET ENTRANCE OF WESTBETH BEFORE A CROWD OF OVER 100 RESIDENTS, DANCERS AND CULTURAL ICONS. THE HLPC CULTURAL MEDALLIONS PROGRAM AFFIXES PORCELAINIZED ENAMEL PLAQUES TO THE EXTERIOR OF BUILDINGS THROUGHOUT NEW YORK CITY TO COMMEMORATE AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE CITY'S RICH AND DIVERSE HERITAGE. CUNNINGHAM'S STUDIO WAS LOCATED ON THE ELEVENTH FLOOR OF WESTBETH FOR ALMOST 40 YEARS.

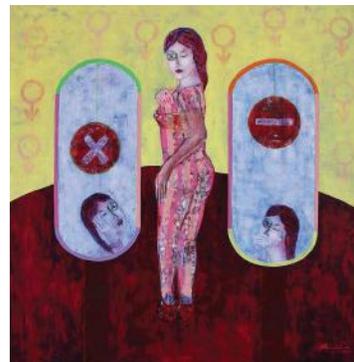
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# Artist-in-Residence **Rashwan Abdelbaki**



WESTBETH WELCOMES ITS NEWEST ARTIST-AT-RISK, RASHWAN ABDELBAKI, A SYRIAN-BORN MULTI-MEDIUM ARTIST SPECIALIZING IN PAINTING, ETCHING, ENGRAVING, DIGITAL ART, INSTALLATION, AND VIDEO. RASHWAN COMES TO WESTBETH THROUGH THE NEW YORK CITY SAFE HAVEN RESIDENCY PROGRAM -- AN INITIATIVE LED BY A COALITION OF ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TO SAFEGUARD FREE EXPRESSION, INCLUDING ARTISTIC FREEDOM INITIATIVE, ARTISTS SAFETY.NET, RESIDENCY UNLIMITED, PEN AMERICA, FORDHAM UNIVERSITY, AND WESTBETH ARTISTS HOUSING. A RECIPIENT OF SEVERAL RESIDENCIES AND FELLOWSHIPS, RASHWAN IS KNOWN FOR WORK THAT DELVES INTO THE INTERPLAY OF RACISM, RELIGION, AND POLITICS THROUGH JOYFUL COLORS AND EYE-OPENING PORTRAITS.

**A RECURRING MOTIF IN HIS PAINTINGS ARE FIGURES CLOTHED IN SIMPLE STRIPED GARMENTS AND DEPICTED WITH ONE EYE OPEN AND THE OTHER EYE CLOSED.**



Rashwan holds a Bachelor's degree in printmaking techniques from the Faculty of Fine Arts of Damascus University. His paintings have been shown in Syria, Lebanon, the UK, and the US. Recent solo shows include *One Eye Open: Paintings* by Rashwan Abdelbaki at George Mason University, *Little Syria* at the Metropolitan College of New York, *Light Up The Darkness* at Dar Al Mussawir in Beirut, Lebanon, and *A Moment* at Al Hamra Theatre in

Damascus, Syria. Rashwan has received fellowships from the American Academy in Rome, the Institute of International Education's Artist Protection Fund, and the Vermont Studio Center.

Rashwan's work emerges in the context of the ongoing Syrian war and the underlying social crises currently being experienced by the citizens of the Middle East. A recurring motif in his paintings are figures clothed in simple striped garments and depicted with

one eye open and the other eye closed. The artist says of these figures, "The Fear inside all of us makes us always awake .. we want to close our eyes and sleep in Peace. But in this crazy and complex world, at least we need to open one eye .. to know what is happening around us .. to be ready for anything new .. Striped .. like prisoners in our beliefs and our religions .. To the defense of our humanity .. our existence.. lights up the darkness." //



THE HLPC CULTURAL MEDALLIONS PROGRAM AFFIXES PORCELAINIZED ENAMEL PLAQUES TO THE EXTERIOR OF BUILDINGS THROUGHOUT NEW YORK CITY TO COMMEMORATE AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE CITY'S RICH AND DIVERSE HERITAGE.



Cover story ...continued

Founder and Chair of HLPC, Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, led the program; other speakers included: Ken Tabachnick, Executive Director, Merce Cunningham Trust; Gus Solomons Jr., Performer, Mentor, Writer; Joan Davidson, President Emeritus, J.M. Kaplan Fund and one of the founders of Westbeth; Richard Kostelanetz, Artist, Author, and Critic; Carolyn Brown, former Merce Cunningham dancer and Author; Laura Kuhn, Director, John Cage Trust; Alastair Macaulay, Chief Dance Critic, *The New York Times*; and Mikhail Baryshnikov, Artistic Director, Baryshnikov Arts Center. The dedication is part of a year-long celebration of Merce Cunningham's life and extraordinarily creative career.

Known for his innovative ideas about modern dance and his collaborations with creators from almost every conceivable artistic discipline, Merce began his career as a dancer with Martha Graham before founding his own company in 1953. Over the next 50 years he created more than 150 dances and 800 "Events." On April 16th 2019, Merce's 100th birthday, the Cunningham Trust will join with the Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Barbican London, and the Opéra Comique in Paris to present the largest Cunningham event ever staged. ✓

For more information please visit [www.mercecunningham.org/centennial](http://www.mercecunningham.org/centennial)

FAR LEFT PHOTO: Ken Tabachnick, Executive Director, Merce Cunningham Trust, Gus Solomons and Mikhail Baryshnikov.

TOP RIGHT: Westbeth Merce Plaque Unveiling Reception.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Ralph Lee, Founder of the Greenwich Village Halloween Parade greets Joan Davidson.

## A New Showcase for Westbeth's Meetings and Events



A new digital sign is up and running across from the elevators at the Bethune Street entrance. It features dynamic content about Westbeth residents, WARC events, Management/Board news updates, maintenance issues and community notices. Current

residents can submit content to be considered for display.

Content for the monitor may include any current resident's visual/literary/ performance-related event WITHIN or OUTSIDE Westbeth, as well as special events open to Westbeth residents sponsored by Westbeth commercial tenants. All events must be free or low-cost. Other significant events open to Westbeth residents sponsored by outside organizations will also be showcased such as the current Fringe Festival.

A visual poster or other graphic image as well as event information is eligible for posting in the center panel for one-off or limited events taking place at Westbeth. Please limit text to the name of the event, event location and time. Submit materials at least 30 days in advance. Other content such as classes, in-house meetings, or events without visuals may be included in the scrolling text on the right side of the monitor. Plain text announcements can be no more than 20 words, and must be submitted up to 2 weeks in advance.

A memo with detailed requirements was slipped under the door of every tenant. Please refer to the memo for complete guidelines or email [WBdigitalnews@phippsony.org](mailto:WBdigitalnews@phippsony.org) for more information. You can also find instructions at [westbetharts.org](http://westbetharts.org) under the resident's page (login and password is swordfish). ✓

# The Westbeth Flea—Bargains for a Cause

**THE WESTBETH FLEA – THE LEGENDARY ELECTION DAY FLEA MARKET -- IS THE PREMIERE COMMUNITY EVENT FOUNDED, SPONSORED AND ORGANIZED BY WESTBETH RESIDENTS TO BEAUTIFY THE PROPERTY AND TO MAKE CHARITABLE DONATIONS THAT BENEFIT COMMUNITY, LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CHARITIES. THE WESTBETH BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE, A COMPLETELY TENANT RUN VOLUNTEER SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE WESTBETH ARTISTS RESIDENTS COUNCIL, PRODUCES AND RUNS THIS RENOWNED ANNUAL EVENT.**



BACK L TO R: Jennifer Cooke, *co-founder, sculptor*; Halina Warren, *real estate*; Inez Foose, *muralist*; Sandra Kingsbury, *actor*; Nancy Gabor, *actor, director*; Laura Klein, *actor, star*; Parviz Mohassel, *architect, painter*; Christina Maile, *printmaker, landscape architect*; Paul Binnerts, *playwright, director*.

FRONT L TO R: Anne Brody, *co founder, painter*; Milda Vizbar, *printmaker*; Penny Jones, *puppeteer*; Gina Shamus, *potter*; Jane Klein, *photographer*.

NOT SHOWN: Blanca Harper, *musician*; Joya Staack, *writer*; Anne Weichberger, *doula*; Beth Griffiths, *chamber music singer*; Debra Jenks, *multi-media*; Ruby Ludwig, *ethno-musicologist*; Bob Ludwig, *painter*; Terry Pruinton, *master gardener*; Kate Walter, *writer*; Wesley Pollit, *volunteer*; Jan Leslie Harding, *actor, puppeteer*; Pawnee Sills, *actor, teacher*; Linda Marks, *poet*; Sheila Schwid, *painter*; Al Cooke, *sculptor*; John Turner, *graphic designer, photographer*; Geo Cominskie, *photographer agent, community organiser*; Roger Braimon, *graphic designer*.

Now in its 35th year, the project began with a tree on Bethune St whose bark was being rubbed raw by bicycle chains. Westbeth tenants Jennifer Cooke and Anne Brody decided that planter boxes around the tree could not only protect the trees, but also give residents a chance to “beautify” the street. They thought the simplest way to raise money and get tenants interested was to hold a Flea Market. Thus, the Westbeth Beautification Committee was born.

Christina Maile, Beautification Committee member and Westbeth Board member, reminisced that the Flea Market was originally held in the Community Room, and for a couple of years in the Westbeth Gallery.

“Year after year, the projects we funded grew, as the interest of the tenants and the neighborhood grew, both in donations and in sales. We started getting and selling all kinds of things – books, original artwork, clothing, household items, electronics, furniture, linens. Artists collect the most unusual things. Flea Market buyers feel they are collecting like an artist! The tag line of the Flea Market though is always “Bargains

Galore”, because pretty much all of our prices are still stuck in the 1980’s.”

The department that has expanded the most is original artwork, in all media, donated by Westbeth artists, or by their families. The Beautification Committee believes it is important to extend their artistic legacy by providing bio information, displaying and storing the work, and selling them at affordable prices - often to people who never ever thought they could own an original piece of art.

The Flea Market has other important functions – it introduces many local residents to Westbeth, it serves as an important means of publicizing events at Westbeth, and the year-long preparation for the sales allows new and older resident volunteers to get to know and work with each other.

The Flea Market opens on Election Day and for two weekends after. People come to Westbeth from the neighborhood and from across the city, and from around the world year after year, lining up hours before it opens.

Beautification projects funded by the Flea have included the canopy at 55 Bethune St; rooftop furniture on the Martha Graham roof; Feldenkrais classes, flowers and shrubs for planters and courtyard gardens, and gallery lighting in the Hallway Exhibition space, to name just a few of the projects!

Money has been donated to disaster relief efforts such as Hurricane Maria disaster relief (also Katrina, tsunamis in Japan and Thailand and others); the UN High Commission on Refugees; Planned Parenthood; Mercy Corps; PETA; International Red Cross; NY Times Neediest Cases, God’s Love We Deliver, Visiting Neighbors, and many, many more.

It takes a full year to put together the Flea Market. A stable group has continued to organize and support it for the past 35 years. However, they continue to need new volunteers to support the ongoing organization of this uniquely Westbeth project. To volunteer and/or to donate to the Flea Market, contact:

[westbethfleamarket@gmail.com](mailto:westbethfleamarket@gmail.com) ✓



**WESTBETH CORP.**

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**Exhibitors Wanted**

Leave a note with the Westbeth office to sign up for the Project Room and Hallway Gallery.