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### KST PRESENTS: Artist, choreographer Marjani Forté examines mental illness, addiction and poverty in “being Here.../this time”

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Artist and choreographer **Marjani Forté** examines the delicate intersections of mental illness, addiction and systemic poverty in her residency reworking of *being Here.../this time* at 8 p.m. on Friday, August 15 at Kelly Strayhorn Theater. Admission is pay-what-you-can.

*being Here.../this time* is the result of personal experiences, interactions, and a three-year project where Forté listened to the stories of women in recovery. “[*being Here...*] came out of a meditation, this idea of being present, and lots of conversations with folks who are in recovery,” says Forté. “I live in New York City at a place where public life is played out in the open. I became really captivated by the experiences of people who were in poverty, often also suffering from mental illness or some kind of addiction. Those two things seemed to be happening almost instantaneously. You didn’t know which was which.” Currently, the project focuses only on the experiences of women, but Forté hopes to gather stories from men in the future.

The project, originally titled *being Here...*, was first presented at New York City’s Danspace Project in March 2013. Forté’s residency reworking of *being Here.../this time* at KST will see the piece change from a linear story to a series of vignettes, reflecting moments in life that are triggered from traumatic thoughts and experiences. Audiences will be able to witness these moments manifested in the performers’ movement throughout the show. Forté plans to include a 3D sound score in the future so audiences can experience the performance at a deeper level.



Pictured: Jasmine Hearn  
 Photo courtesy of Marjani Forté

Dancer, choreographer, and Pittsburgh resident Jasmine Hearn was an original cast member of *being Here...* and joins Forté for this latest reworking. Hearn, who danced with Dance Alloy Theater during their final season, met Forté at KST’s newMoves Contemporary Dance Festival in 2012. They later connected at the American Dance Festival (ADF), where Forté taught. After taking Forté’s classes at ADF, Hearn became interested in the project. “I was really attracted to her movement quality,” says Forté. “She started coming to my classes and we sat and talked a little bit. I asked her if she would be interested in getting in on this project. She said ‘yes’ and she’s been a part of it ever since.”

“*being Here.../this time* is an important conversation on issues often stigmatized in our society,” says Janera Solomon, executive director of KST. “At KST, audiences can expect to be challenged by powerful, mind-opening pieces.”

In addition to the performance, Marjani Forté will lead a **Master Class** on Wednesday, August 13, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at The Alloy Studios for \$5. A free **Artist Lunch** and discussion will follow from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.



### **East Liberty LIVE!**

This event is part of KST's **East Liberty LIVE!** summer series, sponsored by **PNC** and **Yelp Pittsburgh**.

Kelly Strayhorn Theater presents East Liberty LIVE! — a vibrant series of affordable and accessible summer arts programming. With a variety of dance, music, and film events throughout the summer, East Liberty LIVE! provides creative activities and innovative arts experiences for those who work, play, and live in the East End.

### **About the Kelly Strayhorn Theater**

As the last of nine theaters from the 1950s heyday of East Liberty, the Kelly Strayhorn Theater uses the arts as a catalyst for continuing community revitalization. The theater, in its 12th season, continues to play a key role in the transformation of Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood. An intimate, professionally equipped, 349-seat multiple-use performance venue, the theater demonstrates its commitment to Pittsburgh artists and audiences. The KST is a favorite venue of emerging local artists, regional artists and arts organizations who take risks and present new work. Noted Pittsburghers Gene Kelly and Billy Strayhorn, the namesakes, are among the 80 area artists honored on the theater's Gallery of Stars. The building, opening in 1914, is the former Regent Theatre, which served the East End as a movie house for eight decades.

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