



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Shawn Farley at 413-545-4159 or sfarley@admin.umass.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 4, 2013

- WHAT:** WORD BECOMES FLESH
Written and Directed by Marc Bamuthi Joseph
Tour Producer: MAPP International Productions
- WHEN:** Thursday, October 10, 7:30 p.m.
- WHERE:** Bowker Auditorium
University of Massachusetts Amherst
- TICKETS:** Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or go online to <http://www.fineartscenter.com/>
- IMAGES:** To download images relating to this press release please go online to <https://fac.umass.edu/Online/PressImages>

“Joseph’s words can take an audience’s breath away, then coax out sighs, exclamations of approval, and finally draw them to their feet” - *The San Francisco Bay Guardian*

“A searing, satisfying evening” - *The Washington Post*

MARC BAMUTHI JOSEPH’S POWERFUL WORD BECOMES FLESH RETURNS TO UMASS RE-INVENTED

Award-winning hip hop poet Marc Bamuthi Joseph's powerful *Word Becomes Flesh* returns to the Fine Arts Center’s Bowker Auditorium nearly a decade later, re-invented with an ensemble cast from a new generation, on Thursday, October 10th at 7:30 p.m. Featuring a series of performed letters to an unborn son, *Word Becomes Flesh* uses spoken word, dance and live music to document nine months of pregnancy from a young single father's perspective. There will be a post- show discussion/reception with the artists in the Campus Center Reading Room immediately following the performance.

In residence for several days, the company will engage the community with several educational events. Thanks to generous funding from Health New England, nearly 400 area high school students will attend a matinee of *Word Becomes Flesh*, tour the Du Bois exhibition at the University Museum of Contemporary Art, have lunch in the dining commons and enjoy a tour of the UMass campus. The general public is invited to a dynamic public forum "Word Becomes

Flesh: An Evening on Race, Poetry and Politics" on Monday, October 7th, 6pm - 7:30pm in Stirn Auditorum at Amherst College. For more information, please visit: fac.umass.edu/Online/WBFoutreach

Sort of a homecoming, Joseph originally performed this piece as a solo performance nearly 10 years ago in Bowker for New WORLD Theater. It was co-commissioned by the National Performance Network, New WORLD Theater, and La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley, California. Now an ensemble piece, *Word Becomes Flesh* is as meaningful as ever. It has been recreated for a cast of six by The Living Word Project, the resident theater company of Youth Speaks Inc., a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization seeking to empower the youth through art. Directed by Marc Bamuthi Joseph, the work is written and performed here by Dahlak Brathwaite, Daveed Diggs, Dion Decibels, Khalil Anthony, Michael Turner and B.Yung.

Word Becomes Flesh fuses tender stories, playful wit and, at times, purposeful rage to give voice to complexities and contradictions surrounding race and gender in America. With deep honesty and raw physicality, the play integrates hip-hop theatre and contemporary dance performance to deconstruct black male identity in the 21st century. *Word Becomes Flesh* critically, lyrically and choreographically shares one man's experience of fatherhood. And in doing so, examines the legacy of patriarchy and male privilege, the continuum between fathers and sons, and the relationships of women and men. Together these narratives confront the intersection between the reality and the mythology of the black male body—from the cotton field to the athletic field and all spaces in between.

Marc Bamuthi Joseph is not only an award-winning spoken word artist and dancer, he is one of America's vital voices in performance, arts education, and artistic curation. Bamuthi graced the cover of Smithsonian Magazine after being named one of America's Top Young Innovators in the Arts and Sciences. He is the artistic director of the 7-part HBO documentary "Russell Simmons presents Brave New Voices" and an inaugural recipient of the United States artists Rockefeller Fellowship, which annually recognizes 50 of the country's "greatest living artists." He is the 2011 Alpert Award winner in Theatre and in April 2012, he was one of the 21 artists to be named to the inaugural class of Doris Duke Artists. He currently serves as Director of Performing Arts at Yerba Buena Center in San Francisco.

Tickets for the *Word Becomes Flesh* are \$25 and \$15; Five College, GCC, STCC students and youth 17 and under are \$10. For tickets call the Box Office at 545-2511, toll-free at 800-999-UMAS, or purchase online at fineartscenter.com. The performance is sponsored by Season sponsors Baystate Health and Health New England with additional event support coming from El Sol Latino. Funded in part by the Expeditions program of the New England Foundation for the Arts, made possible with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support from the six New England state arts agencies.

PHOTOS

Hi-res photos available for download: <https://fac.umass.edu/Online/article/Images>.

PRESS PASSES

A limited number of press passes are available. Please contact Shawn Farley at 413-545-4159 or sfarley@admin.umass.edu.

ABOUT THE FAC

The Fine Arts Center, located on the UMass Amherst campus, is a presenter of music, dance, theater and the visual arts, bringing hundreds of outstanding and provocative artists to the Pioneer Valley for over 35 years.

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