



krannert center

YOUTH SERIES

18-19

SCHOOL DAY PERFORMANCES
FOR PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND HOME
SCHOOLS, GRADES PreK-12

MANUAL CINEMA

NO BLUE MEMORIES— THE LIFE OF GWENDOLYN BROOKS



I ILLINOIS

College of Fine & Applied Arts



ABOUT THE SHOW

No Blue Memories—The Life of Gwendolyn Brooks tells the story of one of Chicago's most beloved figures. Gwendolyn Brooks was a civil rights icon, an Illinois poet laureate, and the first African-American Pulitzer Prize winner as well as a treasured educator and mentor. Her legacy lives on at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where her papers are held at the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. In Manual Cinema's contemporary, theatrical rendering scripted by Eve L. Ewing and Nate Marshall and commissioned by the Poetry Foundation, striking visuals combine with poetry, storytelling, and original, live music by Jamila Woods and Ayanna Woods for an inspiring tale of identity, politics, and one of the most remarkable American literary careers.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Manual Cinema is an award-winning performance collective, design studio, and film/video production company founded in 2010 by Drew Dir, Sarah Fornace, Ben Kauffman, Julia Miller, and Kyle Vegter. Manual Cinema combines handmade shadow puppetry, cinematic techniques, and innovative sound and music to create immersive visual stories for stage and screen. Using vintage overhead projectors, multiple screens, puppets, actors, live feed cameras, multi-channel sound design, and a live music ensemble, Manual Cinema transforms the experience of attending the cinema and imbues it with liveness, ingenuity, and theatricality.

Crescendo Literary, the writers of this piece, combines the talents of Eve L. Ewing and Nate Marshall. Dr. Eve L. Ewing is a sociologist of education and a writer from Chicago. She is the author of *Electric Arches*, which received awards from the American Library Association and the Poetry Society of America and was named one of the year's best books by NPR and the *Chicago Tribune*. Nate Marshall is from the South Side of Chicago. He is the author of the award-winning book *Wild Hundreds* and an editor of *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*. Nate is the assistant director of Wabash College's Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies where he also serves as a visiting assistant professor of English and Black Studies.

Born and raised on the South Side of Chicago, composer Jamila Woods grew up in a family of music lovers. A frequent guest vocalist in the hip-hop, jazz, and soul world, Jamila has emerged as a once-in-a-generation voice on her soul-stirring debut album *HEAVN*. Ayanna Woods is a composer, singer, and multi-instrumentalist from Chicago. She earned her BA in music composition from Yale University. Her work as a writer, producer, and arranger can be found in film scores for Manual Cinema, Revive LLC, and the viral web series *Brown Girls* as well as in Jamila Woods' release *HEAVN* and Ayanna's own solo project called Yadda Yadda.

ABOUT GWENDOLYN BROOKS

Gwendolyn Brooks is one of the most highly regarded, influential, and widely read poets of 20th-century American poetry. Though born in Topeka, Kansas, Brooks spent her entire life in Chicago, Illinois, after her family relocated during the Great Migration. She was the first Black author to win the Pulitzer Prize (in 1950 for *Annie Allen*) and also served as poetry consultant to the Library of Congress—the first Black woman to hold that position—and poet laureate of the State of Illinois from 1968 until her death in 2000. Many of Brooks' works display a political consciousness, especially those from the 1960s and later, with several of her poems reflecting the civil rights activism of that period. Her body of work gave her, according to critic George E. Kent, "a unique position in American letters. Not only has she combined a strong commitment to racial identity and equality with a mastery of poetic techniques, but she has also managed to bridge the gap between the academic poets of her generation in the 1940s and the young Black militant writers of the 1960s."

P IS FOR PRODUCTION: SHADOW AND LIGHT

This season we invite school communities to explore the performing arts through a selection of topics that reveal the IMPACT of the Arts for Youth.

- Introduction to the arts
- Meaning and cultural context
- Production
- Art-making and creativity
- Careers
- Training

The theatrical wizards of Manual Cinema use light and shadow to create some of the special effects in the performance. Now it's your turn! Choose a book or character, and gather some pipe cleaners and a flashlight. Use the pipe cleaners to shape a character from your story—perhaps giving it a stem to hold it by, too. Now create your shadow by moving the figure in front of a flashlight that is aimed at a light-colored wall or a piece of white paper. Now tell your story by reading from the book or imagining your own narrative while moving the figure.

What happens when you move the figure closer to or farther from the flashlight?

Can you use two figures at once?

What other objects or materials can you use to create shapes or characters for your story?

The following activities require just a little research—find the following poems by heading to your favorite library or online poetry site (such as poetryfoundation.org).

BEVERLY HILLS, CHICAGO BY GWENDOLYN BROOKS

No Blue Memories features many poems by Gwendolyn Brooks including "Beverly Hills, Chicago" about a neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago, which begins with a quote from E.M. Price.

How does this poem make you feel?

How does the quotation relate to the rest of the poem?

What are the people in the poem doing, and how does Brooks describe them?

Does this poem remind you of a place you've been or would like to go?

Do you think about the places you pass as you travel?

Write a short poem about such a place and the people you might meet.

THE BEAN EATERS BY GWENDOLYN BROOKS

Many of Brooks' poems describe everyday life for her characters. In Brooks' poem "The Bean Eaters" she describes the life of a couple as they sit down for a meal.

What do you see every day at home, at school, and as you travel?

What are some activities that you do regularly?

How do these people, places, or things make you feel?

Make a list of three things that you see or do regularly and write a short poem about them.

What are some other ordinary objects that you think would make great inspiration for a poem?

SPEECH TO THE YOUNG, SPEECH TO THE PROGRESS-TOWARD BY GWENDOLYN BROOKS

Gwendolyn Brooks often spoke in classrooms and at graduations across the country sharing wisdom with students. This poem is from one of those presentations.

What advice do you have for students in grades below you?

What would like to say to students in higher grades?

What do you wish you knew about life now?

Think about a time when you needed to be encouraged. What helped you persevere?

Write a poem sharing guidance to your fellow classmates.

ON THE MAP

MANUAL CINEMA COMES FROM . . .
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



Manual Cinema:
No Blue Memories—The Life of
Gwendolyn Brooks

Wednesday-Friday, November 28-30, 2018
at 10am

Colwell Playhouse
Approximately 70 minutes + 10 minute Q&A
Recommended for grades 5 and up

Public Marquee performance

Thursday, November 29, 2018 at 7:30pm

Manual Cinema appears by arrangement with
Elsie Management.

Academic Partner

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GREENING THE ARTS

LIBRARY PARTNERSHIPS

Did you know that the Gwendolyn Brooks collection is held at the University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library, open to the public from 9am to 5pm, Monday-Friday? Through the end of November, a selection of photos, artifacts, and documents will be on display from the Gwendolyn Brooks collection at the Main Library, 1408 Gregory Drive, Room 346. To see specific items or discover what the collection holds, use Ask a Curator at www.library.illinois.edu/rbx.

Krannert Center has also partnered with Champaign Public Library and The Urbana Free Library to help expand your students' Youth Series experience. Our local libraries have placed materials that relate to *No Blue Memories* on display, and librarians are prepared to help your students immerse themselves in the wide-ranging subject areas that are covered by the production. These resources will be available approximately two weeks before through two weeks following the performance.

We hope that you are able to take advantage of these exciting partnerships with our local libraries!

www.champaign.org | www.urbanafreelibrary.org

SPURLOCK MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE: WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28-30

Drop in for a self-guided, interactive visit before or after the performance. Museum guides in each room will offer hands-on object studies and gallery-based challenges for students tied to the themes of *No Blue Memories*. The Spurlock Museum also has a variety of resources for classroom use. Contact Kim Sheahan at ksheahan@illinois.edu or 217.244.3355 for information on available artifacts and lesson plans.

