JAY JACKSON DANCE RESIDENCY AT NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION

The choreographer, drag queen and activist known for starring in RuPaul's Drag Race and So You Think You Can Dance will kick off the YoungArts Season with her residency this September in Miami

MIAMI, FL (August 21, 2018) – The National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts) is kicking off its 2018/2019 season with alumna Jay Jackson (2007 Winner in Dance & U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts) in residence. Best known as Laganja Estranja on RuPaul's Drag Race and So You Think You Can Dance, Jackson will take over the iconic Jewel Box for a three-week residency starting September 10 to create a new multidisciplinary immersive dance theater experience and connect with the community through public dance classes and workshops.

“As a female illusionist I am interested in how individuals express gender in their lives given that it exists as a concept beyond the physical body and is largely performative,” said Jackson. “It is a blessing to return to the YoungArts campus to explore these topics and to create, perform and connect with the local Miami community and my fellow YoungArts alumni.”

Jackson’s engagement highlights YoungArts’ dedication to the expansion of support for alumni artists.

“YoungArts is committed to creating and reinventing the vibrant conditions needed for lifelong artistic support,” said YoungArts President and CEO Carolina García Jayaram. "As part of this commitment, we are offering numerous artistic and professional development opportunities for our alumni this season, beginning with Jay, who is an incredible talent and keeps inspiring dancers, artists and LGBTQ youth through her dance school and outreach work."

Jackson’s residency will be marked by two public engagements. On September 20, she will take over Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM)'s Third Thursdays Poplife Social as Lagangja Estranja for a fan dance party and public performance in collaboration with PAMM. On September 28, she will close her residency with an original work exploring the gradient on which gender exists in contemporary society. The performance will further highlight Jackson's collaboration with YoungArts by incorporating multiple YoungArts alumni, including Delali Ayivor (2011 Winner in Writing and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts),
D'Angelo Lacy aka Black Gatsby (2005 Winner in Theater) and Blake Pfeil (2006 Winner in Theater).

Carnival Foundation is YoungArts’ National Premier Partner. Support for the dance residency is provided by Jay Franke and David Herro; Hearst Foundations; Wells Fargo; the Miami-Dade County Tourist Development Council, Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, and the Miami-Dade County Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners; and the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

**About Jay Jackson**

Jay Jackson (Laganja Estranja), is a choreographer, drag queen and activist based in Los Angeles, CA. After earning her Bachelor of Fine Arts in dance and choreography from the California Institute of the Arts, Jay appeared as a contestant on LogoTV’s Season 6 of *RuPaul’s Drag Race*. Jackson’s choreography credits include commercial artists Miley Cyrus and Brooke Candy. In 2016 #LaganjasDanceSchool was founded, an international highheels masterclass and confidence workshop that has been held in dozens of cities across Europe, Central America, South America and the United States. Jackson also appeared as a contortionist alongside Christina Aguilera for the American Music Awards, in VICE’s *Bong Appetite*, and in Gareth Pugh’s fashion film *PITTI*.

**About the National YoungArts Foundation**

The National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts) was established in 1981 by Lin and Ted Arison to identify and nurture the most accomplished young artists in the visual, literary, design and performing arts, and assist them at critical junctures in their educational and professional development. Through a wide range of annual programs, regular performances, and partnerships with some of the nation’s leading cultural institutions, YoungArts aspires to create a strong community of alumni and a platform for a lifetime of encouragement, opportunity and support.

YoungArts’ signature program is an application-based award for emerging artists ages 15–18 or in grades 10–12 from across the United States. Selected through a blind adjudication process, YoungArts winners receive valuable support, including financial awards of up to $10,000, professional development and educational experiences working with renowned mentors—such as Debbie Allen, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Rebecca Walker, Plácido Domingo, Frank Gehry, Jeff Koons, Wynton Marsalis, Salman Rushdie and Carrie Mae Weems—and performance and exhibition opportunities at some of the nation’s leading cultural institutions, including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington, D.C.), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), The Museum of Modern Art (New York) and New World Center (Miami). Additionally, YoungArts winners are eligible for nomination as a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts, one of the nation’s highest honors for high school students who exemplify academic and artistic excellence.
YoungArts winners become part of a thousands-strong alumni network of artists, which offers them additional professional opportunities throughout their careers. YoungArts alumni who have gone on to become leading professionals in their fields include actresses Viola Davis, Anna Gunn, Zuzanna Szadkowski and Kerry Washington; Broadway stars Raúl Esparza, Billy Porter, Andrew Rannells and Tony Yazbeck; recording artists Josh Groban, Judith Hill and Chris Young; Metropolitan Opera star Eric Owens; musicians Terence Blanchard, Gerald Clayton, Jennifer Koh and Elizabeth Roe; choreographers Camille A. Brown and Desmond Richardson; visual artists Daniel Arsham and Hernan Bas; internationally acclaimed multimedia artist Doug Aitken; New York Times bestselling author Sam Lipsyte; and Academy Award winners Doug Blush and Tarell Alvin McCraney.

For more information, visit youngarts.org, Facebook or Twitter. To watch a brief video about YoungArts, click here.

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