

Press Release, 20 August

## PARK NIGHTS MALCOLM-X BETTS AND NILE HARRIS *TEMPORARY BOYFRIENDS*

Serpentine presents the UK premiere of Malcolm-x Betts and Nile Harris' latest collaboration for this year's Park Nights

At Serpentine Pavilion designed by Marina Tabassum

12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> September 2025, 8pm

Limited tickets, please register your interest [press@serpentinegalleries.org](mailto:press@serpentinegalleries.org)



Image: Malcolm-x Betts & Nile Harris, *Temporary Boyfriend*. Photo: Maria Baranova.



Serpentine is delighted to announce the UK premiere of *Temporary Boyfriend* for this year's Park Nights, hosted in the Serpentine Pavilion designed by Marina Tabassum on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> September 2025. *Temporary Boyfriend* will explore the nuanced poetics of Malcolm-x Betts' and Nile Harris' longstanding collaboration.

*Temporary Boyfriend* draws from past performances in each other's works, including *Niggas at Sundown* at New York Live Arts and *this house is not a home* at Abrons Arts Center. Harris and Betts render the friction and intrigue at the pith of their connection in this improvisatory duet. As the pair traverses the architecture of Marina Tabassum's 2025 Serpentine Pavilion, they journey across various touchpoints of relationality between Black gay men. From the kinship of ancestors lost to the AIDS epidemic, to contemporary manifestations of ephemeral gay brotherhood, *Temporary Boyfriend* is an intimate portrait of the aesthetics of proximity and estrangement.

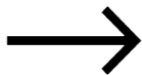
With live musical accompaniment by GENG PTP and scenic and lighting design by Dyer Rhoads, *Temporary Boyfriend* offers a live meditation on the tension and tenderness that binds two bodies in constant negotiation.

Nile Harris is a performer and director of live art. He is the director of the New York-based theatre company Social Security. Core to his art is an interrogation of cultural histories and narratives that construct and enforce systems of power. Through performance, Harris creates immersive experiences that use the body on stage to manipulate one's relationship to time and self-perception. *Temporary Boyfriend* is Harris' first international performance.

Malcolm-x Betts is a New York-based visual and dance artist who believes that art is a transformative vehicle that brings people and communities together. His artistic practice is rooted in investigating embodiment for liberation, Black imagination, and the direct engagement with challenges imposed on the physical body. He is the resident curator at Judson Memorial Church and the founder of curatorial platform 'Black Aesthetics', which is dedicated to enabling artistic freedom and making art accessible to all.

The piece was co-commissioned by the Chocolate Factory Theater, Pink Fang and the Under the Radar Festival.

Since 2002, Park Nights has presented new works across art, music, film, theatre, dance, literature, philosophy, fashion, and technology. Each year's commissions respond to the Pavilion and offer audiences unique ways to experience architecture and performance.



The programme has supported many artists in the early stages of their careers, as well as pioneering writers and thinkers from around the world.

Previous programming has featured artists Etel Adnan, Eun-Me Ahn and Company, Eleanor Antin, BAMBII, Tosh Basco, Meriem Bennani, Black Quantum Futurism, Ann Boyer, Don Mee Choi, Shawanda Corbett, Rhea Dillon, John Glacier, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Joseph Grigely, Dorothy Iannone, Arthur Jafa, Klein, Alexander Kluge, Linton Kwesi-Johnson, Lina Lapelyte, Mica Levi, Carrie Mae Weems, Roscoe Mitchell, Oscar Murillo, Jota Mombaca, Fred Moten together with Eileen Myles, Precious Okoyomon, Christelle Oyiri, Sondra Perry, Adam Phillips, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Josiane M.H. Pozi, Pedro Reyes, Denise Riley, Standing on the Corner Art Ensemble, TELFAR, Leslie Thornton, Wolfgang Tillmans, The Living and The Dead Ensemble, aga ujma, Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro, Kamasi Washington, Ai Weiwei, among many others.

The Serpentine Pavilion 2025 is designed by Bangladeshi architect and educator Marina Tabassum and her firm Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA). *A Capsule in Time* marks the 25<sup>th</sup> year of this pioneering commission and continues Dame Zaha Hadid's ethos of pushing the boundaries of architecture. Her mantra "There should be no end to experimentation", is the foundation in which this commission is built upon and Tabassum's Pavilion exemplifies this.

### **Notes to Editors**

Credits: Curated by Claude Adjil, Curator at Large, with Liz Stumpf, Assistant Curator, and produced by Isobel Peyton Jones.

### **About Nile Harris**

Nile Harris is a performer and director of live art. Often using improvisation, his collaborative practice humorously and critically unravels the systems of power and authority within societal and institutional frameworks. He is a collaborating artist with the Wooster Group, a Resident Artist at Pink Fang, and the director of his NY-based theatre company Social Security. He's currently touring his recent play *this house is not a home* featuring performance artist Crackhead Barney and dancer Malcolm-x Betts to the Walker Arts Center. Harris performances have been presented at BOFFO Performance Festival (2025), Performance Space New York (2025), The Chocolate Factory Theater (2025), The Shed (2024), Abrons Arts Center (2024), Under the Radar Festival (2024), amongst others.



### About Malcolm-x Betts

Malcolm-x Betts is a New York-based visual and dance artist who believes that art is a transformative vehicle that brings people and communities together. His artistic practice is rooted in investigating embodiment for liberation, Black imagination, and the direct engagement with challenges imposed on the physical body. He is the resident curator at Judson Memorial Church and the founder of curatorial platform 'Black Aesthetics', which is dedicated to enabling artistic freedom and making art accessible to all. As a dancer, he has performed in works by Snoogybox (Andy Kobilka), Nile Harris, Moriah Evans, and Alex Romania. His choreographic work has been presented and supported by venues including New York Live Arts, Movement Research, La MaMa Umbria, and Judson Commons, amongst others.

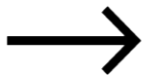
### About Serpentine

Building new connections between artists and audiences, Serpentine presents pioneering contemporary art exhibitions and cultural events with a legacy that stretches back over half a century, from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists, writers, scientists, thinkers, and cultural thought leaders of our time.

Based in London's Kensington Gardens, across two sites, Serpentine North and Serpentine South, Serpentine features a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, architectural showcases, education, live events, and technological activations, in the park and beyond the gallery walls.

The Serpentine Pavilion is a yearly pioneering commission, which began in 2000 with Dame Zaha Hadid. It features the first UK structures by some of the biggest names in international architecture.

Public art has emerged as a central strand of Serpentine's programme. Major presentations include a collection of Eduardo Paolozzi's sculptures (1987), Anish Kapoor's *Turning the World Upside Down* (2010), Lee Ufan's *Relatum – Stage* (2018-19), Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *London Mastaba* in the Serpentine Lake (2018), *I LOVE YOU EARTH* by Yoko Ono (2021), Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's *In remembrance of the coming alien (Alienor)* (2022), Atta Kwami's *Dzidzɔ kple amenuveve (Joy and Grace)* (2021-22), Gerhard Richter's *STRIP-TOWER* (2023), Yayoi Kusama's *Pumpkin* (2024) and Esther Mahlangu's mural *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (2024).



Proud to maintain free access for all visitors, Serpentine reaches an exceptionally broad audience and maintains a profound connection with its local community.

**For more information, please contact:**

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