

"A lot of imagination and a gift for simple, but striking visual effects."
— *The New York Times*

DELIRIOUS DANCES / EDISA WEEKS

THREE RITES:

*Life Liberty
Happiness*



The United States Declaration of Independence states that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are the unalienable rights which have been given to all human beings by their creator and for which governments are created to protect.

THREE RITES is a six-hour interdisciplinary interactive experience by **DELIRIOUS Dances/Edisa Weeks**, that integrates live music, dance, text and two visual installations to examine how America has protected, promoted and pursued life, liberty and happiness, and how these rights manifest in the body. The individual performance rituals (rites) can be performed separately or all together. The full work will premiere in Brooklyn, NY in fall 2021.

Founded by multi-disciplinary artist Edisa Weeks, DELIRIOUS Dances seeks to erase the barriers between art and life, between performance space and audience space, and between mediums. We are interested in finding ways for the audience to interact with and influence the experience of a work. We believe that art revitalizes the everyday to reveal something new about ourselves, and the revelation is an energy, a spark that has the power to change the world.



THREE RITES: *Life*

LIFE is a durational performance installation commenting on what is the purpose of life. It questions America's dependency on oil and coal, and seeks to find a way of working and living that is community-centric, ecologically balanced, embraces diversity and emphasizes being stewards of and living in harmony with nature. On one side of the room, four people whose eyes are sealed shut, repetitively and blindly either wrap black plastic bags with thread to create "stones" which carpet the floor; or decapitate sunflowers and attach found objects to the stalk to create new "flowers". At the completion of each flower the person performs a ritual dance.

On the other side of the room, the outlines of a mural is drawn on the walls. The mural depicts images in nature, alongside writings by environmental activists Vandana Shiva, Buckminster Fuller, Ralph Emerson, as well as Inuit proverbs.

The audience is invited to participate in coloring the mural with chalk and to participate in creative reuse workshops for kids and adults. When the performance is not happening, the audience can engage in discussions with experts in the field on the pros and cons of alternative energy resources, and the Buen Vivir movement which advocates that a nation's success should be determined, not be the Gross Domestic Product, but by the quality of life of its citizens.



THREE RITES: *liberty*

LIBERTY is an interactive installation comprising of one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five roots, representing the year that legalized chattel slavery ended in America. The roots are made of paper and twine and dangle from the ceiling to the floor. The audience physically separates and moves through the roots to find open spaces containing reflections on liberty including:

- Printed portraits of whistle blowers Edward Snowden, Marsha Coleman-Adebayo, Chelsea Manning and others
- A wall of TV monitors with video of civic protests in America
- Art work by local school(s). Student artists create works of art connecting to a topic relating to liberty in America. The art work encourages students to examine who, how, and where they are living in America, how the ideals of liberty are or are not being upheld, and emphasizes building community and civic engagement through critical thinking and creativity.

The *Liberty* installation includes a performance by Edisa Weeks where she is connected like a puppet to objects that have informed the Black experience in America (a bible, black dildo, blonde wig, light bulb, gun, watermelon). Alternating between white face, black face, visceral ritual dance and storytelling, the work examines the pathologizing of African-Americans and how the ideals of liberty are upheld in America.

WATCH

Work-in-progress showing of THREE RITES: Liberty at BRIC Lab Residency, October 2017
<https://vimeo.com/240444496>

READ

“Notes In Alchemy From Moving Arts Lab, Thinking Dance,” by Janna Meiring, February 7, 2017
<http://thinkingdance.net/articles/2017/02/09/Notes-in-Alchemy-from-Moving-Arts-Lab>

BRIC Lab | Brooklyn, NY
photos: Julie Lemberger



THREE RITES: *happiness*

HAPPINESS investigates how laughter, pleasure and contentment reside in the body. The audience is invited to participate in a series of interactive events, and come together for a collective celebration of catharsis, uplift and joy. It features four dancers and commissioned music by **Nathaniel Braddock**, played live by the **Occidental Brothers Dance Band International**. The Occidental Brothers sound is a combination of American Folk, Soukous, Highlife, Dry Guitar and Rumba music.

The event begins with the **Happiness Fête** where the audience can pamper their senses and spirits by:

- Having their hair embellished by Delirious Hair Designs
- Receiving a massage
- Having their portrait drawn
- Learning a line dance
- Sharing a meal family style and more

The Happiness Fête is followed by laughtercises and a dance performance that culminates in a dance party with the audience, a ritual skewering of unhappiness, and a bonfire (weather and location permitting).

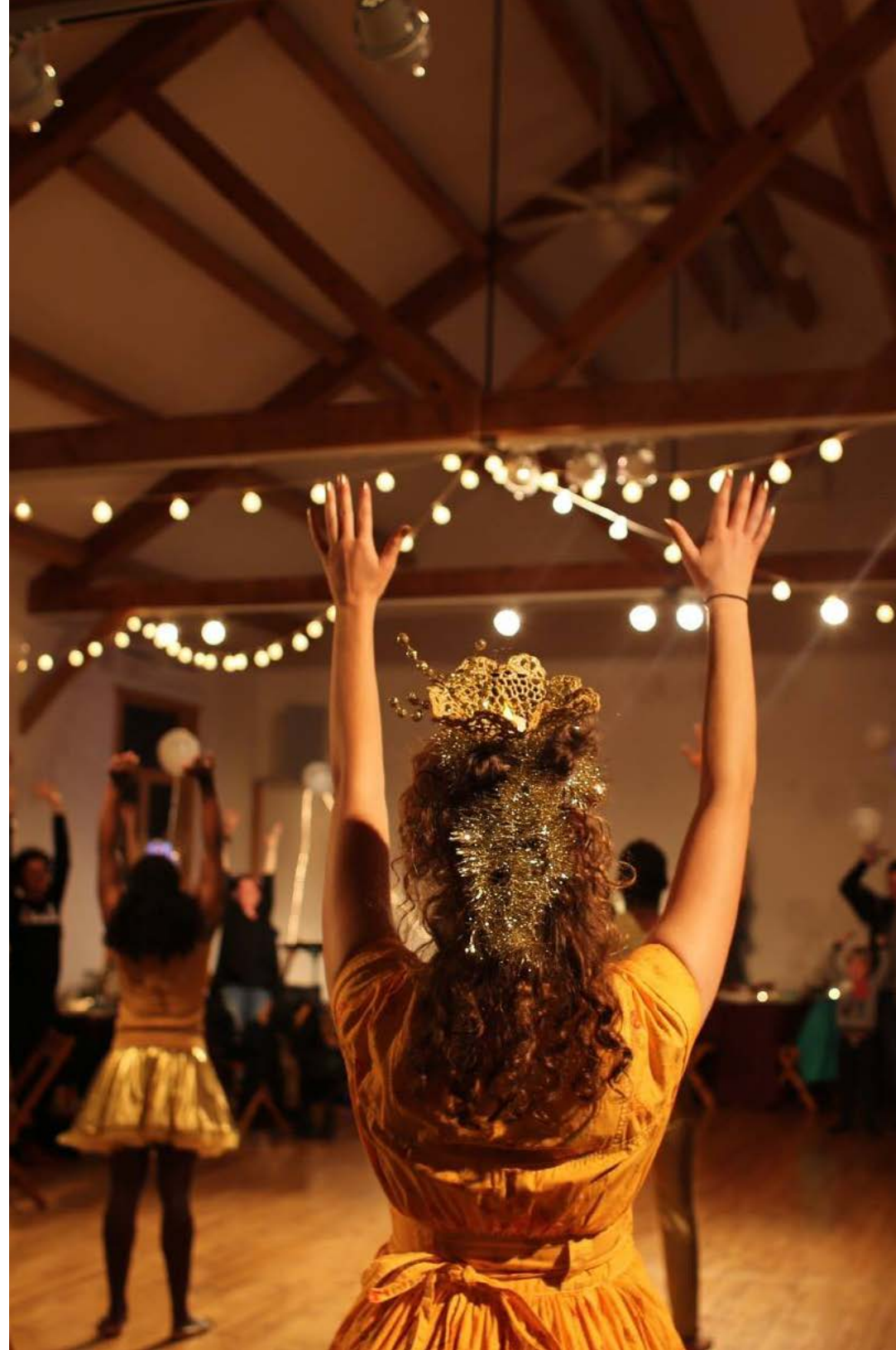
WATCH

Work-in-progress showing of *THREE RITES*:

Happiness at Mount Tremper Arts, 2018 <https://vimeo.com/314176763>

time-lapse video of a Delirious Hair Design during the Chashama Gala, June 2018

<https://www.facebook.com/DeliriousDances/videos/1000871173371304/>



ROOTS PARTY

A **Roots Party** is an interactive making and conversation space, where people are invited to join multi-disciplinary artist Edisa Weeks in her journey of making 1,865 roots out of paper and twine. 1865 represents the year that legalized chattel slavery ended in America. The roots are part of the performance installation, **THREE RITES: Liberty**, and will dangle from the ceiling to the floor to create an environment that the audience separates and moves through, to find open spaces containing reflections on liberty.

A Roots Party takes place over several hours, during which people can participate in making roots, enjoy local food, and engage in conversations about a topic relating to liberty, led by thinkers, practitioners and community members. The Roots Parties emphasize engaging people in a shared dialogue about how liberty is protected, promoted and accessed in their community and America at large. The Roots Parties started from a desire to understand why the US Declaration of Independence guaranteed liberty as an inalienable right, and how America is living up to that guarantee.

Conversation topics include:

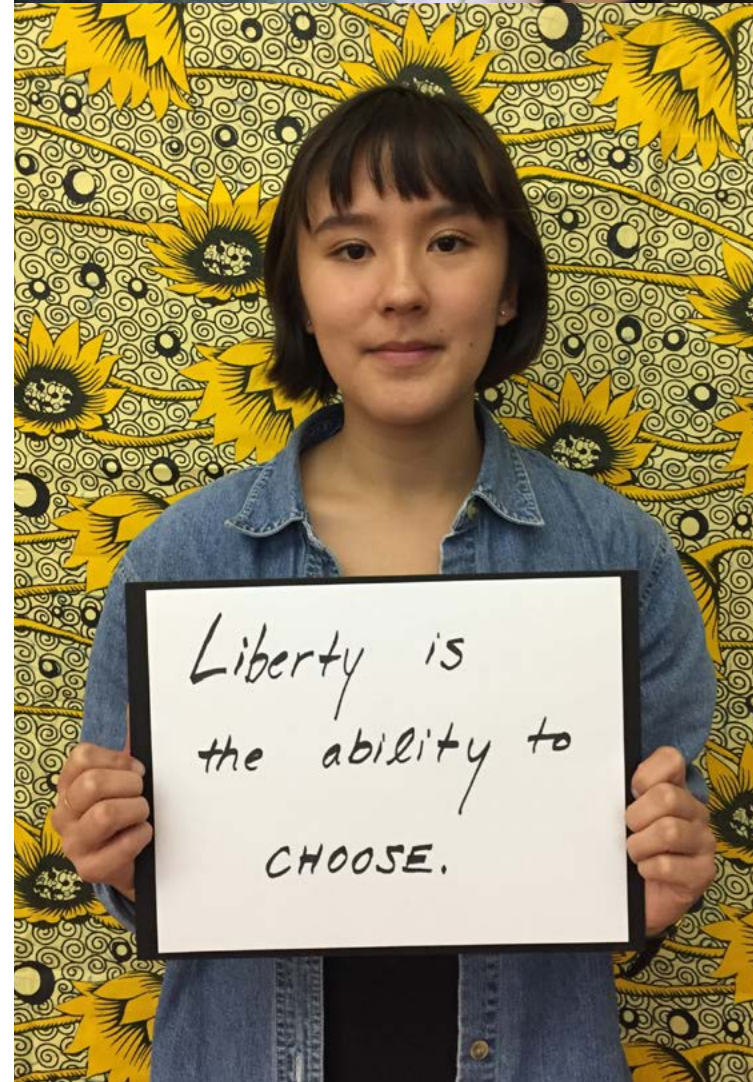
- Closing Rikers: Mass Incarceration and Prison Reform
- Legalizing Marijuana
- What's In Our Hands: Financial Empowerment and Responsibility /supporting local businesses and credit unions
- Embracing Joy: Tapping into childhood play, laughter and joy as radical acts of liberty, resistance and wellness
- America's immigration policies and birthright citizenship

WATCH

Chadwick Creative – Roots Party: An Evening with Edisa Weeks (Soul Bytes Episode 3)
<https://vimeo.com/264621974>

READ

"Roots and Rites: Conceptual choreographer Edisa Weeks '87 prepares for perhaps her most ambitious, provocative work yet," by Tim Murphy, Brown Alumni Magazine, September/October 2018
<https://www.brownalumnimagazine.com/articles/2018-09-05/roots-and-rites>



ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Julie Lemberger



Kate Joyce

EDISA WEEKS (Choreographer, Educator, Maker) creates multimedia interdisciplinary work, that merges theater with dance to explore our deepest desires, darkest fears and sweetest dreams. She grew up in Uganda, Papua New Guinea and Brooklyn, NY. She has a BA from Brown University, and received a full fellowship to attend New York University's Tisch School of the Arts where she obtained an MFA in choreography. She has had the pleasure of performing with Annie-B Parsons Big Dance Theater, Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Co., Dance Brazil, Jane Comfort, Jon Kinzel, Muna Tseng, Reggie Wilson Fist & Heel Performance Group, Sally Silvers, Spencer/Colton Dance, among others. She is a member of the Skeleton Architecture collective, and an Associate Professor of Dance at Queens College where she teaches modern dance technique, improvisation, choreography and mentors emerging artists.

NATHANIEL BRADDOCK (Composer) is the leader of Occidental Brothers Dance Band Int'l, Air Congo, and Trio Mokili, and was a ten-year faculty member of Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music. Braddock has performed extensively with African artists from Mali, Ghana, Zambia, and Congo, and with many American and Australian indie rock bands. His instrumental solo guitar and mandolin sets feature the crossroads of African roots music and American primitive guitar, with original compositions that extend into modern harmonies and rhythms with the complexity of chamber music. He is currently pursuing a graduate degree in Ethnomusicology at Tufts University.

RESIDENCIES

THREE RITES has received the following creative and development support:

- 2020 | **Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography Residency**
THREE RITES: Liberty
- 2016-2020 | **Restoration ART Choreoquest Residency**
THREE RITES: Life, Liberty, Happiness
- 2019 | **Hobart and William Smith College**
THREE RITES: Life, Liberty
- 2019 | **Topaz NYS Dance Force Residency**
THREE RITES: Life
- 2019 | **Mabou Mines SUITE/Space Residency**
THREE RITES: Liberty
- 2018 - 2019 | **Mount Tremper Arts Watershed Laboratory Residency**
THREE RITES: Liberty, Happiness
- 2018 | **Gibney Dance Center** DiP residency
THREE RITES: Happiness
- 2017 | **BRIC Lab** residency
THREE RITES: Liberty
- 2015 | **Snug Harbor Cultural Center**
THREE RITES: Life, Liberty, Happiness
- 2015 | **Materials for the Arts**
THREE RITES: Life, Liberty, Happiness

AWARDS

- *New Music USA*
- *New York State Council on the Arts*
- *THREE RITES* is a National Performance Network/Visual Artists Network (NPN/VAN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by 651 ARTS in partnership with Mount Tremper Arts, RestorationART, and NPN/VAN.

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