

Crossing

The Line

Festival

**SOMEWHERE  
AT THE BEGINNING**  
**Germaine Acogny  
& Mikaël Serre**  
Presented as part of  
**BRIDGING**

US Premiere

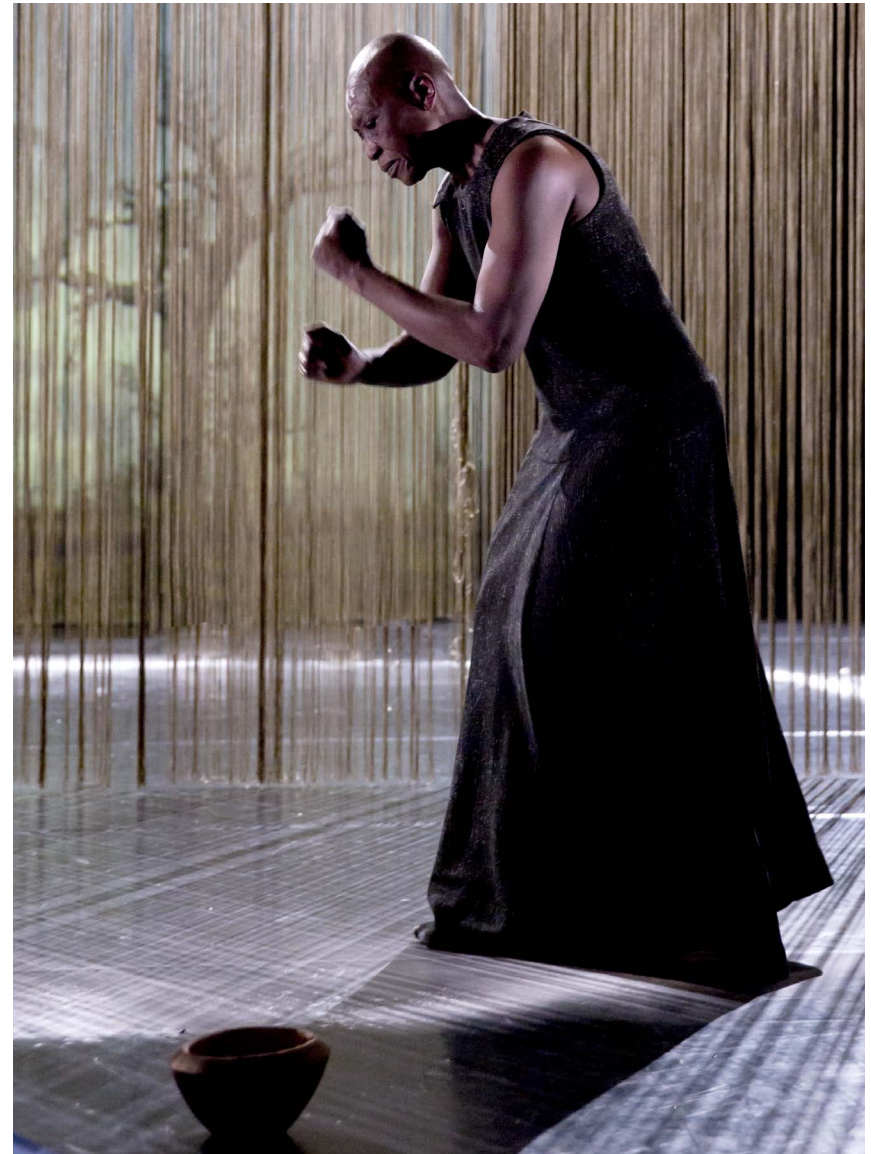
Thursday, September 26

Friday, September 27

Saturday, September 28

La MaMa

Ellen Stewart Theatre



Germaine Acogny in *SOMEWHERE AT THE BEGINNING* © Thomas Dorn

fi:af

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LA MAMA  
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE CLUB

## ABOUT LA MAMA

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La MaMa is dedicated to the artist and all aspects of the theatre. La MaMa's vision of nurturing new artists and new work remains as strong today as it was when Ellen Stewart first opened the doors in 1961. La MaMa has presented more than 5,000 productions by 150,000 artists of all nations, cultures, races and identities. Cultural pluralism and ethnic diversity are inherent in the work created on our stages. Here, artists find a supportive environment for artistic exploration, and audiences are part of the development of an artist's work over time. A recipient of the 2018 Regional Theater Tony Award, and more than 30 Obie Awards and dozens of Drama Desk, Bessie, and Villager Awards, La MaMa has been a creative home for thousands of artists, many of whom have made lasting contributions to the arts.

**LA MAMA**  
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE CLUB

## ABOUT FIAF

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The French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF) is New York's premier French cultural and language center. FIAF's mission is to create and offer New Yorkers innovative and unique programs in education and the arts that explore the evolving diversity and richness of French cultures. FIAF seeks to generate new ideas and promote cross cultural dialogue through partnerships and new platforms of expression. More information is at [fiaf.org](http://fiaf.org).

## ABOUT BRIDGING

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For the 4th edition of BRIDGING, the French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF) and The Edmond de Rothschild Foundations are proud to present a series of events highlighting the artistic practices and legacy of dancer, choreographer, and educator Germaine Acogny.

BRIDGING: An International Dialogue on Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts was launched by the French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF) and The Edmond de Rothschild Foundations as part of *Crossing the Line Festival* 2016. BRIDGING offers international perspectives to evaluate policies and practices in an effort to move beyond simple acknowledgement of cultural diversity to achieve genuine equity in the arts in our shifting cultural landscape.

## ABOUT CROSSING THE LINE FESTIVAL

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*Crossing the Line* is a citywide festival that brings together international artists and New York City audiences in engaging and diverse interdisciplinary works that give new perspectives on our changing world. *Crossing the Line* is produced by the French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF) in partnership with leading cultural institutions, which this year include The Invisible Dog Art Center, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, Theatre for a New Audience, La MaMa, and ISSUE Project Room. This year's edition of the festival is curated by FIAF Artistic Director, Courtney Geraghty.

## ABOUT SOMEWHERE AT THE BEGINNING

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Germaine Acogny, the "Mother of Contemporary African Dance," presents the US premiere of her powerhouse solo, *SOMEWHERE AT THE BEGINNING*. Co-created and directed by Mikaël Serre, this unflinching and brave work traces African history interwoven with her own life narrative.

Founder and director of the renowned École des Sables in Senegal, Acogny, who is now in her 70s, has shaped a new generation of dancers and choreographers in Africa. As part of BRIDGING, she will teach a workshop with students of dance at NYU Tisch School of the Arts.

*SOMEWHERE AT THE BEGINNING* is presented as part of BRIDGING: An International Dialogue on Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts, an initiative co-developed and supported by the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations in collaboration with FIAF.



*SOMEWHERE AT THE BEGINNING* is supported by FUSED (French US Exchange in Dance), a program developed by FACE Foundation and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States with the support of the Florence Gould Foundation, The Ford Foundation, Institut français-Paris, The French Ministry of Culture, and private donors.



## CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

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Concept & Direction  
**Mikaël Serre**

Choreography  
**Germaine Acogny**

Assistant Choreographer  
**Patrick Acogny**

Set Design  
**Maciej Fiszer**

Costumes  
**Johanna Diakhate-Rittmeyer**

Music  
**Fabrice Bouillon "LaForest"**

Video  
**Sébastien Dupouey**

Lighting Design  
**Sébastien Michaud**

Technical Direction  
**Marco Wehrspann**

Text by  
**Togoun Servais Acogny, Alopho, Germaine Acogny, and Euripides** (Medea), adapted for the stage by **Mikaël Serre**

Production  
**JANT-BI, Senegal**

Co-Production  
Les Théâtres de la Ville du Luxembourg;  
Théâtre de la Ville, Paris; Institut français-Paris

Residency and Co-production  
La Ferme du Buisson, scène nationale  
de Marne-la-Vallée  
Residency  
Le Centquatre, Paris

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As a not-for-profit organization, FIAF depends upon charitable donations from the French and American communities. FIAF is deeply grateful to the following generous supporters of its 2018–2019 season.  
Reflects donations made from July 2018–June 2019.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

### Germaine Acogny

Senegalese and French, Germaine Acogny has developed her own Modern African Dance technique and is widely considered the “Mother of Contemporary African Dance”. For more than five decades she has been an emissary of African dance and culture, performing, choreographing, and teaching all over the world. From 1977 to 1982, she was artistic director of Mudra Afrique, created by Maurice Béjart and the Senegalese President L.S. Senghor in Dakar. In 1997, Acogny was appointed artistic director of the Dance of Africa in Creation section in Paris. With her husband Helmut Vogt, she founded in 1996 the École des Sables, the International Center for Traditional and Contemporary African Dances, based in Senegal. She has received two Bessie Awards: Japanese choreographer Kota Yamazaki and Acogny won for their joint creation *Fagaala*, and in 2018 she was recognized for the performance of her solo *Mon élue noire (My Black Chosen One): Sacre #2*. Acogny is a Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite, Officier et Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, and Officier de l'Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur of the French Republic. She is also a Knight of the National Order of the Lion and Officer and Commander of Arts and Letters of the Senegalese Republic.

### Mikaël Serre

French-German director, actor, performer, and translator Mikaël Serre trained at the Beaux-Arts de Saint-Étienne before beginning his career as a photographer and graphic designer. He trained in Russia as a director before joining the Ecole Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris. As an artist associated with the Ferme du Buisson and then at La Rose des Vents, he created his first productions by choosing texts by contemporary authors or a set script. Transcending borders, his work has developed internationally thanks to cross-fertilization with various partners and artistic collaborators around the world, including in France, Germany, Switzerland, Senegal, and Italy. His directorial work has been featured at venues such as the Théâtre National de Chaillot, Théâtre de la Bastille, and Opéra de Dijon, and he has been invited to numerous festivals including the Theater Pina Bausch, FIND Festival at Berlin's Schaubühne, and the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin. Recent works include *SOMEWHERE AT THE BEGINNING* (2015) with Germaine Acogny; *Song of Solomon* (2016), *The Tales of Hoffmann* (2017), *Trois Ombres* (2018) and *La Bohème* (2019). In 2020, he will direct *The Robbers* by F. Schiller, and a new creation, *Offenbach Report*, at the Opéra National de Lorraine à Nancy.

## COMING UP AT FIAF MORE CROSSING THE LINE FESTIVAL

### When Birds Refused to Fly Olivier Tarpaga

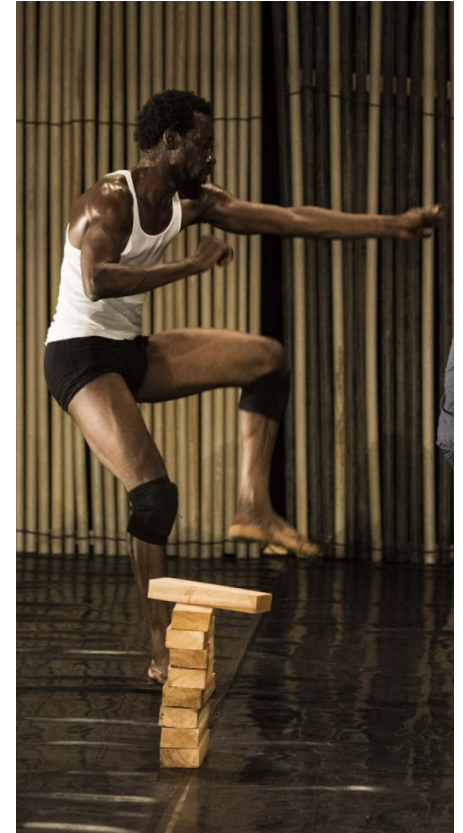
**Dance**  
NY Premiere

Thu, Oct 10  
at 7:30pm  
FIAF Florence Gould Hall

*“Steeped in social relevance.”*  
— *The Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, 2011

Award-winning musician, dancer, and choreographer Olivier Tarpaga makes his highly-anticipated *Crossing the Line* debut with the New York premiere of his joyful and deeply personal work, *When Birds Refused to Fly*. Set to a powerful soundtrack by Tarpaga's father's band, Super Volta—combining traditional sounds from Burkina Faso and driving contemporary rhythms—the piece compares the hope of independence movements across Sub-Saharan Africa in the 60s to the painful fight for Civil Rights in the United States.

Tickets and info at  
[crossingthelinefestival.org](http://crossingthelinefestival.org)



*When Birds Refused to Fly* © Géry Barbot