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RESIDENCY WEBSITE: go.wisc.edu/barbata

UW-Madison Arts Institute’s Interdisciplinary Artist in Residence, Laura Anderson Barbata, to Teach “Community Arts Practice” and to Collaborate with Community Groups During the Spring to Create a Celebratory Procession, “Strut!” on May 2, 2015

MADISON, WI — The University of Wisconsin-Madison Arts Institute and the Design Studies Department welcome Laura Anderson Barbata as artist in residence for the spring 2015 semester. Since 1999, the Arts Institute’s Interdisciplinary Arts Residency Program has brought innovative artists to campus to teach semester-long, interdepartmental courses and to publicly present their work for campus and community audiences.

Transdisciplinary social artist Laura Anderson Barbata (member of the National System of Artists, Mexico) creates public art performances that speak to special issues through blending art, dance, music, and design. The roots of her work come from stilt dancing/walking traditions in the Caribbean, Mexico, West Africa, and evolving groups in Brooklyn. She has created projects with indigenous people in Mexico and South America. Her work is included in various private and public collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City, and the Landesbank Baden-Württemberg in Stuttgart. (Full artist bio below.)

While in residence, Barbata will teach a course called “Community Arts Practice,” which will culminate in a public procession, “Strut!” on Saturday, May 2. In the course, students will learn to facilitate collaboration with community organizations, other UW-Madison students, and members of the public. Strut! will be a celebratory procession in downtown Madison showcasing the unique expressions and collaborations of community and campus groups. The Brooklyn Jumbies, stilt walkers, will also participate in Strut!

In addition to Strut!, there are a number of other public events associated with this residency. On Wednesday evenings from January 21-March 25, there will be Weekly Community Conversations. Each week, two or more participating speakers and/or groups will share their work...
with the public and with each other. Presenters will include dancers, musicians, spoken word artists, visual artists, stilt walkers, educators, activists, and community and cultural leaders from campus and beyond.

The Brooklyn Jumbies will be in Madison from **Wednesday, February 25 to Saturday, February 28**. In addition to sharing their work in the Weekly Community Conversations, they will also teach a public stilt walking workshop and perform in *Moonshine*, a festive performance that takes place every February during Black History Month. The **Brooklyn Jumbies** perform numerous cultural elements of the African Diaspora including stilt walking, folk/traditional African drum and dance, fire breathing, limbo dancing, and much more. They have partnered with Barbata numerous times. (Schedule below.)

Laura Anderson Barbata will also discuss her own work in several talks during the semester. She will give a talk, ”On Collaboration and Identity,” as part of the 2015 Public Humanities Seminar Series, presented on **Tuesday, February 17** by the UW–Madison Center for the Humanities. Barbata will also discuss her artistic work in the context of her personal biography at a UW MANIAC event on **Tuesday, March 3** and at the Dance Department’s Friday Forum on **March 13** (details on [go.wisc.edu/barbata](http://go.wisc.edu/barbata)).

Laura Anderson Barbata’s residency is organized by the University of Wisconsin-Madison **Arts Institute** and is hosted by the **Design Studies Department** and cosponsored by the **Dance Department**; the **Art Department**; the **Department of Theatre and Drama**; the **Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies Program (LACIS)**; and the **Ruth Davis Design Gallery**, which hosted an exhibition by Laura Anderson Barbata called *Transcommunality* from September 19 to November 21, 2014. The Edgewood College Gallery is a community partner. The Art Institute’s Interdisciplinary Arts Residency Program is made possible by funding from the UW-Madison **Provost’s Office**.

**Spring 2015 Laura Anderson Barbata Residency Public Events**

For more detailed information including locations, additional events, schedule, and information on speakers and organizations’ websites - visit:
[go.wisc.edu/barbata](http://go.wisc.edu/barbata) (public events)

**Weekly Community Conversations**

**Wednesdays, January 21-March 25, 2015 | 6:30-8:00pm**

Location: Varies (see above link for details)

Each week, two or more participating speakers and/or groups will share their work with the public and with each other. Descriptions of each speaker or community group is highlighted and includes links to their work and/or biographies on the public events section of the residency website.
ON COLLABORATION AND IDENTITY – Art in the Social Realm

Tuesday, February 17 | 4:00pm | University Club, Room 313 | 803 State St.

Learn more about Barbata’s work, her plans for the students, how all of Madison can become involved in the project, and how the arts can play a meaningful role in public discourse and bring about change. Presented by the UW-Madison Center for the Humanities as part of the 2015 Public Humanities Seminar Series.

Brooklyn Jumbies Visit

February 25-28, 2015 | Wednesday-Saturday
Location: Varies (visit: go.wisc.edu/barbata)
Community Conversation – Wednesday, February 25 | 6:30-8:00pm
Moonshine performance – Friday, February 27 | 3:30-5:00pm
Student & community stilt walking workshops –Saturday, February 28 | 10:00am-12:00pm

Strut!

May 2, 2015 | Saturday
Location & Time | TBA
Strut! will be a celebratory procession showcasing the unique expressions and collaborations of community and campus groups and will also feature the Brooklyn Jumbies.

Biography – Laura Anderson Barbata

Born in Mexico City, Laura Anderson Barbata lives and works in Brooklyn and Mexico City, where she is Associate Professor at the Escuela Nacional de Pintura, Escultura y Grabado “La Esmeralda” of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes. She is also a member of the National System of Artists, Mexico.

Barbata creates public art performances that speak to special issues through blending art, dance, music, and design. The roots of her work come from stilt dancing/walking traditions in the Caribbean, Mexico, West Africa, and evolving groups in Brooklyn. She has created projects with indigenous people in Mexico and South America. Her work is included in various private and public collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City, and the Landesbank Baden-Württemberg in Stuttgart.

Barbata’s best known project, Transcommunality, was first conceived in 2002 in collaboration with the Dragon Keylemanjahro School of Arts and Culture in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. With the goal of providing free extracurricular activities to impoverished youth in its capital city, Port of Spain, the project focused on the revival of the art of traditional West African stilt walking known as moko jumbie. Moko is derived from a name of an African deity and jumbie is a West Indian word for ‘spirit’ or ‘ghost.’ The group that grew out of the project reinforces social ideals such as healthy life choices and respect for cultural heritage through carnival competitions, workshops, and outreach programs.
Since Barbata’s involvement, including designing and building costumes for the school’s carnival performance, the group has consistently won awards and gained greater recognition. The group has been the subject of two documentaries in Europe.

Barbata’s work was also featured recently in Madison during her Transcommunality exhibition at the Ruth Davis Design Gallery on the UW-Madison campus from September 19-November 21, 2014. Some of the work included costumes for stilt walkers, Oaxacan alejibres, and photos/videos of performers. The exhibition has traveled to Centro de las Artes de Nuevo Leon, Monterrey; Museo de la Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico; Museo Textile de Oaxaca, Mexico; and Bric House in Brooklyn, New York. The exhibition continues to travel throughout Europe. As a supplement to the exhibition, Turner Publishing published the book Laura Anderson Barbata: Transcommunality: Interventions and Collaborations in Stilt Dancing Communities in March 2013.

For more on Laura Anderson Barbata: www.lauraandersonbarbata.com

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**UW-Madison Arts Institute’s Interdisciplinary Arts Residency Program**

The Interdisciplinary Arts Residency Program, established in 1999, enables the Arts Institute to support extended residencies for the benefit of all arts departments and programs of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This program is interdepartmental and interdisciplinary. While in residence, artists teach an interdisciplinary course for university credit, present at least one free public event, and participate in community outreach activities. The program gives students exposure to working artists, provides course credit, and strengthens programmatic ties among individual departments, programs, and other campus and community arts entities. The program also provides opportunities for the community to meet and exchange ideas with world-renowned artists.

To learn more, please visit: www.artsinstitute.wisc.edu/iar.htm

**UW-Madison Arts Institute Overview - “The Voice of the Arts”**

As a division of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Arts Institute speaks for and on behalf of the collective voice and vision of the arts. We advance the arts as an invaluable resource to a vital university, and we promote all forms of artistic expression, experience, and interpretation as fundamental paths to engaging and understanding our world. The Institute’s programs and initiatives include, but are not limited to, the Interdisciplinary Arts Residency Program, Arts Outreach program – musical ensembles that travel around the state teaching and performing, the Madison Early Music Festival, the Wisconsin Film Festival, and the Arts on Campus website.

Arts Institute: www.artsinstitute.wisc.edu/ | Arts on Campus: www.arts.wisc.edu/

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