

MAY 1, 2013
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EMILY JOHNSON/CATALYST: *NIICUGNI*

When: June 8, 8pm & June 9, 6pm, 2013
Where: BodyVox Dance Center, 1201 NW 17th Ave, Portland, Oregon
Online: <http://pica.org/event/emily-johnsoncatalyst/>

Press Contact: Patrick Leonard, Communications Director
503.242.1419 x19, patrick@pica.org

Press Photos: <http://pica.org/about/press/emily-johnson-niicugni/>

Password: picapress2013

PICA is pleased to welcome back TBA:10 alum Emily Johnson to present her latest performance *Niicugni*, an interwoven project of sound, installation, stories, and dance, exploring the ways in which we literally embody our histories through our movements. *Niicugni* is presented as part of the second-annual PICA Symposium, *How Do You Mean? Culture in Translation*, June 7-9, 2013. For more details, please visit **pica.org**.

"I want to be on the land my ancestors dug into, pulled from, rose up from - and fell into. I want to be on this land, listening, and I also want to let the land be."

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In the Yup'ik language, "niicugni" is a directive to pay attention, to listen. Emily Johnson's performance quietly compels such attentiveness through its layering of multiple dances, live music, and stories, housed within a light and sound installation of handmade, functional fish-skin lanterns. *Niicugni* asks, "Can we pay attention to the ways we do and do not listen to our bodies, histories, impulses, and environments?" The cells of our bodies are like the molecules that make up the land: repositories for the past, present, and future. Our bodies hold myth and truth, magic and evil, hope and death, laughter and monsters, as well as ancestral histories and cultural identities. In the moment of each performance, *Niicugni* wonders if we can recognize the importance of everyone in the room. Can we see ourselves as part of the whole? Can we absorb that everyone we see is here now and will be gone?

About Emily Johnson/Catalyst

Emily Johnson/Catalyst is the Minneapolis-based performance project company of Alaska-born choreographer Emily Johnson. Since 1998, Johnson has created dance works that function as installations, engaging audiences within an environment of multiple senses. Johnson received a 2012 Bessie (New York Dance and Performance) Award for Outstanding Production and has been a 2012 Headlands and MacDowell Artist in Residence, a 2011 Native Arts and Cultures Fellow, a 2009 McKnight Fellow, and a 2012, 2010, and 2009 MAP Fund Grant recipient. She has performed in Montreal, Russia, and across the US at venues including New York Live Arts, Walker Art Center, PS122, DiverseWorks, and The Que'Ana Bar in Clam Gulch, Alaska. Johnson is co-curator of THIS IS DISPLACEMENT, a visual art exhibit

featuring the work of forty-six artists from nineteen Tribal Nations, which toured from 2009 – 2011.

About Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA)

Since 1995, PICA has championed the practice of contemporary artists from around the world, driving vital conversations about the art and issues of today. PICA presents visual and performing artists and embraces those individuals who exist at the borders of mediums and ideas. Through artist residencies and exhibitions, lectures and workshops, and the annual Time-Based Art Festival, PICA constructs a broad platform for contemporary art.

The logo for PICA, consisting of the letters 'PICA' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, positioned above a horizontal yellow bar.

415 SW 10th AVENUE
(3rd FLOOR)
PORTLAND OREGON 97205
503 242 1419
pica.org