
Minty Fresh Circus update



March 2023

Minty Fresh Circus

Created by Monique Martin, Minty Fresh Circus is a US-based circus show performed by an all-Black cast, with a majority-Black creative team celebrating the healing power of Black music & movement, infused with the joy & resilience of those from the African diaspora. Structured in nine rituals via spectacular circus and dance skills, this all-ages show will be 70 minutes in length, touring with 7-9 acrobats and 2 staff/crew. Minty Fresh Circus will preview at the Apollo Theatre in NYC in fall of 2024. It will receive its world premiere in spring, 2025 at the venue to-be-announced.

Work-in-progress trailer: <https://tinyurl.com/22v5bbrr>

Core Creative Team

Monique Martin

Creator

Writer

Director

Adesola Osakalumi

Movement Director

Traci Bartlow

Dance Consultant

Soul Science

Co-founder Chen Lo

Co-founder Asante' Amin

Composer

Dr. Fredara Hadley

Music Consultant

Kim Cook

Dramaturg

Creative Consultant

Minty Fresh Circus is a journey through time and space, using circus and dance as the forms with which to explore themes of liberation when it exists only through the imagination. In past and future realities, bodies transmit codes of protection, adornment, healing, joy, and spiritual communion. Through Minty Fresh Circus we (re)discover music as medicine, find murmuration and flocking as survival, and summon oasis spaces through ritual. Minty Fresh takes us beyond struggle and below the surface to the places where Black joy takes practice born from blood and becomes birthed as power. A raucous, playful reimagination of circus and story through movement, visual design, and sound, Minty Fresh evokes and reflects the dignity, resilience, and transcendence of the Black American experience.



Sankofa is an African word from the Akan tribe in Ghana. The literal translation of the word and the symbol is “it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind.”



Overview

Expected Delivery:

Spring/Fall 2024 *preview* @ The Apollo Theater, New York City

Spring 2025 *world premiere*, venue TBA

Artistic Development Residencies to date supported by: [Lake Placid Center for the Arts](#), [The Samuels Foundation](#), [The Apollo Theater](#), [Factory International](#), UK (formally known as Manchester International Festival) and [La Grainerie](#), Toulouse, France

Overview continued

Artistic Development:

- February 2023: La Grainerie, Toulouse, France. Workshop and Research Residency
 - November 2022: Aircraft Circus London UK. Workshop and Research Residency
 - April 2022: Hi-ARTS New York, NY Workshop and Research Residency
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Overview continued

To-date, the creators have:

- Solidified the core creative team's collaborative approach.
- Established foundational movement vocabulary, central structural elements, show shape and flow.

Defined Artistic Structure

Themes:

- Liberation/Imagination
- Ritual
- Sovereignty
- Black Joy

Five Elements:

- Healing
- Protection
- Fun
- Adornment
- Spiritual Life

Foundational Movement:

- Murmuration
 - Dap
-

Opening Visual Landscape

Middle Passage as birth canal for a new identity:
subverted, vertical, cocoons, transformational...



Central Structure:

Five Elements

- Healing
- Protection
- Fun
- Adornment
- Spiritual Life

Nine Ritual Spaces

- Working with the five elements, we are creating nine expressions of “oasis spaces,” moments, and celebrations of Black American life, joy, and resilience as rituals.
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“oasis space”

*A fertile space serving as a refuge
to release and recalibrate from
labor.*

Healing methods:

Weightlessness

Vibration

Surrender

Empowerment

Singing/Vocalizing



Protective forms:

Ritual

Armour

Body Percussion as Drum

Marching/Stepping



Release of fun:

Rhythm

Beatbox

Heartbeat

Play



Adornment genres:

Masking

Beauty Salon/Barbershop

Creative individualism within community identity



Spiritual life:

Music/The Black Church

Nap Ministry

Breath

Visioning/Time Traveling



[Link to How I Got Over](#)
Mahalia Jackson



[Link to “Resting on and For the Earth”](#)

Weaving the Story



DAP, Dignity and Pride, The Body Holds the Code



Murmuration, Finding our Way Together, Safety

Conceptual & Cultural References:

Sankofa

Hula Hoop

Jook Joint/Lindy Hop

Underground Railroad

Double Dutch

Hush Harbors/Oasis Spaces

Ritual

Hand Games

Cypher

Afrofuturism

Ham Bone

Soul Train Line

Non-linear Time

Body Percussion

Hush Arbor

Great Northern

Preening

Maroonage

Migration

Beatboxing

Clowning

Gulla Stick Pounding

Cultural Identity and Archetypal References:

[Harriet Tubman](#)

[Moms Mabley](#)

[ODB](#)

[Nat Turner](#)

[Williams & Walker, Co](#)

[Flavor Flav](#)

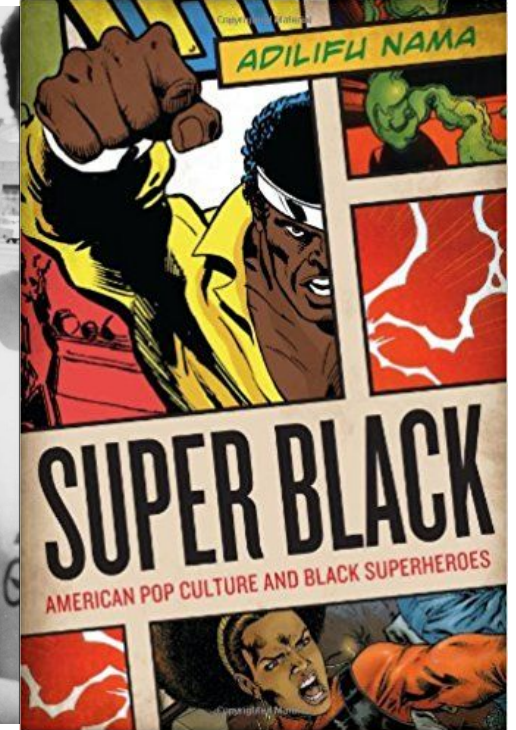
[Angela Davis](#)

[Flip Wilson](#)

[Janelle Monáe](#)

[Little Richard](#)

Visual Iconography & Historical References:



Visual Iconography & Historical References:



Audience Experience and Interactive Devices:

Call and Response

Joy as Transgressive

Imagination as Portal

Music as Narrator

Liberation as Agency

Fun as Love Amplifier



Core Creative Team
Residency Retreats

Casting & New York
Residency for Show
Development with the
Apollo Theater

Show Premieres



Core Creative Team
retreat; Secure Design
Team; Begin Creative
Design Retreats

Workshop the Show

Design & Additional Creative Team will include:

Sound Design

Composer

Lighting Design

Projection Mapping

Video Animation

Movement Direction

Movement Consultant

Archival Image Researcher

Illustration

Costume Design

Cast:

Minimum seven performers on stage.

Techniques utilized:

Acrobatics

Dance

Aerial (Cord Lisée & Straps)

Clowning

Stilt Walking

Juggling, object manipulation

Chinese Pole

Development & Administration:

Producing Management & Representation:

Laura Colby, President

Elsie Management



Currently Seeking

1. Supported residencies
 2. Co-commissioning partners to fund the creation of Minty Fresh Circus
 3. Presenting partners to present Minty Fresh Circus in the 24/25 season and beyond
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Something about Black exile, about Black refusal, gestures at a generosity stranger than 'truth' can accommodate; it gestures at how things spill away from neat lines and steady identities; it gestures at the drunken, creolized promiscuity of 'reality itself'.

Black exile distrusts straight lines and loves zigzagging cartographies, meandering stories that do not care much for some Cartesian notion of a fixed truth. Black exile loves death and ghosts, moonlit dalliances, subterranean experiments, hybrid bodies, bacchanal aesthetics, perverse mixtures and spillages, monsters with phallic horns sprouting from their heads, grandmother concoctions, and stories of a promiscuous 'world' that won't stay still long enough for us to paint its portrait. For Black exile, facts vibrate at the speed of mystery.

Bayo Akomolafe

Music is our witness, and our ally. The beat is the confession which recognizes, changes and conquers time. Then, history becomes a garment we can wear and share, and not a cloak in which to hide; and time becomes a friend. - James Baldwin

