

# press release

THE KITCHEN

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## **ISHMAEL HOUSTON-JONES / FRED HOLLAND COWBOYS, DREAMS, & LADDERS**

February 23-26, 1984, 8:30 P.M.

\$6.00/\$4.50 members/TDF + \$2.50

The Kitchen

Reservations: 925-3615

On February 23-26, 1984 The Kitchen will present COWBOYS, DREAMS, AND LADDERS, the latest collaborative work of dancer/choreographer Ishmael Houston-Jones and dancer/visual artist Fred Holland. The piece takes place in a visual landscape created by Fred Holland to evoke the expansiveness of the West. To create this landscape, Holland has borrowed from childhood dreams and memories, as well as from real and fictitious images of the West. The innocent world in which cowboys were "guitar drumming heroes" is in contrast with the modern world in which neither safety nor heroes exist. It will depict the world "after the Flood", where tables float in mid-air, shattered glass appears everywhere, and ladders lead downward to nowhere. In the context of a visual narrative that suggests both safety and danger, Houston-Jones/Holland will use stories, music, personal history, and movement to express the mood of a "Black West in the East Village". A large part of the movement of COWBOYS, DREAMS, AND LADDERS results from Houston-Jones' and Holland's ongoing improvisational process which began in 1976.

ISHMAEL HOUSTON-JONES was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1951, the only child of a barber (he) and a payroll auditor (she). Upon moving to Philadelphia in 1972, he joined with Jeff Cain and Terry Fox to form A Way of Improvising. While in Philadelphia, he was also a member of Group Motion Media Theatre, Two Men Dancing, and the Philadelphia Contact Collective. Since moving to New York in 1979, Mr. Houston-Jones has performed autobiographical evening-length solos, has collaborated with Daniel Lepkoff and Stephanie Skura, and has performed the works of John Bernd, Ping Chong, and Alice Eve Cohen. Last year he performed and taught workshops on political art-making in conjunction with Dancers for Disarmament. He also organized Parallels, the series of black post-modern choreographers at Danspace. In 1983 he was the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Choreographers' Fellowship.

FRED HOLLAND is from Ohio, where he received a BFA in Painting. In Philadelphia he became involved with movement via Aikido and Contact

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Improvisation, and he worked with A Way of Improvising, Zero Moving Company, and the Philadelphia Contact Collective. In 1977 he moved to West Berlin where he worked with the Tanz Fabrik and formed Moving Target (with Christine Vilardo), a performing arts collective which has toured throughout Germany. In 1980 Mr. Holland received a Notgemeinschaft der Kunst grant for his production of Mass (Measure). Since moving to New York in 1981, he has worked with Meredith Monk as well as with Ishmael Houston-Jones. Last fall Mr. Holland was a part of Parallels, a black choreographers' series at Danspace.

HOUSTON-JONES and HOLLAND'S most recent collaborations include an untitled duet to a sound score by Mark Allen Larsen performed for the Tenth Anniversary Celebration of Contact Improvisation at St. Mark's Danspace and Babble: First Impressions of the White Man produced by Dance Theater Workshop in March 1983.

COWBOYS, DREAMS, AND LADDERS was commissioned by The Kitchen with funds from the Interarts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts.