



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 29, 2023



Left: Performance of *Kea and Her Ark* at ArtYard, Frenchtown, NJ, 2023. Photo: Marlin Bert.
Right: Performance of *Kea and the Ark*. Photo courtesy John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

***Kea and the Ark*, Oct.13–15 at John Michael Kohler Arts Center**

Kea Tawana had powerful hands and a long stride. In the 1980s, she built a three-story-tall and 86-foot-long ark on the highest point in Newark, NJ, using materials from abandoned houses.

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center will present [*Kea and the Ark*](#), a multidisciplinary theater work exploring Tawana's incredible life of loss and resilience, Friday, Oct. 13 through Sunday, Oct. 15.

Kea and the Ark tells the story of a woman who—in an act of protest, a test of ingenuity and tenacity, and the fulfillment of vision for the perfect vessel to take her home—single-handedly built a 20-ton ark in Newark's Central Ward.

Created and performed by Philadelphia-based [White Box Theatre](#), *Kea and the Ark* incorporates movement, puppetry, storytelling, and live music. Audiences are taken on a journey across the map—from a Japanese internment camp to a Hopi reservation, through the South via boxcar, and into Newark during the uprisings of the Sixties.

The hour-long show provokes, enchants, and inspires, and has captured audiences from ages four to eighty. "When I walked into the performance space, I gasped....I had an immediate, visceral recognition that I was entering another world," said Pamela Barnett, dean of The School of Arts and Communications at The College of New Jersey, after seeing *Kea and the Ark* earlier this year at ArtYard in Frenchtown, NJ.

Following each performance, there will be a talk with the artists and walk-thru of the stage installation. Show times are Friday, Oct. 13, at 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 14 and 15, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 (\$10 for Arts Center members). To purchase tickets, visit jmkac.org/events, call (920) 458-6144, or stop at the Arts Center.

Sebastienne Mundheim (founder and artistic director of White Box Theatre) is an award-winning artist with 30 years of experience in visual arts, movement, music, and storytelling. Her work is sophisticated, playful, poetic, and visually rich, engaging people of all ages. She and her team of White Box Theatre collaborators—Harlee Trautman, Daniel de Jesus, Payton Smith, and Candra Kennedy—will be at the Arts Center for a week-long residency that includes workshops and working with school-tour groups.

In addition to the performances, the community can explore themes and ideas ignited by Tawana's story through writing and performance workshops. Visit jmkac.org/events for workshop times and registration. There are also self-guided tours of the exhibition [*Kea Tawana: I Traveled into the Future in a Dream*](#), on view through Jan. 28 at the Arts Center.

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center is located at 608 New York Ave., Sheboygan, WI. Free parking is available in the Arts Center lot.

Presentation of *Kea and the Ark* is supported by the Kohler Trust for the Arts and Education, Ruth Foundation for the Arts, Kohler Foundation, Inc., the Frederic Cornell Kohler Charitable Trust, and the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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Contact

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About the John Michael Kohler Arts Center

Founded in 1967, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center (JMKAC) is dedicated to generating creative exchanges between an international community of artists and a diverse public. Central to its mission is promoting understanding and appreciation of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists through original exhibitions, commissioned works of art, performing arts, community arts initiatives, and publications.

The Arts Center's collection focuses primarily on works by artist-environment builders, self-taught and folk artists, and works created in the Arts/Industry residency program. JMKAC is the world's leading center for research and presentation of artist-built environments.

In June 2021, the Arts Center opened the Art Preserve, a satellite campus highlighting its collection of 25,000 individual works of art by more than 30 art-environment builders. The Art Preserve features immersive displays of art environments and curated visible storage of environment components. It also serves as a resource for research on art environments and the artists who create them.

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center is located at 608 New York Avenue, Sheboygan, WI. The Art Preserve is located at 3636 Lower Falls Road, Sheboygan. Admission to both is free. For more information, call 920-458-6144, or visit jmkac.org, [Facebook](#), or [Instagram](#).

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center is supported by corporate and foundation donors, government grants, and its many members. The Arts Center is not an entity of Kohler Co. or its subsidiaries.

Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Thursday: 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.
Saturday, Sunday: 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Location

John Michael Kohler Arts Center: 608 New York Avenue, Sheboygan, WI
Art Preserve: 3636 Lower Falls Road, Sheboygan, WI