

YALE UNION is led by a desire to support emerging and under-acknowledged artists, propose new modes of production, and stimulate the ongoing public discourse around art. 800 SE 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Portland, OR 97214 [www.yaleunion.org](http://www.yaleunion.org)  
(503) 236-7996 [yu@yaleunion.org](mailto:yu@yaleunion.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 23, 2019

ASHER HARTMAN'S *THE DOPE ELF* AT YALE UNION

Portland, OR — Yale Union is pleased to announce a new large-scale theatrical project by Los Angeles playwright Asher Hartman and his company, Gawdafful National Theater. *The Dope Elf* is a series of three unique performances staged over the course of four weekends within a nomadic installation/film set, and simultaneously livestreamed to Yale Union's website ([yaleunion.org](http://yaleunion.org)). Originating at Yale Union, the project will also tour to The Lab in San Francisco and, eventually, throughout the United States.

Caught up in the whirlwind of *The Dope Elf's* multitude of voices, sensorial phenomena, and slippery points-of-view, the "play" becomes a space to experience aching laughter and psychic pain. Characters like John, Little Man, and Saxobeat, a mangy wolf dog, overlap and inhabit one another, evading fixed identity by switching between a multiplicity of characterizations. This unboundedness is felt in the language which, at times poetically and at times naturalistically, contradicts or evades the action. Refusing easy categorization or interpretation, Hartman's projects slip between the realms of visual art, theater, film, and mysticism.

*The Dope Elf* is non-narrative—it has no beginning and no end. What results is not a story or moral tale, but an investigation into present, ancestral, and imagined experiences of navigating a disjointed American landscape. The actors, space, and finally audience come together to channel the humor and the discomfort of this experience, collectively.

Asher Hartman is an interdisciplinary artist and writer whose work centers on the exploration of self through Western histories and ideologies. He is the founder and chief beneficiary of Gawdafful National Theater, a group of artist-actors for whom he has written since 2010. He is also one half of the performative duo Krystal Krunch (with Haruko Tanaka), who teach intuition-building to artists, activists, and interested others. Recent theatrical works include *Lost Privilege Company* in "Archive Fever: Lost Words, Buried Voices" as part of USC's Visions and Voices series and Pieter Performance Space (2018); *Sorry, Atlantis, Or Eden's Achin' Organ Seeks Revenge* at Machine Project, LA (2017); *Mr. Akita*, at Hauser & Wirth, Los Angeles (2017), the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (2017), and the Tang Museum, New York (2015); and *The Silver, the Black, the Wicked Dance* at LACMA (2016).

*The Dope Elf* is curated by Dena Beard and commissioned by Yale Union and The Lab with support from The Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, the California Arts Council, and the Foundation for Contemporary Arts.

***The Dope Elf***

Written and Directed by Asher Hartman

Performed by Gawdafful National Theater

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September 14–15 and 20–22, 2019

October 11–13 and 18–20, 2019

Performance 1 on Fridays, Performance 2 on Saturdays, and Performance 3 on Sundays

7:30pm doors / 8pm performance

Yale Union, 800 SE 10th Ave, Portland, OR 97214

Tickets available at [yaleunion.org](http://yaleunion.org)

**Press Preview:** Friday, September 13, 2019

7:30 doors / 8pm performance

FREE; please RSVP to [hope@yaleunion.org](mailto:hope@yaleunion.org)