**News From PASA**

**For immediate release**

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**Roger Guenveur Smith to Perform *In Honor of Jean-Michel Basquiat***

**Renowned Actor Kicks Off PASA Popups at Baranco on Nov. 14**

**Lafayette, LA:** Actor Roger Guenveur Smith returns to Lafayette with a new solo performance: *In Honor of Jean-Michel Basquiat*. The play is a tribute to the acclaimed neo-expressionist painter whose career skyrocketed in the 1980s, and whose life ended at the age of 27. The performance is set for 7:30 p.m. on November 14 at the Theater at Baranco, the first performance in the Popups at Baranco series offered by Performing Arts Serving Acadiana (PASA). Tickets $25 and are available at pasaonline.org and through the Heymann Center Box Office.

“Everyone who attended Roger’s performance of *Otto Frank* last year can attest to his captivating stage presence and unique acting style, says Jackie Lyle, PASA’s executive director. “This is one actor who can fill a theater with a remarkable presence that combines with his creative playwrighting skill. As the performance unfolds, it is easy to become enraptured by the character, almost forgetting that it is Roger on stage.”

Roger and Jean-Michel befriended each other in Los Angeles, with Basquiat painting in a Venice studio and Smith rapping in the fertile 1980s club scene as “Hollywatts.” Throughout the decade, Smith’s politically charged soliloquies frequently found their way onto Basquiat’s canvas, and Smith eventually created “Smiley,” a Basquiat-inspired character for Lee’s classic *Do the Right Thing,* currently streaming on Netflix.

“I hope it’s a reconsideration of who the artist was,” Smith says. “That folks will walk out not mourning the tremendous loss or admiring my performance, but go on to seek out his work and be inspired to pursue kindness, love, joy and happiness.”

“He was a friend of mine. It’s called ‘In Honor of Jean-Michel Basquiat’ because I continuously feel the need to pay tribute to him, investigate his work and life, and present his work to new generations of art lovers. Basquiat’s life was an exemplary tribute to the art world and revolutionary consciousness,” Smith adds.

*In Honor of Jean-Michel Basquiat* is scripted by Smith and scored by Marc Anthony Thompson. Their frequent collaborations include *A Huey P. Newton Story,* adapted from the Obie Award-winning stage play into a Peabody Award-winning telefilm, as well as the Bessie Award-winning *Rodney King*. Both Newton and King were directed for the screen by Smith’s longtime colleague Spike Lee.

PASA’s Pop-Up at Baranco Series takes place in the 400-seat theater of the historic Baranco Elementary. Baranco is an accessible venue and American Sign Language is offered on request. Tickets are available at pasaonline.org and at the Heymann Center box office.

Roger Guenveur Smith is an internationally acclaimed actor, writer, and director who has created a prolific body of work on stage and screen.

He adapted his Obie Award-winning solo performance of *A Huey P. Newton Story* into a Peabody Award-winning telefilm, directed by his longtime colleague Spike Lee, with whom he continues to collaborate in a relationship that is unparalleled in the American cinema.

For Lee's Oscar-nominated *Do the Right Thing*, Smith improvised the stuttering hero, Smiley, after his debut as fraternity pledge Yoda in Lee's first studio film, *School Daze*. The eclectic range of characters expanded with a Russian roulette-playing gangster in *Malcolm X*, a guitar-playing cop in *Get on the Bus*, the street philosopher Big Time Willie in *He Got Game*, a hard-nose detective in *Summer of Sam*, and an opportunistic insurance salesman in *Chi-Raq*. Smith portrayed American black leader Booker T. Washington in the 2020 Netflix miniseries *Self Made*, based on the life of Madame C. J. Walker.

The performance of *In Honor of Jean-Michel Basquiat* is approximately one hour long, with no intermission. Parking is plentiful on the Baranco Elementary Campus.

In addition to the performance, PASA will offer special sessions for people wanting to learn more about Jean-Michel Basquiat and Roger Guenveur Smith’s unique technique.

On November 10, UL Visual Arts Capstone senior students will offer diverse perspectives on the paradigm of Jean-Michel Basquiat as a genius. The discussion will examine Basquiat’s historical and cultural impact in relation to the students’ own creative practices and aspirations as emerging public artists.

In addition to the performance, Roger Guenveur Smith will lead an acting workshop on November 13 at Cité des Arts. The workshop is free and open to the public. Actors should prepare to actively participate in this session. Cité des Arts is located at 109 Vine St. in downtown Lafayette.

PASA’s Pop-Ups at Baranco, including *In Honor of Jean-Michel Basquiat*, are generously sponsored by the law firm of Oats & Marino, LFT Fiber, and a partnership with 100 Black Men of Greater Lafayette.

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For more information, visit pasaonline.org or follow PASA on social media at @pasacadiana. To contact PASA, call 337-769-3231 or email jackie@pasaonline.org.

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**About PASA:** Performing Arts Serving Acadiana offers performing arts entertainment, focusing on dance, theater, and classical music, with occasional forays into other genres. PASA also delivers performing arts activities—master classes, workshops, lecture demonstrations, and other offerings—in a variety of locations in the Acadiana area.

For more information about PASA or any of the performances, call PASA at (337) 769-3231 or email jackie@pasaonline.org.

PASA 2025-2026 Public Performance Dates:

November 14, 2025: *In Honor of Jean Michel-Basquiat*. The Theater at Baranco Elementary. Corner of Moss St. & Mudd Ave.

January 16, 2026: *What the Constitution Means to Me*. The Theater at Baranco Elementary. Corner of Moss St. & Mudd Ave.

March 10, 2026: Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana. Heymann Performing Arts Center

March 20, 2026: Tribute to Roberta Flack and Quincy Jones, performed by Jill Butler and her Joyride Band. The Theater at Baranco Elementary. Corner of Moss St. & Mudd Ave.

All performances begin at 7:30 p.m.