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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 5, 2009

What: Gesel Mason's *No Boundaries*
Dancing the Visions of Contemporary Black Choreographers
Where: Painted Bride Art Center, 230 Vine Street, Philadelphia
When: Friday and Saturday, April 3 and 4, 8pm
Price: \$25 / \$12.50 for Bride Members

"Ms. Mason has put together a show that should be required viewing for students of dance history, not so much for the facts it touches upon but for the personalities and points of view revealed..." –Jennifer Dunning, *The New York Times*

"You could compare it to a pitcher's no-hitter, a senator's 12-hour filibuster, a lone cyclist's daylong, head-into-the-wind breakaway in the Tour de France."
–Sarah Kaufman, *The Washington Post*.

Award-Winning Visions of Black Dance Make Philadelphia Debut

PHILADELPHIA, PA – For the first time since 1998 when the *City Paper* hailed her as "young, black and, brilliant," Gesel Mason returns to Philadelphia. During much of the decade since she appeared here with Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Mason has been honing *No Boundaries*, a project that comprises new and existing works from the nations leading African-American choreographers. As the project grew over the years, incorporating pieces from such luminaries as **Robert Battle, Donald McKayle, Bebe Miller, David Roussève, Reggie Wilson, Andrea Woods, and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar**, Mason sought ways to bring it to Philadelphia. "I've always had a close relation with Philly, not because I've lived or performed much there, but because of the artists I've worked with—it feels like my sister city somehow," she commented. Recognizing the timeliness and relevance of Mason's work to the Philadelphia cultural landscape, Painted Bride Art Center has partnered with Dance Place in Mason's home of Washington D.C. to share this project with local audiences.

No Boundaries, produced by **Mason/Rhynes Productions**, celebrates the diversity and vision of African Americans in modern dance by sharing the creative process and cultural perspectives of leading and emerging choreographers through video documentation and performance. The artists who have choreographed pieces for the project all reflect the breadth of style in contemporary dance, drawing upon roots in African tradition, ballet, and a diverse combination of cultural and theatrical forms. Video documentation capturing the artists' creative process and the development of the project provides interludes between the works and allows us to see how personal experience and background influence each choreographer's vision.

At the Bride, Mason will perform "Jumping the Broom", a romantic slave drama created by **David Roussève**, the psychedelic "Bent" by **Jawole Willa Jo Zollar**, and Mason's "How to Watch a Modern Dance Concert, or What in the Hell are They Doing on Stage?", called "funnier than it's title and

wickedly on the mark...” (*Washington Post*). The project includes two recent additions: “Seeline ‘oman” by **Reggie Wilson**, and **Robert Battle**’s “Ella,” a “physical scat” performed by Sarah Levitt to the music of Ella Fitzgerald. Mason will also present an excerpt from her new work, *Women, Sex, and Desire* performed by members of Gesel Mason Performance Projects. *No Boundaries* combines dance and video documentary to explore the creative visions of these choreographers and how they push black dance in America beyond stereotypical boundaries.

Gesel Mason is Co-founder and Artistic Director of Mason/Rhynes Productions (www.mason-rhynes.org) and Artistic Director for Gesel Mason Performance Projects. Ms. Mason has performed with Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company and toured Germany with the Repertory Dance Theatre of Utah. She taught and performed in Poland, in 1996 under the direction of Jacek Luminski and again in 1999 with Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, where she worked for four seasons as Performer, Project Director, and Artistic Director/Founder of Teen Exchange. She continues to perform as a guest artist and serves as Rehearsal Director for Lerman’s *Ferocious Beauty: Genome*. She has also performed with Ralph Lemon in the final installment of his Geography Trilogy: “*Come home Charley Patton*”

Ms. Mason was selected Emerging Choreographer by the Bates Dance Festival in 2000, and received 2007 Millennium Stage Local Dance Commissioning Project from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Her work has been presented at the Fort Wayne Performing Arts Center, Diverse Works in Houston, 651 Arts in Brooklyn, Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis, Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts in College Park, MD, and as part of the International Contemporary Dance Conference and Performance Festival in Bytom, Poland, DanceAfrica, and the International Association of Blacks in Dance.

TICKET INFORMATION: Ticket prices vary for all Bride events. Many Bride shows sell out; order tickets in advance 24 hours a day at paintedbride.org or Tuesday – Saturday, 12-6pm at 215.925.9914. Bride members receive 50% off of single tickets. Students and seniors with ID receive a 25% discount. The Bride is located at 230 Vine Street in Old City, Philadelphia.

MISSION: Painted Bride Art Center collaborates with emerging and established artists to create, produce, and present innovative work that affirms the intrinsic value of all cultures and celebrates the transformative power of the arts. Through performances and exhibitions, education and outreach, the Bride creates a forum for engagement centered on contemporary social issues.

PHOTOS, VIDEO, AND INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE.

Contact Oliver Wunsch, Painted Bride Marketing Director, at 215-925-9914 x14 or oliver@paintedbride.org

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