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POOR DOG GROUP CELEBRATES 5TH ANIVERSARY & WILL PREMIRE THE FINAL INSTALMENT OF A THREE-YEAR PERFORMANCE PROJECT.

FIVE SMALL FIRES – A NEW WORK BY POOR DOG GROUP, WILL PREMIRE MARCH 6TH – 28TH 2014 AT THE BOOTLEG THEATER.

Los Angeles, CA – *Poor Dog Group [PDG]* celebrates 5 Years of innovative theater in Los Angeles and abroad with the premier of – *Five Small Fires*. Conceived and directed by **Jesse Bonnell** and created by **Poor Dog Group** this new work concludes a multi year performance project centered on ancient ritual and Greek mythology.

Over the past three years, **Poor Dog Group** has investigated Greek antiquity and the mythic rites of Dionysus creating one new play every year from 2010 – 2013. This marks a single body of work centered on Greek mythology. Each play has embraced the ephemeral nature of performance by developing new designs, concepts, and narrative each year. This body of work ceaselessly evolves giving each public presentation a new identity, under a new title. The plays are: *Satyr Atlas* (2010 Getty), *Dionysia* (2011 EMPAC), and lastly *Five Small Fires* (2013 The Bootleg Theater).

Five Small Fires (FSF) is an original work that weaves together collective hysteria, ritualistic frenzy, California Spiritual Extremism, and the mystic rites of ancient Greece. Revolutionaries of an abstract New Age movement stew over a dark secret that begins to reemerge, causing the members to turn on each other. Time begins to unravel as paranoia and mania collide with overlapping narratives. While philosophical rhetoric builds upon itself, the members continue to seek emancipation from the troubles of contemporary life by conducting a series of lessons/tests, which they broadcast on-line. As these rituals collide in celebratory chaos, a higher community is formed through dance, initiation rites and aggressive liberation.

The set design evokes a community center like art installation. Inside this world we see a skeletal broadcast studio that mimics 1970's video art joie de vie, much like the studios of Paul MCarthy, Bruce Newman, Vito Acconci, and Yonne

Rainer. The ensemble activates the space creating doomsday messages to the outside world hurling themselves into mythological paths that evoke The House of Atreus and Euripides' *The Bacchae*. The set operates like a machine based on living conditions gathered from multiple cult-like environments ranging from Jonestown to the company's own old warehouse in Los Angeles. The imagery of the work pulls at the extremes of group identity moving back and forth from bombastic to mysterious.

"The structure and history of Greek theater was the perfect platform for us to make work based in modern mythology within the keyhole of art and life – allowing us to interweave ancient ritual into a contemporary backdrop – a commentary on individualism, power, greed, excess, violence, and death." says Bonnell.

This body of work was co-commissioned by Experimental Media Performing Arts Center & The Getty Villa Lab Theater. Project support from: Creative Capital, University of California Los Angeles Department of World Cultures, and the Center for Cultural Innovation ARC Program.

About Poor Dog Group

We are a collective of theater artists committed to theatrical provocation and rigorous critiques of history that speak to our current sense of being.

Poor Dog Group was founded in 2008 as a collaborative art lab dedicated to contemporary theater.

Nationally, Poor Dog Group (PDG) has been shown at REDCAT, The Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, RADAR L.A., South Coast Repertory, The Getty Villa, EMPAC, The Collapsible Hole, Baruch Performing Arts Center and site-specific locations. Abroad, PDG has toured throughout Eastern Europe including Croatia, Poland and Serbia. PDG has received project support from Theater Communications Group, Foundation for Contemporary Art, United States Embassy Belgrade and Los Angeles County Arts Commission, and a Cultural Exchange International Grant from the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. Co-Founder and Director Jesse Bonnell is a MacDowell Fellow and has received residencies at REDCAT, UCLA, CalArts, University of Zagreb, EMPAC, and YADDO. Bonnell is a 2013 Creative Capital grantee.