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Say Something Bunny! A forgotten home recording from the 1950s
inspires an immersive performance.



New York, NY, May 24, 2017 -- *Say Something Bunny!*, an immersive one-woman performance that brings to life an enigmatic audio recording made more than 60 years ago, will have its U.S. premiere on May 26 at the UNDO Project Space in Chelsea presented by UnionDocs Center for Documentary Art. Created by artist Alison S. M. Kobayashi in collaboration with Christopher Allen, this mesmerizing experiment in storytelling began with two unmarked spools of wire discovered in an antique audio device. The recording revealed the voices of a Jewish family living in suburban New York in the early 1950s. However, all of these details were unknown to Kobayashi when she began researching the piece.

Say Something Bunny! takes its title from a line in the recording, which was purchased at an estate sale in 2007. After passing through several hands, it eventually made its way to Kobayashi. Over six years and hundreds of hours of listening carefully to the recording, she began to piece together the identities of the speakers, the time period and location based on clues from the family's casual banter. Meticulous study, archival research, and an active imagination, allowed Kobayashi to unlock personal drama, family history, and emotional depth in material others might have overlooked as trivial or found incomprehensible. The winding path of inquiry, which becomes part of the performance, included thousands of public records, a trip to visit the grave of a Greenwich Village bohemian, a search for America's prettiest schoolteacher, and a collection of erotic films held in a public library.

Entering the conceit of a theatrical 'table-read,' the audience of *Say Something Bunny!*, finds itself cast in the story of an unforgettable Jewish family. As they listen to the recording unspool, this novel framing offers the audience both a useful mnemonic and stronger identification with the characters. Kobayashi reveals the stranger-than-fiction narrative hidden in the recording, focusing on the biography of the eldest son, David, whose career as a playwright and lyricist inspired the format of the piece. Through a technically sophisticated performance that combines archival film, live video and surround sound, Kobayashi takes on over a dozen roles; narrator, director, and fact-checker, embodying multiple characters and reenacting significant pop-cultural references of the era.

"A multigenerational yarn of Rothian Heights," according to Art F City, *Say Something Bunny!* was first staged at Toronto's Gallery TPW in February 2016. It will run at the UNDO Project Space at 515 W. 20th Street from May 26 through July 30. Performances are Thursday to Saturday at 7:30 pm, with matinees on Saturday at 2:00 pm and Sunday at 4:00 pm. Tickets start at \$25 and will be released in batches for purchase at saysomethingbunny.com.

Listen to a clip of the found audio and learn more about the project at saysomethingbunny.com/press. Photos are available upon request.

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Alison S. M. Kobayashi (Director, Performer, Co-author) Kobayashi's award-winning and multi-disciplinary work has been exhibited widely in Canada, the United States and overseas. She was a guest artist at the 2008 Flaherty Film Seminar, a Spotlight Presentation at Video Out, Jakarta International Film Festival, a 2016 Yaddo Fellow and 2016 MacDowell Colony fellow. In 2012, she was commissioned by Les Subsistances in Lyon, France to

produce her first live performance, Defense Mechanism. Alison S. M Kobayashi was born in Mississauga, Ontario and is based in Brooklyn, NY where she is the Director of Special Projects at UnionDocs.

Christopher Allen (Co-author, Producer, Dramaturgy, Technical Design) is a producer/director of documentary media projects and a programmer of multi-disciplinary events. He co-founded UnionDocs, a Center for Documentary Art in Brooklyn, and has been responsible for the organization's growth from grassroots as the Executive Artistic Director. He has initiated many collaborative projects, uniting the creative efforts of hundreds of artists, documentary makers and communities including Living Los Sures, Documenting Mythologies, Capitol of Punk and Yellow Arrow. In addition to Say Something Bunny!, Christopher collaborated with Alison on Defense Mechanism and other performances.

Say Something Bunny! is being co-presented by [UnionDocs Center for Documentary Art](#) and was originally created for a solo exhibition curated by Kim Simon at Gallery TPW. It was made possible with funds from the Canada Council for the Arts, NYSCA, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, Brooklyn Arts Council, Yaddo, The MacDowell Colony, Gendai Gallery, AbelCine, Norkin Digital and UnionDocs Center for Documentary Art.