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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Karen Stokes Dance presents "Sunset at White Oak Bayou"

Houston, TX. – Karen Stokes loves Houston history – especially the kind of tidbits largely unknown to the public. For instance, Houston was founded on the creation of a myth.

The original founders of Houston, the Allen Brothers, marketed the Buffalo Bayou as "having an abundance of excellent spring water and enjoying the sea breeze in all its freshness. ... It is handsome and beautifully elevated, salubrious and well-watered." This entrepreneurial exaggeration, along with the statement that the newly founded Houston was a thriving port rather than a few muddy streets riddled with mosquitoes, brought settlers to Texas. Thus began the settlement of the fourth largest city in America. For Stokes, this is fertile ground for dance-making.

Karen Stokes Dance presents "Sunset at White Oak Bayou" a site specific work at White Oak Bayou on October 18, 2015. With original music by [Brad Sayles](#), played live by [Heights 5 Brass](#), Karen Stokes Dance brings to life Houston's origins in its original setting. Stokes is making it her mission to bring Houston history alive in the very spot the Allen's Brothers stepped ashore, on the banks of White Oak Bayou as it merges with Buffalo Bayou. This site, the original Port of Houston, (now renamed Allen's Landing after its founders) has been a central focus of Stokes' work for two years.

"Sunset at White Oak Bayou" is the third installment in her series of Houston historical sites.

"Channel/1836," a dance for film project that premiered as part of a live performance in October 2014, was shot on the banks of the Houston Ship Channel, at the capture site of General Santa Anna.

"Backstage at Allen's Landing" premiered in May 2015 as a walking tour of the north side of the Bayou, interlaced with small interactive projects and performances that enlightened the audience to the rich historical significance of the site. "Sunset at White Oak Bayou" is a performance highlighting both sides

of White Oak Bayou, with audience members invited to sit picnic-style on lawn chairs or blankets. Dancers leap and balance amid pilings and concrete stairs, combining the ghosts of ships, entrepreneurs, and the infamous Texas pioneer spirit with contemporary dance. These site-specific installments are part of the KSD [DEEP: Seaspaces](#) initiative, a larger work on Houston's love of exploration of both sea and sky slated to premiere in 2016.

Both "Sunset at White Oak" and "Backstage at Allen's Landing" are opportunities for Houstonians to explore the areas around Allen's Landing, the original Port of Houston. Largely unknown to the public, the White Oak Bayou side of Allen's Landing is the focal point of both history and architecture of Houston – the city literally grew up around it. On the east side is the Willow St Pump Station, the site of the original Allen Brothers Saw Mill, the first waste water treatment facility for Houston, and a one-time crematorium. On the west: UH Downtown inhabits the original site of the Merchant and Manufacturer's Building, which was envisioned to be the Grand Central Station of Houston prior to Black Thursday, 1929. Crossing over and surrounding the site are all the modes of ground transportation in Houston: a bike trail, a railroad bridge, pedestrian paths, the light rail, the Katy Freeway to the north, bus routes on three sides, and the original port of Houston on the south side of the turning basin of White Oak and Buffalo Bayou. In nooks and crannies and nearby bridge underpasses, traces of inner city homelessness are found, giving clues to the forgotten.

Karen Stokes Dance presents "Sunset at White Oak Bayou" at White Oak Bayou on October 18, 2015, at 5:30pm and 6:15pm. A reception at Willow Street Pump House will follow the second performance. The performances are free and open to the public. For show reservations and tickets to the reception, visit www.karenstokesdance.org.

"Sunset at White Oak Bayou"

Sunday, October 18, 2015

Time: 5:30pm and 6:15pm

Location: Wood St. between N. Main & San Jacinto.

Rain Date: Sunday, November 1, 2015. Registered participants will be notified by email day of show if there is a need to re-schedule due to rainstorms.

Karen Stokes Dance: www.karenstokesdance.org

Photos available upon request.