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**THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHOREOGRAPHY-AKRON RECEIVES \$1 MILLION FROM THE MELLON FOUNDATION TO CONTINUE CREATIVE ADMINISTRATION RESEARCH**  
**– Signature Program Challenges and Innovates Administrative Practices for the Arts –**



Pictured: [left] CAR Artists, Thought Partners, and NCCAkrON team members at the 2023 Summit Convening (photo Shane Wynn), [top right] Raja Feather Kelly (standing) with company members Laura Snow, Ashley Chavonne, Alexandria Giroux, and Brandi Holt of the feath3r theory (photo Kate Enman), and [bottom right] CAR Thought Partner Huong Hoang with Artist Brian Brooks (photo Dale Dong).

AKRON, OH (August 28, 2023) — **The National Center for Choreography-Akron (NCCAkrON)** announces a \$1 million multi-year award from the **Mellon Foundation** to continue and evolve its signature **Creative Administration Research (CAR)** program. Launched in 2020, the CAR program supports U.S. dance artists and challenges the field to think beyond the boundaries of known, traditional models and “best practices.” Over the next three years, NCCAkrON will build on the impact of this national program by welcoming more artists and Thought Partners to CAR and sharing program learnings with the wider performing arts field.

The Creative Administration Research program is intentionally designed to build a bridge between 20th century working knowledge and the 21st century dance ecosystem. Since 2020, the program has initiated five cohorts for a total of 19 Artist Teams from across the U.S. CAR

Artists and Thought Partners participate in intensive virtual Investigative Retreats designed to reflect on their body of work, examine chronic pain points across operations, and imagine multiple ways forward. NCCAkrón has hosted two CAR National Summit Convenings, a rare occasion for program participants to spend time together in-person, share common challenges and transitions, dance, dine, and connect. Participants receive an annual stipend for this thought work.

“We are so grateful for the Mellon Foundation’s continued support to press forward with this work,” stated **NCCAkrón Executive/Artistic Director Christy Bolingbroke**. “Creative Administration Research is more important than ever for NCCAkrón and choreographers alike, to process our ever-shifting arts landscape while simultaneously striving for groundedness and longevity in the field. With this major acknowledgement, we will continue to ask new questions instead of seeking the same answers.”

Based in Miami, FL, and a **CAR Artist since 2021**, **Pioneer Winter** remarks, “The NCCAkrón ethos is so warm and accepting. I immediately felt welcomed into a community of humans asking questions I never knew how to verbalize. For the past two years the questions asked and lessons learned have inspired a new approach to 'administration'. It has also fostered in me new confidence as an artist and leader. The opportunities, experiences, and lessons shared between us have expanded my capacity to consider and create beyond what I thought possible.”

Over the next three years, NCCAkrón plans to expand and deepen the Creative Administration Research program. There will be open application periods to welcome new Artist Teams to the program; the next application period will be from September 5 - October 5, 2023. A second level of programming designed to bring CAR learnings and prompts to other cities across the country will launch in the coming years. In this next iteration, funds have been earmarked to seed artist-led administrative experiments among CAR alumni, continuing to embody NCCAkrón’s values of research and development with the spirit of abundance.

NCCAkrón has also commissioned essays from 19 contributing authors and is developing a book of Creative Administration Research findings and reflections, edited by Tonya Lockyer (Suquamish, WA).

“The CAR program elevates administrative inquiry as rigorous creative practice, illuminating pathways towards building more just and equitable contemporary dance practices,” said **Emil Kang, program director for Arts and Culture at the Mellon Foundation**. “We are excited to renew and deepen our support of this exciting program as an important element in supporting a thriving dance ecology.”

***Current Creative Administration Research Artists and Thought Partners include:***

**Banning Bouldin** (Nashville, TN) | John Michael Schert (Boise, ID)

**Brian Brooks** (New York, NY) | Huong Hoang (New York, NY)

**Ronald K. Brown** (Brooklyn, NY) | Sandra Burton (Williamstown, MA)

**Brandon "Chief Manny" Calhoun and Jamal "Litebulb" Oliver** (Chicago, IL) | Sarah Curran (Chicago, IL)

**Marjani Forté-Saunders** (Pasadena, CA/New York, NY) | Michele Byrd-McPhee (Jersey City, NJ)

**Rosie Herrera** (Miami, FL) | Aaron Mattocks (Acra, NY)

**Raja Feather Kelly** (Brooklyn, NY) | Byron Au Yong (Palm Springs, CA/Seattle, WA)

**Jamil Olawale Kosoko** (Philadelphia, PA/New York, NY) | Ellen Chenoweth (Philadelphia, PA)

**Bebe Miller** (Columbus, OH) | Antuan Byers (New York, NY)

**Rashaun Mitchell and Silas Riener** (Margaretville, NY) | Tonya Lockyer (Suquamish, WA)

**Dominic Moore-Dunson** (Akron, OH) | Antuan Byers (New York, NY)

**Edgar L. Page** (Denver, CO) | Antuan Byers (New York, NY)

**jumatatu m. poe** (Philadelphia, PA) | Reuben Roqueñi (Portland, OR)

**Iquail Shaheed** (Philadelphia, PA) | Conrhonda Baker (Elberton, GA)

**Umi IMAN Siferllah-Griffin** (Atlanta, GA) | Conrhonda Baker (Elberton, GA)

**Kate Wallich** (Seattle, WA) | Indira Goodwine-Josias (Boston, MA)

**Pioneer Winter** (Miami, FL) | Dixon|Dahlia Li (New York, NY)

**Takahiro Yamamoto** (Portland, OR) | Byron Au Yong (Palm Springs, CA/Seattle, WA)

**Abby Zbikowski** (Columbus, OH and New York, NY) | Francine Sheffield (Richmond, VA)

### ***About NCCAkron***

The National Center for Choreography at The University of Akron supports the research and development of new work in dance by exploring the full potential of the creative process. In addition to offering studio and technical residencies to make new work, activities focus on catalyzing dialogue and experimentation; creating proximity among artists and dance thinkers; and aggregating resources around dance making. For more information, visit [nccakron.org](http://nccakron.org).

A discrete organization of its own, separate from the University, the establishment and general operation of NCCAkron are made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

### ***About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation***

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at [mellon.org](http://mellon.org).

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