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**KNIGHT FOUNDATION COMMITS \$1.5 MILLION WITH  
THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHOREOGRAPHY-AKRON  
TO CREATE THE KNIGHT DANCE AWARD**



L to R: Ashwini Ramaswamy talks with NCCAkron's Christy Bolingbroke (photo Dale Dong), yield for dance sign on a film set in Akron (photo Dale Dong) Alberto Ibarguen of the Knight Foundation, Silas Riener, and Rashaun Mitchell talk onstage (photo Mike Crupi.)

AKRON, Ohio (September 27, 2022) — **The National Center for Choreography - Akron (NCCAkron)** announces a new \$1.5 million gift from **The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation** to create the **Knight Dance Award**. In 2015, the Knight Foundation provided the original capital to establish NCCAkron, the second choreographic center of its kind in the country, with a \$5 million endowment gift. NCCAkron plans to award the \$50,000 Knight Dance Award to a single recipient during the fall of each year.

The Knight Dance Award is envisioned to honor a living choreographer whose body of work is distinguished not only for its artistry but also for its originality of thought and impact. The award will celebrate the experimentation and longevity of choreographers in the United States with an eye to the future, embodying the established craft of choreography as well as new practices to shape a 21st century dance landscape.

“Throughout Akron’s history, art has been a consistent force for building community and culture. By supporting ongoing experimentation and growth, and now through the recognition of artistic achievement of great American choreographers, the National Center for Choreography-Akron is becoming a key player in that story,” said **Victoria Rogers, Vice President of Knight’s arts program**. “With Knight’s new investment, NCAAkron will directly support established and emerging talent that are pushing the boundaries of their work and finding new, innovative ways to expand the field of dance.”

“NCCAkron was formed almost seven years ago to address research and development opportunities in dance and serve as an anchor in the national ecology,” shared **Christy**

**Bolingbroke, NCCAkron Executive/Artistic Director.** “This additional gift enables us to further our advocacy for today’s working choreographers and dance as an artform being central to culture in this country. We are extremely grateful for our ongoing partnership with the Knight Foundation. Their commitment to arts and culture is generous, far-reaching, and transformative. The Knight Dance Award will be an extension of their exemplary example.”

This new gift will provide \$500,000 in cash over five years to develop and establish this national choreographic prize and add \$1 million to the endowment to support the Knight Dance Award in perpetuity. The coming months will be spent developing the nomination, application, and committee selection process. The first recipient of the Knight Dance Award will be named in 2023.

The Knight Dance Award will carry a cash prize of \$30,000 in unrestricted funds to the artist; the remaining \$20,000 of the award will be an invitation for the artist to co-design an engagement with NCCAkron and establish a multi-year relationship. During such engagements, NCCAkron welcomes artists into the abundant environment that is Akron by providing unlimited studio space, nearby housing, and connections to The University of Akron as well as surrounding community thinkers.

This gift is part of a larger investment in Akron arts. As Akron continues its evolution into a vibrant community with a thriving downtown, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation is investing over \$31 million to transform and rename the University of Akron’s Polsky Building into a hub for civic engagement and in support of key arts organizations and initiatives that empower local artists. In addition to the NCCAkron grant, **The University of Akron** will receive \$20 million to renovate the Polsky Building, to be renamed after the Akron-born Knight brothers, where the school will relocate academic and community programs for the benefit of Akron’s residents and members of the university community. **Akron Art Museum** will receive \$7 million to incorporate digital and technical infrastructure, and **ArtsNow** will receive \$1 million to support the Akron Cultural Plan. Additionally, Knight is allocating \$1 million for a future **Knight New Work Akron** call for proposals in support of Akron-based artists using tech in their practice, and \$750,000 for the **Knight Digital Transformation Fund**, a second open call to help local artists with operational technology.

### **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).

The establishment and general operation of NCCAkron is made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

### **About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

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