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**THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHOREOGRAPHY-AKRON HOSTS  
COMMUNITY CLASS WITH DANCE ARTIST SHAMEL PITTS**  
*– Pitts is the 2024 Knight Choreography Prize Recipient –*



*Shamel Pitts; photo by Delaney Greenberg, courtesy of Kelly Strayhorn Theater*

AKRON, OH (May 13, 2025) — On June 2, **the National Center for Choreography-Akron (NCCAkron)** will host a community dance class with 2024 Knight Choreography Prize Awardee **Shamel Pitts** (Brooklyn, NY).

**The In-Practice Movement Workshop**, guided by Shamel Pitts, is grounded in developing physical efficiency and proficiency, expressive range, and clarity through creative prompts. Participants will physically examine and experience embodied movement sources; dynamics, speed, rhythm, and groove; and aliveness within stillness, while incorporating visualization to discover unique individual expression through dancing in a communal space. No movement experience necessary.

**Class Details**

Monday, June 2, 6:00-7:30 PM  
Guzzetta Hall 194, University of Akron  
228 E Buchtel Ave, Akron, Ohio 44325  
FREE

RSVP: <https://www.nccakron.org/event-details/communityclass-shamelpitts>

Ages 16+. No movement experience necessary. Wear clothes that are comfortable to move in.

Shamel Pitts is a performance artist, dancer, conceptual artist, choreographer, spoken word artist, and teacher whose work explores and embodies multiplicity, vulnerability, Afrofuturism, rigor, and connection. After graduating from The Juilliard School, Pitts danced all over the world with Mikhail Baryshnikov's Hell's Kitchen Dance, Ballets Jazz Montréal, and Batsheva Dance Company. Shamel Pitts is the artistic director/founder of TRIBE, a New York-based multidisciplinary arts collective. He has created a triptych of award-winning multidisciplinary performance art works known as his "BLACK series," which has been performed and toured extensively around the world since 2016. Candice Thompson of *Dance Magazine* says "Choreographer Shamel Pitts has been provoking audiences with multidisciplinary dance works that push against the boundaries of identity." Full bio below.

Made possible by Knight Foundation, the Knight Choreography Prize is designed to support the artistic experimentation and career longevity of choreographers in the United States. Each year the award honors a living choreographer whose body of work is distinguished not only for their artistry but also for their originality of thought and impact. The award celebrates choreographers who provide significant contributions to the dance field, expand audiences for dance, and ensure the artform has a prominent place in U.S. culture. Pitts received an unrestricted cash award of \$30,000, plus \$20,000 in programmatic support over two years, to be co-designed with NCCAkron.

NCCAkron Executive/Artistic Director Christy Bolingbroke remarks, "I am always excited any time we can invite the Northeast Ohio community to move with us. The combination of Shamel's performance background and multi-disciplinary approach makes for a lush and expansive experience for all."

### **About Shamel Pitts**

Shamel Pitts (Brooklyn, NY), a 2024 MacArthur Fellow and 2024 Doris Duke Artist Award recipient, is a performance artist, choreographer, conceptual artist, dancer, spoken word artist, director, and teacher. Born in Brooklyn, NY, Pitts began his dance training at LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts and, simultaneously, at The Ailey School. He is a first-prize winner in the National Arts Competition from YoungArts. Pitts went on to receive his BFA in dance from The Juilliard School and was awarded the Martha Hill Award for excellence in dance. He began his dance career in Mikhail Baryshnikov's Hell's Kitchen Dance and Ballets Jazz Montréal. Pitts danced with Batsheva Dance Company for seven years under the artistic direction of Ohad Naharin and is a certified teacher of Gaga movement language. Pitts created a triptych of award-winning multidisciplinary performances, with his arts collective TRIBE, known as his "BLACK series," which toured extensively to festivals & performance spaces around the world since 2016. He is an adjunct professor at The Juilliard School, a guest faculty member at Princeton University, New York University, and Wesleyan University, and has been an artist in residence at Harvard University. He is a Princess Grace Award recipient in Choreography, NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellow, Jacob's Pillow artist-in-residence, and 2020 Guggenheim Fellow.

***About NCCAkron***

The National Center for Choreography-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) and follow @nccakron on social media.

A discrete organization of its own, separate from The University of Akron but with offices based there, the establishment and general operation of NCCAkron are made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

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

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