



**Media Contact:**

Mariclare Hulbert, Publicist

585.278.2302

[mariclare.hulbert@gmail.com](mailto:mariclare.hulbert@gmail.com)

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHOREOGRAPHY - AKRON ANNOUNCES  
NEW CREATIVE ADMINISTRATION RESEARCH PROGRAM COHORT**



Photo credits (L to R): Jasmine Hearn (photo Jakayla Monay courtesy of the artist and DiverseWorks), Deneane Richburg (photo Tim Rummelhoff), and Amy O'Neal (photo Gabriel Biencycki).

AKRON, Ohio (January 23, 2025)—**The National Center for Choreography - Akron (NCCAakron)** welcomes the sixth cohort of their **Creative Administration Research (CAR)** program. The artists of this new cohort are **Jasmine Hearn** (Houston, TX), **Amy O'Neal** (Los Angeles, CA/Seattle, WA), and **Deneane Richburg** (St Paul, MN).

The Creative Administration Research program supports U.S. dance artists and challenges the field to think beyond the boundaries of known, traditional models and “best practices.” NCCAakron has built a think tank of Artists and Thought Partners across 19 states to do this work. With continued support from the Mellon Foundation, NCCAakron welcomes these three new teams to the program this year.

Since 2020, the program has initiated six cohorts 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. This new cohort will make 25 CAR Artist Teams to date.

Jasmine Hearn (Houston, TX) is an interdisciplinary artist, teacher, doula, performer, and organizer. Amy O'Neal (Los Angeles, CA/Seattle, WA) is a dancer, choreographer, curator, and dance educator merging contemporary and street dance to challenge notions of race, gender, and the sampling nature of innovation. Deneane Richburg (St Paul, MN) is the founder/Artistic Director of Brownbody and a former competitive figure skater, whose work combines dance, theater, and movement forms from the African Diaspora to produce unique site-specific pieces that challenge the dominant visions of who or what kinds of movement belong on the ice.

"We are constantly humbled with each pool of applicants for this program," says NCCAkron Executive/Artistic Director Christy Bolingbroke. "The response affirms the interest and demand for what Creative Administration Research has to offer — to better understand and interrogate how the business of dance gets done so we can imagine the next chapter of dancemaking."

New CAR Artist Deneane Richburg remarks, "In my view creative administration means addressing the dichotomy between an efficiency-based way of being which is really encouraged in the U.S., and alternative values that prioritize moving with intention and creating the space we as humans and artists need to play, explore, and research."

Jasmine Hearn expands, "Without efficiently managing the behind-the-scenes labor and rooting this work in care, I won't be able to grow nor last."

And Amy O'Neal explains, "CAR means working to dismantle hierarchies and systems of power to create new ways that empower all of us to work together with reciprocity and depth. CAR means making sure that our dance ecology survives and thrives because it is deeply important to our society."

All Artists will be paired with a Thought Partner — an artist, administrator, or other thinker, identified from NCCAkron's national community and curated based on their background and skill sets. Thought Partners are identified through the CAR Work-in-Process (WiP) — a series of small group discussions by nomination and invitation with arts administrators, artists, funders, and presenters to discuss current dance business models and the potential around the program. Since 2020, NCCAkron has brought together and cultivated 80 thinkers and leaders across the arts sector.

Over the next year, Artists and Thought Partners will engage in Investigative Retreats (intensive periods of exploration) to identify administrative experiments that support their artistic practices.

NCCAkron continues to seek opportunities to share program learnings with the wider performing arts field. [\*Artists on Creative Administration: A Workbook from the National Center for Choreography\*](#), a book on creative administration edited by Tonya Lockyer (Suquamish, WA) and published by the University of Akron Press was released September 2024. Related virtual and in-person Making Moves book events will continue through 2025.

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## **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).

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 Artists**

**Jasmine Hearn** (Houston, TX) native to occupied lands now known as Houston, TX, is an interdisciplinary artist, teacher, doula, performer, and organizer. They are one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" (2025), and a recipient of a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grants to Artists award (2023), a Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon Polsky Rome Prize in Design with collaborator Athena Kokoronis of DPA (2023), a Creative Capital Award (2022), a Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship (2019), New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Awards for Outstanding Performer (2021, 2017), and Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grants (2022, 2017). They have been awarded residencies through SummerStages at the Institute for Contemporary Arts, Boston, MA; Pittsburgh Foundation, Pittsburgh, PA; and the Camargo Foundation, Cassis, France.

Jasmine has creatively collaborated with artists, Bill T. Jones, Saul Williams, Solange Knowles, Alisha B. Wormsley, Vanessa German, Marjani Forté-Saunders, Lovie Olivia, Tsedaye Makonnen, Holly Bass, and Li Harris; with companies including, STAYCEE PEARL dance project, Urban Bush Women, David Dorfman Dance, Helen Simoneau Danse, and Dance Alloy Theater, producing solo and collective choreography for performances at the Metropolitan Museum, BAM, New York Live Arts, the Guggenheim Museum, the Getty Center, the 2019 Venice Biennale, the Ford Foundation, Danspace Project, BAAD!, Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), and the Carnegie Museum of Art. [jasminehearn.com](http://jasminehearn.com)

**Amy O'Neal** (Los Angeles, CA/Seattle, WA) is a dancer, choreographer, curator, and dance educator merging contemporary and street dance to challenge notions of race, gender, and the sampling nature of innovation. She creates for concert dance, theater, dance film, music video, and virtual reality and has toured eight acclaimed evening-length works nationally and internationally. From 2000 to 2010, along with musician/composer Zeke Keeble, O'Neal co-directed locust, a dance/music/video performance company based in Seattle. From 2010 onward, she creates experimental performance centering practices, values, and people of hip hop and house dance culture. O'Neal is a grantee of Creative Capital, National Performance Network, National Dance Project, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, and Foundation for Contemporary Art. She is a two-time Artist Trust Fellow, DanceWEB/Impulstanz scholar, Kennedy Center Social Impact Residency Artist, Harvard Visiting Dance Innovator, and Herb

Alpert Award nominee. Amy is on faculty at the University of Southern California Gloria Kaufman School of Dance and works between Seattle and LA as the Curating Artist in Residence for Velocity Dance Center. She is the founder of The Hybrid Lab: Conversations in Merging Dance Cultures, a research/performance platform for street dance practitioners to experiment with form and format. [amyoneal.com](http://amyoneal.com)

**Deneane Richburg** (St Paul, MN) is the founder/Artistic Director of Brownbody, the home for her choreographic work. A former competitive figure skater, Richburg choreographs work that combines dance, theater, and movement forms from the African Diaspora to produce unique site-specific pieces on ice and stage that challenge the dominant visions of who or what kinds of movement belong on the ice. In 2013 she established Brownbody to honor complex narratives of U.S.-based Black communities to celebrate the nuance, beauty, and complexities of Blackness. Previous works include: *Living Past (Re)memory* (2011); *Waiting for You* (2013); *Quiet as It's Kept* (2015); and *Tracing Sacred Steps* (2022). Richburg has also re-staged several Urban Bush Women works on ice and has performed with companies including FlyGround and Kariamu and Company. She is a recipient of a 2017, 2022, and 2023 McKnight Choreography Fellowship, a 2019 Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship, and a Dance/USA Fellowship to Artists. Richburg received her MFA in dance and choreography from Temple University, an MA in Afro-American Studies from UW Madison, and a BA in English and African American Studies from Carleton College. [brownbody.org](http://brownbody.org)