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**NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHOREOGRAPHY - AKRON RECEIVES \$20,000 GRANT
FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
FOR SUMMER/FALL 2022 PROJECTS**



From left to right: CAR Summit Convening Welcome Dinner (photo W. Tanner Young)

AKRON, Ohio (June 27, 2022)—**The National Center for Choreography - Akron (NCCAkron)** has been approved for a \$20,000 Grants for Arts Projects award from **the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** in support of the recent Creative Administration Research National Summit Convening, a Technical Residency, and two Dancing Labs. NCCAkron joins 1,125 arts projects across America, totaling more than \$26.6 million, that were selected during this second round of fiscal year 2022 funding. NCCAkron is one of three dance organizations in Ohio to receive funding in this round, and the only arts organization in Akron to do so.

“It is always an honor to receive NEA funding and recognition,” said NCCAkron’s Executive/Artistic Director Christy Bolingbroke. “Our programs arise from iterative conversations with artists across our field — a process that can take anywhere from 15-18 months. We celebrate receipt of critical support like this at a precipitous moment in the final stages of these projects coming home to Akron.”

The Creative Administration Research (CAR) Summit Convening welcomed 46 artists and thinkers from 16 states to Akron, Ohio from June 2-4, 2022 — what one attendee called “a rare and joyful event.” Participants shared and compared notes from their individual journeys through the work of administrative thinking; created new shared reference experiences to inform future work; and physically moved together, face-to-face and body-to-body, for the first time in two

years. Recordings of panel conversations featuring arts leaders **Marc Bamuthi Joseph** (Washington, D.C.) and **Elena Muslar** (Ontario, CA) will be released later this year as bonus episodes of NCCAkron's *Inside the Dancer's Studio* podcast.

In July 2022, **Stefanie Batten Bland** (New York, NY) will visit Akron and reimagine her work "Embarqued: Stories of Soil" as a gallery installation at abolitionist John Brown's former home, in partnership with the Summit County Historical Society of Akron, OH. This work is an oral, visual, and physical history of slave ships that pushes the boundaries of the African American dance-theatre genre. The installation will be open to the public from July 15-September 3, 2022.

Dancing Labs are one of NCCAkron's flagship experiments, and bring together artists with shared creative questions who may never otherwise have the opportunity to engage with one another. They provide space to disrupt habits and traditional systems, and instead embrace rigorous play and positive failure. This grant will support **Dancing Lab: Jazz Dance is...**, with lead artist **Melanie George** (Philadelphia, PA) alongside other jazz choreographers, producers, and musicians. Inspired by the democratic nature of jazz music and honoring its uniquely Black American roots, the Lab seeks to widen the palate and visibility of jazz dance beyond the most immediate contemporary forms and venues.

The grant will also support **Dancing Lab: Parenthood & Choreography**, where lead artist **Meg Foley** (Philadelphia, PA) will invite parent-artists to focus on the distinctions and intersections between art practice and parenting practice. This is a follow-up to Meg's NCCAkron research residency with Michèle Steinwald this past spring, expanding her research for *Blood Baby* to cross-reference and compare to other artist-parent experiences.

"The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support arts and cultural organizations throughout the nation with these grants, including NCCAkron, providing opportunities for all of us to live artful lives," said NEA Chair **Maria Rosario Jackson**, PhD. "The arts contribute to our individual well-being, the well-being of our communities, and to our local economies. The arts are also crucial to helping us make sense of our circumstances from different perspectives as we emerge from the pandemic and plan for a shared new normal informed by our examined experience."

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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.

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

About the Lead Artists

Meg Foley (Philadelphia, PA)

Meg Foley is a performer, choreographer, and director of moving parts, the name that she ascribes to her various dance- and performance-based actions exploring the materiality of dance and physical identity as form. Meg researches improvisational practices and embodiment frames that engage with meaning-making through practiced attention, danced affirmation, expansion, and relationality. Her work has been presented by the Philadelphia FringeArts Festival, Vox Populi Gallery, Moore College of Art & Design, Pilot Projects, Bowerbird, Thirdbird, and Icebox Project Space, and throughout the U.S., Canada, Germany and Poland. Her work is supported by Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Independence Foundation, Polish Cultural Institute, Art Stations Foundation, and Dancemakers Centre for Creation. She is also creative co-director of "The Whole Shebang," an interdisciplinary arts space and studio.

<http://www.megfoley.org>

Melanie George (Philadelphia, PA)

Melanie George is a dance educator, choreographer, dramaturg and scholar. She is the founder and director of Jazz Dance Is... Dance Project and an Associate Curator at Jacob's Pillow. As a dramaturg, she works closely with internationally recognized contemporary performing artists in the incubation of new works for the stage. In 2012, Melanie founded Jazz Dance Is... Dance Project. She is a highly sought after teacher and choreographer, staging neo-jazz works on dancers throughout the United States. Her choreography spans concert dance, theatre, and vocal staging. Choreography commissions include works for Arizona State University, Western Michigan University, University at Buffalo, and Salve Regina University, and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company (2016 Helen Hayes Award Nominee for Outstanding Choreography).

<https://www.melaniegeorge.org>

Stefanie Batten Bland (New York, NY)

Jerome Robbins awardee Stefanie Batten Bland (New York) is an interdisciplinary global artist who interrogates contemporary and historical culture, she situates her work at the intersection of dance-theatre and site-sympathetic installation. She is 2020 commissioned artist by Baryshnikov Arts Center, Duke Performances, Oxford University, and 2019 fellow at Center for Ballet Arts at NYU, Batten Bland is also currently a choreographer for American Ballet Theatre's inaugural Women's Movement Initiative. She created Company SBB in Paris in 2008 and established it in New York City in 2011, when she was in residency at Baryshnikov Arts Center and began her current residence at University Settlement. Regularly produced by LaMama Experimental Theater, she premiered her latest live work "Look Who's Coming To Dinner" at LaMama in fall 2019 for FIAF's Crossing the Line Festival. <https://www.companysbb.org>