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**NCCAKRON RECEIVES \$20,000 GRANT
FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
– The National Center for Choreography-Akron is the Only Akron Arts Organization
to Secure Funding This Round –**



Pictured L to R: Al Evangelista (photo Tanya Rosen Jones), Kimberly Bartosik (photo Maria Baranova), and Helanius J. Wilkins (photo Christopher Michael Carruth).

AKRON, Ohio (July 12, 2023) — 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) to support three different artistic initiatives in 2023-2024. These initiatives are among 1,130 projects across the country, totaling more than \$31 million, that were selected during this second round of Grants for Arts Projects fiscal year 2023 funding. Thirty-two Ohio arts organizations received funding.

“The National Endowment for the Arts is pleased to support a wide range of projects, including NCCAkron, demonstrating the many ways the arts enrich our lives and contribute to healthy and thriving communities,” said **NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD**. “These organizations play an important role in advancing the creative vitality of our nation and helping to ensure that all people can benefit from arts, culture, and design.”

“It is an honor to consistently receive recognition and funding from the National Endowment of the Arts,” shared **Christy Bolingbroke, Executive/Artistic Director of NCCAkron**. “At NCCAkron, programming is designed collaboratively with dance artists and organizations from across the U.S. and right here in Ohio. We are proud to meet artists where they are and to help them dream and develop in Akron as a continuing hub for arts innovation.”

This NEA funding will support three different NCCAkron artist initiatives.

Dancing Lab: Mga Tsismosa

In partnership with Daring Dances (Ann Arbor, MI), Al Evangelista (Cleveland, OH) led a cohort from across the country engaging with similar questions regarding queer Filipinx-American

diaspora, social justice, and performance studies. They gathered in June 2023, beginning on Philippines Independence Day, for a week of dancing, cooking, conversation, play, and more. Invited artists include Jay Carlon (Los Angeles, CA), Anito Gavino (Philadelphia, PA), and Marie Lloyd Paspe (Brooklyn, NY).

Creative Residency: *The Encounter: Akron*

In July and August 2023, Kimberly Bartosik (Brooklyn, NY) will develop a new iteration of this live physical theater work that she creates with communities around the world, combining professional, pre-professional, and non-professional performers. The work is an encounter with oneself, drawing from what we each carry in our bodies. *The Encounter: Akron* will be shared in three culminating performances with Rubber City Theatre. This collaboration is also a partnership with CDS Creative Productions and has received support from the Knight Arts Akron Community Fund at The Miami Foundation.

Creative Residency: *The Conversation Series: Stitching the Geopolitical Quilt to Re-body Belonging*

Helanius J. Wilkins (Boulder, CO) will research lesser-known histories for a multimedia dance work that will amplify the voices of diverse, intergenerational communities from across the United States. Rooted in social justice practices, Wilkins will lead community engagements to access difficult conversations that he will “stitch together into a dance-quilt” to broaden our understanding of what it means to be American and sew ourselves together anew. Invited artists include Avery Ryder Turner (Boulder, CO).

For more information on other projects included in the NEA grant announcement, visit arts.gov/news.

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 are made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

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Al Evangelista (Cleveland, OH) is an Assistant Professor of Dance at Oberlin College with an affiliate appointment in the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies, a Faculty Fellow at the Center for Communicating Science at Virginia Tech, and a passionate advocate for interdisciplinary collaboration. He organized this Dancing Lab residency at NCCAkron to bring together queer Filipinx-American choreographers across the nation and is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, Daring Dances, and an Oberlin College Teaching Grant. Al’s scholarship and artistic work engage with social justice, technology, and performance studies, particularly in expressing queer and Filipinx-American narratives. He has created work and performed at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Links Hall, American Theatre Company, Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts, University of Chicago, Virginia Tech, Dance Exchange, Chicago Opera Theatre, the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, the Inconvenience, among many others. alevangelista.com

Jay Carlon (Los Angeles, CA) is an experimental performance maker and community organizer. Born and raised on California's Central Coast, their work is inspired by growing up queer and the youngest of 12 in a Filipino, Catholic, and agricultural migrant-working family. He is committed to connecting his art practice to sustainability and their personal and collective journey of decolonization. Named 25 to Watch by Dance Magazine, Jay's work has been presented in Los Angeles at REDCAT, The Broad Museum, Los Angeles Dance Project, Annenberg Community Beach House, homeLA, and Museum of Contemporary Art; in New York at 92ndY; in Monterrey, Mexico at Espacio Expectante; and in Bangkok, Thailand at Creative Migration. Jay is a performer and directing associate with Australian aerial spectacle theater company Sway, where he performed at the 2014 Olympics and the 2018 Super Bowl. Carlon has also performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Bill T. Jones, jumatatu m. poe, The Industry Opera, Oguri, Solange Knowles, Rodrigo y Gabriela; and choreographed works for Kanye West, Yoke Lore, and Mndsgn. jaycarlon.com

Anito Gavino (Philadelphia, PA) directs her project-based company Ani/MalayaWorks, an all-Filipino/Asian-American dance collective which began as a mother/daughter company founded in 2014. Gavino started the company as a way to teach her daughter about her ancestral lineage, pride, and legacy which are often muted when living abroad. Realizing that many first-generation Asian Americans relate to this disconnection to homelands and ownership of cultural identity, Gavino expanded her vision to merge community stories from the global majority as a way to garner solidarity. She uses dance, film, and theater as a storytelling mode to explore memories, spiritual journeys, and community-based decolonial art activism, she produced *La Migra, Let's Run* (2014), *Mujeres* (2015), *Patawili* (2019) and *Tagong Yaman* (2022). She is a recipient of the 2021 Leeway Transformation Award, 2020 and 2019 Leeway Art for Social Change, Career Transition for Dancers, 2022 and 2020 MAPfund Grant recipient, National Performance Network, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Independence Public Media Film Fund, Scribe Video Center Planning and Finishing Grant and more. She has been supported by Movement Research at Judson Church, Painted Bride, Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance, Dance Place. KYL/D Artist-in-residence and more. Dance career highlights include dancing with Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Latin Ballet of Virginia, Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers, and Ananya Dance Theater. Anito writes for a dance publication, thlNKing Dance, an MFA in Dance graduate from Hollins University, and is a Visiting Assistant Professor at Muhlenberg College. anigavino.com

Marie Lloyd Paspe (Brooklyn, NY) is a Filipina-American dance and vocal performer, installation choreographer, director, educator, culture bearer, and writer. Paspe is a performer with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company since 2018, Bessie-awarded for Outstanding Choreography for contributions for BTJ/AZ's production of "Deep Blue Sea," the 2022 Asian American Arts Alliance Jadin Wong Fellow, and the 2023 Gallim Moving Artist Resident. Of Filipina descent, she was born in Singapore, grew up in Mississauga, Canada, migrated to Bellingham, MA in 2000, and received U.S. Citizenship in June 2019. Her work to re-root the small, brown, hypersexualized body through postmodern and pole dance forms exist within—yet juxtaposes—the eurocentric, the patrionormative, and the white-dominated space. Paspe's choreography and performance have been presented internationally in Germany, Israel, the

Philippines, and China; and nationally in NYC, Boston, LA, Philadelphia, Jersey City, and Minneapolis. She has been featured in Taikang Space (Beijing, China), an artist-in-residence at TOPAZ Arts (Queens, NYC), movement director of treya lam's residency at MASS MoCA (North Adams, MA), and a Creatives Rebuild NY grant recipient. Her dance and vocal performance have been featured in The New York Times and Fjord Review. marielloypaspe.com

Kimberly Bartosik (Brooklyn, NY) is a Bessie Award winning and Guggenheim Fellow choreographer whose work has been commissioned and presented by BAM Next Wave Festival, FIAF's Crossing the Line Festival, ADF, Torn Space Theater, New York Live Arts, LUMBERYARD, American Realness, and others. She has toured to Supersense: Festival of the Ecstatic (Australia), Bratislava in Movement (Slovakia), Wexner Arts Center, Dance Place, ADF, The Yard, MASS MoCA/Jacob's Pillow, FlynnSpace, Bates Dance Festival, Columbia College, CCN de Franche-Comté à Belfort, Festival Rencontres Chorégraphique Internationales de Seine-Saint Denis, Artdanthe Festival, and others. Bartosik is a recipient of the Doris Duke Foundation Performing Artist Recovery Fund in the New York Community Trust and the Virginia B. Toulmin Women Leaders in Dance Fellowship at Center for Ballet and the Arts at NYU. Other awards include NEFA's National Dance Project Production & Touring Grant and Community Engagement Fund; MAP Fund; Jerome Foundation; FUSED (French-US Exchange in Dance); USArtists International; Foundation for Contemporary Arts; American Dance Abroad; and others. Bartosik is a 2020 Bessie Award Honoree for Outstanding Production and Outstanding Performer (Burr Johnson) for *through the mirror of their eyes*. She also received a Bessie Award for Exceptional Artistry for her 9 years of dancing in the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. daela.org

Helanius J. Wilkins (Boulder, CO) is a Louisiana native and Colorado transplant. He is a choreographer, performance artist, educator, certified Colorado Change Leader, and activist. Wilkins's creative research and projects are rooted in the interconnections of American contemporary performance, cultural history, and identities of Black men. His projects examine the raced dancing body and ways ritual can access knowledge. He uses remembering to piece together and liberate Black identity through performance. Having choreographed 60+ works, foundations/organizations including NEA, NEFA National Dance Project, National Performance Network (NPN), and DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities have supported his work. He founded and artistically directed D.C.-based EDGEWORKS Dance Theater, an all-male dance company predominantly of Black men that toured nationally and internationally (2001 - 2014). He is Associate Chair and Director of Dance at the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder). He is a member of the National Board of Directors of the American College Dance Association (ACDA) for the Northwest region and is a former member of the Colorado Council on Creative Industries, a position he was appointed to in 2018 for a 4-year term by Governor Jared Polis. www.helaniusj.com

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