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



Photo credits (L to R): Marina Magalhães (photo Bobby Gordon), Kara Jenelle Wade (photo Wes Klain), and anna thompson & taylor knight of slowdanger (photo courtesy of the artists).

AKRON, Ohio (January 5, 2024)—**The National Center for Choreography - Akron (NCCAkron)** welcomes the fifth cohort of their **Creative Administration Research (CAR)** program. NCCAkron recently announced \$1 million in renewed funding for this program, supported by the Mellon Foundation. The artists of this new cohort are **Marina Magalhães** (Santa Cruz, CA), **Kara Jenelle Wade** (Atlanta, GA), and **taylor knight & anna thompson** of **slowdanger** (Pittsburgh, PA).

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.” For the past three years, NCCAkron has built a think tank of Artists and Thought Partners across 16 states to do this work. With the continued support from the Mellon Foundation, NCCAkron welcomes these three new teams to the program this year.

Since 2020, the program has initiated five 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 22 Artist Teams to date.

Marina Magalhães (Santa Cruz, CA) is a border-crosser, bridge-builder, and dance-maker from Brazil; her long-term collaborative project, *Body as Crossroads*, seeks to generate and share listening practices of body, spirit, and land so as to mobilize dance as change-making praxis. slowdanger (Pittsburgh, PA) is a multidisciplinary performance entity that makes live and digital works at the intersection of movement, sound, technology, physiological centering, and ontological examination. Kara Jenelle Wade (Atlanta, GA) is a multi-faceted movement artist; through dance, spoken word, and audience engagement, she utilizes oral histories and personal experiences to cultivate visuals and performances that she calls “Melanin Rich Projects.”

“We were thrilled by the entire applicant pool,” says NCCAkron Executive/Artistic Director Christy Bolingbroke. “Making this opportunity an open application continues to affirm the interest and demand for what Creative Administration Research has to offer — to better understand and interrogate how the business of dance gets done while also writing the next chapter for dancemaking.”

New CAR Artist slowdanger remarks, “Creative Administration Research means imagining new systems for emergent artistic entities that support one's ability to dream. CAR creates a scaffolding for resonance, for the artist, their team, and current/possible audiences.”

Marina Magalhães expands, “Often the very things we see as inconveniences or obstacles to our creative work are unique opportunities for us to practice the very core values that drive it. CAR is about developing mutual care between creation and administration that is aligned in shared values and dissolves the binary of art and business.”

And Kara Jenelle Wade explains, “To me, Creative Administrative Research means meeting an artist where they are and handling business in a way that feels authentic to their journey and for their needs.”

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: 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 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.

In addition to growing the program, NCCAkron continues to seek opportunities to share program learnings with the wider performing arts field. A book on creative administration edited by Tonya Lockyer (WA) and a collaboration between NCCAkron and the University of Akron Press is expected later this year.

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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](http://nccakron.org).

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

### **About the Artists**

**Marina Magalhães** (Santa Cruz, CA) is a border-crosser, bridge-builder, and dance-maker from Brazil currently living on Ohlone land. Her choreography has been called “stirring... hypnotic” by the Los Angeles Times and “riveting... a physical and emotional feat” by South Africa’s Creative Feel Magazine. A recipient of MAP Fund, National Performance Network, and California Arts Council grants, amongst others, Magalhães has shared her work in theaters, museums, nightclubs, and living rooms around the world – including The Ford (LA), Bowery Ballroom (NYC), and Hamburger Bahnhof (Berlin). Magalhães was based on Tongva Land (LA, CA) for seventeen years, where she spearheaded many initiatives dedicated to sharing dance as a tool for racial and healing justice, like the popular Dancing Diaspora platform she ran in partnership with Pieter Space & local artists in 2017-2021. Her current Creative Capital Award-winning project, *Body as a Crossroads*, seeks to generate listening practices of body, spirit, and land so as to mobilize dance as change-making praxis. Magalhães earned her BA in World Arts & Cultures/Dance from UCLA and her MFA in Dance from University of the Arts. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Dance at the Department of Performance, Play & Design at UC Santa Cruz. [marinamagalhaes.com](http://marinamagalhaes.com)

**Kara Jenelle “KJ” Wade** (Atlanta, GA / Los Angeles, CA) is a choreographer, spoken word artist, and international arts educator. As a fellowship recipient, she earned her MFA from UCLA’s Department of World Arts & Cultures/Dance, where her thesis, *ÌYÁguration*, was selected for 6 national film festivals. KJ’s credits include: Beyoncé’s *Black Is King*, Janet Jackson, Lauryn Hill, Coming 2 America, Daddy Yankee, Wiz Kid, Tiwa Savage, Burna Boy, Nike, BET, Latin Grammys, Black Eyed Peas & more. Her choreography highlights music, dance and storytelling practices of the African diaspora, and she’s had a global reach through 19 million views on her YouTube channel and teaching abroad in Spain, Taiwan, Netherlands, France, UK, Nigeria, Kenya, El Salvador, and beyond. KJ currently serves as an Associate

Artistic Director for Ladies of Hip Hop Collective, along with founding Kaliba Jah Creative Collective and being the visionary and co-founder of Delta Chi Xi Honorary Dance Fraternity, Inc. Her recent achievements include 2024 Teaching Artist for Next Level 10.0 Costa Rica, 2023-25 Residency Fellow for The Creatives Project, 2023 92NY Future Dance Festival, 2022 National Black Arts Festival Project grant awardee, and joining the Creative Administration Research cohort with NCCAkron 2024. [karajenelle.com](http://karajenelle.com)

**taylor knight & anna thompson** are co-founding artistic directors of **slowdanger** (Pittsburgh, PA), a multidisciplinary performance organism. slowdanger uses a systematic approach to movement, integrative technology, found material, electronic instrumentation, vocalization, physiological centering, and ontological examination to produce their performance work, which utilizes performance practice to delve into circular life patterning, including effort, transformation, and death. From directing music videos to scoring plays, they transform their shape to adapt to a variety of different containers. slowdanger has performed across the United States, Canada, and Europe in venues ranging from proscenium theaters and galleries to nightclubs and dive bars. In addition to producing multidisciplinary dance/sound performances, we develop soundcores for theater, dance, film, and virtual reality projects, as well as act as interdisciplinary movement consultants for actors, musicians, and architects.

Their work has been presented by The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Carnegie Museum of Art, Usine C, Dance Place, The Warhol Museum, and more. slowdanger was one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" and has been supported by The Foundation for Contemporary Arts, NPN Creation Fund, NDP/NEFA, and The Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation. [slowdangerslowdanger.com](http://slowdangerslowdanger.com)