

For Immediate Release
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Dancers' Group Announces Spring 2021 CASH Dance Grant Recipients



SAN FRANCISCO, CA--May 20, 2021--[Dancers' Group](#), a service and presenting organization in the San Francisco Bay Area, is pleased to announce it has awarded \$105,000 in grants to 30 Bay Area dance artists and organizations. Each grantee will receive \$3,500 as part of the spring 2021 round of CASH Dance.

The CASH Dance program, which has been supporting dancemakers since 1999, was designed by artists for artists, and seeks to support artists and organizations that represent the many diversities of Bay Area dance.

Dancers' Group received 92 applications for this round of funding--60 applications from individual artists and 32 applications from organizations. They were able to provide grants to 16 individual artists and 14 organizations, featuring dance forms such as turf, kathak, contemporary, traditional Chinese, Korean, Middle Eastern, and Congolese dance, and more. Many of the works focus on the experiences of BIPOC artists, and many projects directly address issues of identity, oppression, and racism.

“Given the pandemic, for this round of CASH Dance, Dancers' Group encouraged applications that would support artists and organizations where they are now—and did not require that a creative activity culminate in a performance,” said Wayne Hazzard, Executive Director of Dancers' Group. “The range of applications received reflects the incredible diversity of dance in the Bay Area and especially the need for financial support during this time. We're so proud of the 30 grantees and how their diverse dance practices honor their vision of the moving body.”

"We received a range from dance film project development, to travel plans to study under esteemed teachers, to documenting systemic cultural dance erasure in higher education, to

dance+technology apps, to just simply asking for funds to relieve the financial burden of the pandemic,” said Andréa Spearman, Artist Resource Manager at Dancers’ Group. “It all reminded me of our community’s elasticity and strength to remain true to ourselves and our practice. That IS the art.”

The CA\$H Dance grant is funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Grants for the Arts.

The 30 Spring 2021 Dance grantees are:

Organizations

Afro Urban Society
Alyssandra Katherine Dance
Antara Asthaayi Dance
Bellwether Dance Project
Dancing Around Race
dawsondancesf
Detour Dance
Dohee Lee Puri Arts
GERALDCASELDANCE
Helen Wicks Works
Mud Water
pateldanceworks
RoundAntennae
Vishwa Shanthi

Artists

Byb Chanel Bibene
Elizabeth Boubion
Erik Lee
Evie Ladin
Farah Yasmeen Shaikh
Ishika Seth
Julie Crothers
Malia Byrne
Marcelo Solis
Megan Lowe
Nicole Maria Hoffschneider
Olivia Eng
Ousseynou Kouyate
Rasa Vitalia
Sammay Dizon
Sara Shelton Mann

Organization Projects

Afro Urban Society is an incubator and presenter of Afro-Urban performing and visual arts, culture, media, and social discourse. Through original and curated arts and event production, popular arts education and cultural engagement, they ignite communities to make meaningful connections, be inspired, and live vibrantly.

CASH Dance will support: creating a dance video journal short that explores intimate exploration of safety and connection when we feel at home. They will collect stories from Bay Area community, and choreograph and capture movement via video that illustrates the narratives.

Alyssandra Katherine Dance is a contemporary dance company that was established in London in 2015 and is now based in San Francisco. Their mission is to create innovative and culturally relevant works of art that promote awareness around topics of mental illness, East Asian identity, and female empowerment.

CASH Dance will support: creating a work in progress of *The Oriental Woman*. The piece will explore the stereotypes and fetishization of Asian women in Western culture and how, historically, Asian women's identities are strongly defined by the misogynistic white perspective in occidental countries.

Antara Asthaayi Dance was established in Mountain View in 2016 by Artistic Director Antara Bhardwaj, an established kathak artist trained under Pandit Chitresh Das. The mission: to entertain, educate and inspire audiences through the story-telling dance form of kathak.

CASH Dance will support: general operating that will support the first phase of their "Guru Bahen" program, a term referring to two women studying with the same teacher (guru-sisters). This program celebrates and fosters sisterhood amongst the kathakas, regardless of where they may be on their individual journey of the art form —from beginners to advanced students.

Bellwether Dance Project, Artistic Director Amy Foley, delves into the myriad ways in which individuals make meaning. They explore unsettling human experiences, ranging from the deeply personal to the laughably universal and examine the ways humans experience and translate the events of inner and outer lives.

CASH Dance will support: the continued development of *Aurora Sad Magic*. Through research, movement language generation, and working on a score with composer Ben Juodvalkis the work is inspired by the Aurora Borealis and the ancient understanding of that natural phenomenon.

Dancing Around Race explores the socio-cultural dimensions of race within the interconnected fields of choreography, dance presentation, dance training, funding, curatorial practices, and dance criticism in U.S. contemporary and postmodern dance.

CASH Dance will support: compensate core members Gerald Casel, David Herrera, Yayoi Kambara, Bhumi B. Patel, and Raissa Simpson and initiate three goals (curation, professional development, and web development) to address critical areas of systemic racism through dialogue, writing, and artistic exercises.

Detour Dance, founded in 2009 by Artistic Directors Kat Cole and Eric Garcia, is a devised dance-theater ensemble based in San Francisco. Their mission is to center the prismatic

experiences of queers & people of color. They are committed to creating bold performance that promotes intersectional justice through collective storytelling.

CASH Dance will support: Creating *UP ON HIGH*, a multi-genre work that interrogates the notions of legacy and inheritance, asking "What is built that has resonance beyond us?" The project is a series of short dance films that bring a drag aesthetic and artistry to the dance-theater genre.

Dohee Lee Puri Arts is the producing organization of performance artist Dohee Lee. Their mission is to create and tour multidisciplinary, community performance rituals under the direction of Dohee Lee. They utilize art to heal fractured relationships in the urban environment - relationships between humans and the land and between individuals and their communities.

CASH Dance will support: general operating funds to pay staff and collaborating artists to premiere *MU* in Fall 2021 at YBCA.

GERALDCASELDANCE creates and presents dances that ask questions about human beings – who they are, what they do and how their actions affect the world in which they live. Dropping hints of narrative while inviting space for contemplation, each dance delivers multiple levels of interpretation by combining movement and spatial composition with metaphor and imagery.

CASH Dance will support: the premiere of *Not About Race Dance* in December, with co-production support from CounterPulse.

dawsondancesf continues to break down the barriers placed on classical ballet and bring to light the strength and beauty that artists possess within themselves. The organization aims to construct an atmosphere that allows the dancers to explore their own artistic voices through Gregory Dawson's choreography and vision.

CASH Dance will support: general operating support for administration of a tour to the Dance St Louis Festival, a Home Season at Dance Mission Theater in early winter, and development of the *Human Nature Project*, to premiere at the Gray Area Foundation in Spring 2022.

Helen Wicks Works combines dance and socio-political perspectives in circus-informed aerial performance. The company performs in outdoor public and community spaces, igniting the imagination of multigenerational audiences to spark individuals' imagination, collective envisioning, and spiritual relief throughout the pandemic.

CASH Dance will support: creation and performance of *ON AIR*. Planned outdoor events/performances will take place in Summer and Fall 2021. Potential collaborators include SF Parks Alliance's Skybridge on Stevenson (Thursday night series) and Z Space, SF.

Mud Water is a collective that highlights turfing, a distinctly Oakland "homegrown" Black dance form and social movement that embodies joy, liberation, and the art of storytelling. Their work investigates themes such as trauma from systemic/structural racism, displacement, and (de)colonization, using dance freestyle, performance, and stage work as methods of research and as pathways of healing.

CASH Dance will support: planning and working with Mosaic America (formerly Sangam Arts) to produce a new work that explores multiracial solidarity and intersectional themes such

as our individual right to space and sense of belonging, and our individual relationship to land and to our physical bodies.

pateldanceworks centers marginalized voices at the intersection of embodied research and activism, using dance and movement as a pursuit for liberation and decolonization.

CASH Dance will support: research and development of the multi-year project, *fault lines*. The upcoming research phase will include embodied vocal training, accessing digital archives resonant with thematic content, building connections globally with queer Asian artists, and provide movement training intensives for project collaborators.

RoundAntennae is a free choreographic mentorship program; a relationship between experienced choreographers (facilitators) and emerging and independent choreographers (artists). RoundAntennae believes in the talent of each artist, supports their creativity and artistic self-worth.

CASH Dance will support: mentorship from KT Nelson and Joanna Haigood to co-facilitate 14 emerging choreographers in two Intensive Work Periods and host four Informal Showings at Zaccho Dance Theater and ODC.

Vishwa Shanthi is a secular cultural organization that promotes peace through Dance, Yoga, and other allied arts and was started in 1999 by Shreelata Suresh.

CASH Dance will support: the creation of a library of videos and interactive publications - the series on Hindu Gods and Goddesses, the 9 emotions (navarasas), the 8 kinds of nayikas/heroines (Ashtanayikas), and other dance-related topics. The library will be available online for Bharatanatyam students and the community at large.

Artist Projects

Byb Chanel Bibene is a dance educator, choreographer and performer. He is the founder and Artistic Director of Kiandanda Dance Theater and the Mbongui Square Festival. Bibene's aesthetic sensibility is rooted in the dance culture of his country of origin, the Republic of Congo.

CASH Dance will support: *[Re]member* (June 2021), a project that connects Black bodies via their shared history in fighting for liberties and against slavery. It portrays the restoration of African pride and the solid connection that Black bodies have by awakening the Black consciousness that defines resilience and freedom.

Erik Lee is a dancer, choreographer, and instructor whose movement style is a mixture of modern, contemporary, ballet; African diasporic styles of Hip Hop, Congolese, Talawa; and gesture-based movement common in Black church praise dance.

CASH Dance will support: The formation of *His Legacy Dance Company*. The company will be unique in its faith-based content, African Diasporic and American contemporary movement, and mixture of formal and informal means of presentation.

Evie Ladin is a percussive-dancer, choreographer, composer, banjo player and square-dance caller whose intercultural music/dance performances, recordings and teaching reconnect Appalachian arts with other African-Diaspora traditions. She is the Artistic Director of MoToR/dance, an all-female percussive dance company.

CASH Dance will support: Development of *Water In The Kettle*, a three-part work exploring American foundational ideas of freedom and equality and the disconnect between claims to those values and actualization on several levels, including the complex feminine and cultural racism.

Elizabeth Boubion is a second generation Chicana and queer choreographer, the artistic director of the Piñata Dance Collective founded in 2011, and founder of Festival of Latin American Contemporary Choreographers (FLACC) founded in 2014.

CASH Dance will support: Development of and research for a solo film project that focuses on Boubion's own personally transformative experiences with the embodied content surrounding gender-based violence, pushing through fear in the desert alone, and dancing for the lost victims of femicide.

Farah Yasmeen Shaikh is a Pakistani American Muslim Kathak dancer committed to presenting traditional and innovative performances, training, and collaborative partnerships in Kathak dance and other traditions related to South Asian classical arts. She is also the Founder of Noorani Dance and host of the Heartistry Talkshow podcast.

CASH Dance will support: Shaikh's travel to Pakistan to study with Nahid Siddiqui, renowned Pakistani Kathak artist.

Ishika Seth is an independent artist creating work, performing and teaching in the Bay Area. She was the Assistant Artistic Director of the Mona Khan Company for a decade and has also showcased her work under the name Ishika Seth & Dancers. She seeks to create work combining her Indian Contemporary roots and her training in Western dance forms. She is interested in examining & dismantling systems of patriarchy and colonization and how they affect the process of art-making.

CASH Dance will support: The process and production of more dance films that merge classic Indian dance and contemporary/modern dance styles.

Julie Crothers is a white, disabled, queer dancer, choreographer, and educator based in Berkeley. Her solo choreographic work has been presented on stages throughout the Bay Area and beyond, including at CHOPSHOP Dance Festival, PUSHfest Dance Festival, and the International Women in Dance Leadership Conference.

CASH Dance will support: Space rental fees and compensation for Crothers, her collaborators, and a dramaturg, and commissioning an original piece from composer Phillip G Anderson. *Big Brother* (April 2022) is an exploration of the artist's queer and disabled identities through the lens of the conservative Church of Christ that the artist grew up in.

Malia Byrne is a mixed, Asian-American dancer and creator based in Chochenyo Ohlone land (the Bay Area). She is co-associate artistic director of Skywatchers and a founding member of the queer, femme, horizontally-led arts collective Asian Babe Gang. Her personal movement arts and performance practice centers ancestral lineage, body reclamation, storytelling, and friendship.

CASH Dance will support: an artist retreat to support planning, research, and development for *SINGER*, which explores the intrapersonal, generational, and social impacts of removing our bodies from the natural cycles in which they belong by examining the often racialized and

feminized act of sewing. This includes transportation, lodging, and creative time for Byrne and her collaborator.

Marcelo Solis has been an Argentine Tango dancer, choreographer, and instructor for over 30 years. He has taught and performed internationally and has also published articles about the tradition and history of the form.

CASH Dance will support: A live in-person socially distanced and livestreamed Argentine Tango Milonga in San Francisco.

Megan Lowe is a devoted dancer, performer, choreographer, singer-songwriter, dance filmmaker, teacher, and administrator, with Chinese and Irish ancestry weaved into the fabric of her being. She makes dances with an affinity for dynamic places and partners and is deeply rooted in a community of women creatives engaged in site-specific, contemporary, and aerial dance.

CASH Dance will support: Artist fees for "*Tangram*" (Dec 2021), a dynamic partnering duet that challenges traditional ideas of male/female duets and lifts up the leadership and innovation of Chinese descendent artists in Bay Area dance and improvisation.

Nicole Maria Hoffschneider is an award-winning dance artist that has studied, taught, and performed contemporary and traditional forms of MENAHT (Middle Eastern, North African, Greek, Turkish) dance for over a decade.

CASH Dance will support: The process and production of a solo dance and music film in collaboration with ODC Theater.

Olivia Eng is a multi-disciplinary artist, performer, teacher, and choreographer with a dance background rooted in modern, house, West African (Guinea, Senegal), ballet, hip-hop, salsa, and Afro-Brazilian dance. Olivia developed S.C.A.R.S. (Strength, Courage, and Resilience of the Soul), an ongoing project that involves dance, storytelling, poetry, music, and photography to create a series of empowering films and live performances.

CASH Dance will support: S.C.A.R.S. next dance film, *Let Me Be*, that addresses BIPOC experiences of accepting and celebrating the ethnic traits and cultural practices that they were once shamed and bullied for.

Ousseynou Kouyate is a traditional West African artist that merges art forms from Senegal, Mali, and Guinea. Specifically portraying oral histories through traditional dance and music.

CASH Dance will support: Experimental folkloric works that will combine traditional dance, griot song repertoires, drum rhythms, and associated 13th century Manding instruments, specifically, the bala, kora, and ngoni.

Rasa Vitalia has performed all over the Bay Area as a samba, salsa, and belly dancer for public, private, and corporate events. In addition to being a dance performer, Rasa is a vocalist, songwriter, and performance artist and one of America's most highly regarded popular solo entertainers.

CASH Dance will support: Finding and renting a space that is suitable for teaching belly dance, samba, and salsa virtually as well as hosting in-person parties and classes as restrictions are lifted.

Sammy Dizon is a Filipinx American choreographer, interdisciplinary artist, and cultural producer of Bikol, Kapampangan, and Ilokano descent who bridges the traditional and contemporary in centering embodied storytelling as a vehicle for collective healing and liberation. Through multimedia dance theatre, she invokes rituals for remembering and decolonizing.

CASH Dance will support: development of a dance film, *Memorya*, that explores navigating Alzheimer's and other mental health complexities in the Filipinx and other immigrant communities.

Sara Shelton Mann trained and performed in the companies of Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis, the Halifax Dance Co-Op. She settled in San Francisco, founding and directing Contraband (1979-1996) and influencing the evolution of contemporary Bay Area dance. For over fifty years, she has mentored hundreds of professional dancers and choreographers in the Bay Area and internationally, and connected local artists with their peers from around the globe.

CASH Dance will support: The creation of a training manual that codifies Mann's pedagogy. This process includes archive research; working with an assistant to catalog, organize, and assemble materials for the publication of the manual; and collaborating with a videographer to film supplemental training exercises.

***Above - Pictured left to right, Detour Dance (photo by Eric Garcia); pateldanceworks (photo by Em Kane); Farah Yasmeen Shaikh (photo by Magic Lantern:Maud Daujean)*