



Contact:

Stacie Ma'a, President

Gerbode Foundation

510-915-8048, info@gerbode.org

For Immediate Release:

August 24, 2021

Gerbode Foundation Awards Eight \$50,000 Commissions for New Choreography Projects

New dance and movement-based projects selected for its 2021 Special Awards in the Arts program

Berkeley, Calif.—The Gerbode Foundation, in partnership with The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, is pleased to announce the recipients of a \$300,000 initiative to support the creation and production of new dance and movement-based projects by choreographers and dance artists. The [2021 Choreography Awards](#) is the first round of the Special Awards in the Arts program and is a three-year, \$900,000 initiative to support the commissioning of individual artists creating new works in dance (2021), theater (2022), and music/sound design (2023). As a result of the impact of COVID-19 on the performing arts field, and a 46% increase in applications, the Gerbode Foundation's Board of Directors approved an additional \$100,000 for this round, resulting in awards to 8 recipients instead of 6, the number of awards approved in every round since 1987.

The new dance projects will be commissioned and premiered by Bay Area nonprofit organizations between July 2022 and December 2024. Each organization will receive a grant of \$50,000: \$12,500 or more will represent a commissioning fee to a California-based choreographer and dance artist, and the remaining funds will be used by the presenting organization for expenses related to the creation and premiere of the new dance work.

The recipients of the 2021 Choreography Awards are listed in alphabetical order by organization:

Artists in Motion Bay Area & Pin@y Educational Partnerships/Patrick Cruz

In *Art of Work*, through a choreographic mentorship process, Patrick Cruz will explore the intersections between Hip Hop dance, Filipino identities, colonial trauma, and somatic healing work. Through conversations around labor, healing, and dance, the choreographers and dancers become historians and storytellers. The project will culminate in a film that uses dance to explore an understanding of self, family, community, and what it's like to work in the world as a Filipino American. *Art of Work* is where dance is in conversation with history, healing, and identity.

Authentic Arts & Media/jose esteban abad

&theruptureisnow. is a multimedia performance choreographed by jose e. abad in collaboration with an all-queer Black cast of interdisciplinary artists: Styles Alexander, Gabriel Christian, Clarissa Dyas, and Stephanie Hewett. Honoring the Black Radical Tradition of experimentation, improvisation, and intergenerational wisdom circles, these artists will engage in the exploration of the expansiveness and future of Black life within the diaspora to create a genre-defying performance that hybridizes improvisation, contemporary dance, electronic music, altar installations, and rituals of healing through somatic work.

Dance Mission Theater/Adia Tamar Whitaker

Adia Tamar Whitaker's project *Following The Road to Ose Tura*, is a dance and music response to *The Road to Ose Tura*, a dance film created by Ifa priestess, dancer, choreographer, and scholar,

Efeya Ifadayo Olaberinjo Makala Sampson. Before Sampson transitioned into the ancestral realm, she charged Whitaker and other dance family members with setting the second part of her ancestral dance prayers and completing the dance film she began. *Following The Road to Ose Tura* is a four-chaptered, site-specific, ritual dance theater performance featuring Whitaker's choreography, including film projections of Sampson's work.

Mahea Uchiyama Center for International Dance/Meridith Kawēkiu Aki

This new dance project will introduce the tradition of hula ki'i, a type of hula where dancers use puppets to tell the story. This work will encompass the research of classical themes, the construction of the hula puppets, and development in the hula ki'i tradition. Meridith Kawēkiu Aki will work with key collaborators in Hawai'i to expand and deepen her experience in the form. She will then lead members of Hālau Ka Ua Tuahine to construct and dance with the puppets. The project will culminate in a performance featuring the lead artist, the hālau, and key collaborators.

Mosaic America/My-Linh Le

My-Linh will work with the Oakland-based turf/dance theater collective known as Mud Water Theatre to produce a new evening-length performance piece that investigates dance as a method of autoethnographic research and as a pathway to healing. Autoethnography is the reflexive study of self in the context of one's own culture, using personal experience to understand cultural experience. The resulting research will be presented as a staged performance piece that critically and deeply represents the lives and experiences of the participating artists, whose ethnic backgrounds include African-American, Nicaraguan-American, and Filipino-American, and that incorporates artistic disciplines such as dance, storytelling, art technology, and digital media.

Noorani Dance/ Farah Yasmeen Shaikh

In *Saabit Rehna* (Persistence), Farah Yasmeen Shaikh, with her 25 years of Kathak practice, explores the tumultuous evolution of performance and preservation of the arts in Pakistan. In collaboration with dancers, musicians, writers, and filmmakers, Farah will research and document the evolving style of dance and music that is accepted in that country. The culmination of these collaborations will be performances by Farah, the Noorani Dance Company, and other dancers and musicians of the South Asian arts, incorporating the findings from this research, to honor the persistence of artists in Pakistan, and the power and beauty of what they have created to ensure the survival of arts in their country.

The Lab SF/Indira Allegra

Indira Allegra's *The Dispersal of a Feeling is Another Subject* is an evening-length dance and installation-based performance which explores the choreography of indecision—the everyday movements, tics, utterances, and moments of quiet associated with not knowing what to do next. This extensive, multidisciplinary project will be composed of Allegra's original sculpture and choreography alongside videos and interviews collected by the artist, documenting indecisive moments enacted by people in public spaces. The audience will experience this immersive performance in the round as one continuous happening for 60 minutes.

Zaccho Dance Theatre/Veronica Blair

Inspired by legendary playwright/poet Ntozake Shange's "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf," *COLORED GRRLS* is a reimagining of an American theater classic expressed through the lens of contemporary circus. Using circus, aerial arts, dance, and original text, *COLORED GRRLS* peers into the lives of five women of African descent as they share intimate stories of existing in a world shaped by patriarchy, sexism, racism, and the sisterhood that grows from these shared experiences.

“As we start to recover from the impact that COVID-19 has had on artists, we look forward to the reemergence of their artistry in bold, new, innovative ways,” said Stacie Ma’a, the president of the Gerbode Foundation. “We are thrilled to support these choreographers and dance artists, all of whom are pushing the boundaries of the creative process with their unique approaches to developing and imagining this new work.”

The Gerbode Foundation was assisted in making these grants by an advisory panel composed of the following nationally respected dance and movement-based experts:

Maia Maiden, aka Rah Fyah, is a scientist by day, dancer by night. She has been a leader in the Minnesota dance community for over 20 years. A South Minneapolis native, her work as a dancer and choreographer in Hip Hop led her to create Maia Maiden Productions, a Twin Cities based arts presenter. She has served on numerous fellowship/grant panels and has been recognized with many honors, including Minnesota Sage Dance Award for Outstanding Performance, McKnight International Choreographers Residency Partner, and Ordway Sally Award for Initiative, to name a few.

A native of Honolulu, **Jeff Michael Rebudal** is the Artistic Director of Rebudal Dance. He choreographed the American premiere of Philip Humberg’s *Paper Dolls* in Washington, DC. His opera and theater choreography credits include *L’Etoile* (New York City Opera, Opéra de Montréal, and other international performances), *Romeo et Juliette*, *La Traviata*, *La Rondine*, and *A Little Night Music*, for which the Metropolitan Opera News described the dances as “...delightful choreography.... a bright moment.” Jeff is also an original founding member of the critically acclaimed Seán Curran Company.

Pramila Vasudevan is a cultural worker and transdisciplinary artist. She is the founding Artistic Director of Aniccha Arts (since 2004), an experimental collaborative producing site-specific performances that examine agency, voice, and group dynamics within community histories, institutions, and systems. She is the director of Naked Stages (since 2016), a program for early-career performance artists at Pillsbury House Theatre. She received the 2017 Guggenheim and 2016 McKnight Fellowships in Choreography.

Anna Martine Whitehead makes, writes about, and teaches performance as a Black queer art intervention. She is based in the traditional homelands of the Council of Three Fires: the Odawa, the Ojibwe, and the Bodéwadmiakiwen Nations, as well as the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Sauk and Meskwaki, the Kiikaapoi, Peoria, and the Očeti Šakówiŋ Nations (so-called Chicago).

About the Gerbode Foundation

[The Gerbode Foundation](#) is interested in programs and projects offering potential for significant impact. The primary geographical focus is on the San Francisco Bay Area and Hawaii. The Foundation's program areas include advancing truth, justice, the environment, the arts, and special initiatives which include strengthening the philanthropic process and the nonprofit sector.

About the Special Awards Program

Since 1987, the Gerbode Foundation has made innovative grants through its Special Awards Program to Bay Area arts institutions to commission new works from choreographers, playwrights, and composers. The Special Awards Program has also supported visual artists, poets, and multimedia artists.

In a time of cultural shifts and fiscal insecurity in the arts, these coveted, nationally respected awards have helped underwrite culturally and aesthetically diverse, acclaimed new works by prominent artists and emerging ones. These grants have supported artists at critical junctures in their careers; enabled nonprofit local arts groups to develop and debut substantial, original works; and enriched Bay Area audiences, readers, and viewers by giving them first access to ambitious new creations.

###