

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

Daniel Gwirtzman Dance Company announces Upcoming Presentation of Framing Ménerbes

Company: Daniel Gwirtzman Dance Company
Venue: The Schorr Family Firehouse Stage
Location: Johnson City, NY

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Daniel Gwirtzman Dance Company announces an upcoming presentation of Framing Ménerbes in Johnson City, New York on October 15th. The screening will be followed by a Q&A with Daniel Gwirtzman and special guest Eli Horwatt. The screening at The Schorr Family Firehouse Stage includes a 6PM reception, a 7PM screening, and an 8PM Q&A. Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased at <https://firehousetage.org/event-directory/>.

CHOREOGRAPHER DONALD BYRD ON FRAMING MÉNERBES:

"I think the first thing I thought was how beautiful the place is and how lucky those people are to live there. And I also thought that you think it's beautiful too. The beauty of the place was seductive but not in a kind of sinister way, it had a sweetness about the seductiveness of the place, and I thought that that's what you were responding to, that emotional sense of a place, how you felt being there, how you felt being around and with those people, and in a sense it felt a bit like a valentine to them. And so I think that was an interesting way to engage with it. I'm an artist too, so most of us, we make things about ourselves. Not that I'm saying that 'yourself' was not in it, but you were sharing yourself in terms of how you perceived these people, and with us as a result of that. There are things about it that I found for that reason moving. I found it moving because you have a kind of generosity that way, with the people and the place. That generosity always moves me. I'm not a particularly generous person. So when I see generosity in other people I'm kind of touched by it. I was touched by that. You are, I would say, an abstract, non-linear thinker and the film is kind of an abstract non-linear piece. And what that does I think is it invites us as a viewer to make our own connections. And I like that. You don't tell us what to think, what to feel, any of that stuff. And I really appreciate that."

Framing Ménerbes frames a stunning village in Provence, its natural beauty of far-reaching vistas, mountains, vineyards, and the light for which it is known, taken in through the prism of choreographer, filmmaker, and dancer Daniel Gwirtzman, celebrating thirty years as a New York City artist in 2025. The film combines the vicarious excitement of a travelogue with a documentary-like portrait of an artist's creative process, immersing the viewer into the picturesque landscapes, charming architecture, and beauty of dance. Daniel shot each frame of the film, capturing the dancer who has been with him the longest, himself! A dozen participants from the region joined as performers in this film which illuminates the inspiration to produce art. The film had its European (France) and US (NYC) premieres in June 2025.

SAYS DANIEL ABOUT FRAMING MÉNERBES:

"I was given a huge gift and I ran with it, following the sun's trajectory and exploiting it to shoot. Days were long because the days were long. I was up before the sun rose and after it sunk late at night. Knowing the time was limited I pushed myself to get out, into some precarious places at times, and create. Most happily, bounding into Provence with this energy and friends I had met the first time I was there in 2016, there was a level of support, which spread out within the village; sixteen participants who were intrigued answered the pied piper's call. The goal of each day was to highlight a place that could be lit by the sun. A gift to chase it and be so inspired. Framing Ménerbes is the result of this. As a dancer, to be in this shape at this age was a gift as well. I was pushed and I answered my own call as a choreographer. The excitement of this synergy undergirds the film."

SPECIAL GUEST BIO

Eli Horwatt is a scholar and film curator focused on the intersection of documentary and experimental media. He completed his PhD at York University (Toronto) with a dissertation on the aesthetic legacy of conceptual and post-minimal art in experimental film and documentary. He has programmed for the Wavelengths sidebar at the Toronto International Film Festival, Hot Docs International Documentary Festival, Pleasure Dome, and at Colgate University's Alternative Cinema series. His writing on experimental documentary, contemporary found footage practice, and institutional critique in new media art may be found in journals such as Framework, World Records, CineAction, and Millennium Film

Journal. His most recent work examines guerilla projections by The Illuminator Collective in New York City and organizing by independent filmmakers for fair remuneration at film festivals.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Direction, Choreography, Filming, Editing: Daniel Gwartzman

Cast: Daniel Gwartzman, Philippe Anthoine, Franck Benel, Ophélie Brisset, Mireille Cartet, Virginie Cornet-Butcher, Isabelle Ducimetièrre, Myriss Mouisson, Paulina Nourissier-Muhlstein, Nancie Piskor, Sven Slazenger, Susanne Turner

Original Score: Jeff Story

Production: Daniel Gwartzman Dance Company, Dora Maar Cultural Center

Lightning sometimes does strike twice. Daniel Gwartzman has the sole distinction of being the only dance artist to receive a fellowship from the Dora Maar Cultural Center in Provence, France. This past June he received a second. Since the residency's inception in 2006, more than 300 artists and writers have been awarded 25 National Endowment for the Arts Grants, 18 Fulbright Fellowships, 11 Rockefeller Foundation awards, 19 PEN writing awards, among many other accolades. The Center offers artists' residencies for "individuals of exceptional vision to produce enduring works of art, literature and scholarship."

Daniel was in residence for five weeks last June and describes this period as an unusually prolific time, living in a house Picasso acquired for his longtime muse and lover, the famed surrealist painter and photographer Dora Maar. He developed an extensive series of dance photography, all self-portraiture, filmed in situ, in beautiful Provence. The unique setting of this landscape, renowned for centuries to artists, coupled with the choreographic imprint, has yielded a unique trove of vibrant visual imagery.

This photographic imagery has been folded into the larger project he developed, a dance film titled Framing Ménerbes, which premiered in Provence on June 19, 2025. A call for participants was circulated in the village of Ménerbes, and surrounding villages, asking not for dance experience, only interest. Sixteen people, ranging in age from 30 to 90, worked on individual projects with Daniel, not one of them a professional dancer, and some new to dance completely. Several of these encounters are part of the final film, which showcases Daniel both alone and with these inhabitants of Provence.

DANIEL SHARES MORE ABOUT FRAMING MENERBES:

"It was an incredible and rare experience to live in Dora Maar's house, a house that has never been made public or turned into a museum. Rather, it continues to function as a site for the contemplation and production of art. The studio I was given was Dora's actual bedroom. Looking out the windows each day from this space, situated at the top of the village's ridge, there was a profound mixture of emotions, taking in the unfathomable beauty of the valley and thinking about the depression she fell into and how damaged she was by the break-up of her relationship with Picasso. I considered how for her the Maison was a golden prison. These opposing themes of being within and without, beauty and despair, freedom and containment informed the research of the film, with its use of windows as a motif. At the end of the day how we frame anything is how we see it. The long summer days were bookended by the best lighting available. I had never been more energized or inspired, chasing the sun from before its rise, and finishing the last shoot each day with its setting, exhausted, and eager to wake up the next morning and begin again. Framing Ménerbes captures this compulsive impulse to create, which I was able to spread to the village, earning the nickname by residents as the 'Mayor of Ménerbes.'"

Daniel Gwartzman celebrates thirty years as an NYC company director and choreographer. Since co-founding Artichoke Dance Company in 1995, "a welcome addition to the New York Dance scene" (The New York Times), he has choreographed and performed without pause. Reviews from Artichoke's debut concert earned him comparisons to Mark Morris, by Elizabeth Zimmer in The Village Voice, whose company he toured internationally with over several years as a guest.

An artist/scholar, Daniel Gwartzman is deeply immersed in multiple arenas: as a producer, dancer, educator, and filmmaker, known for his blend of innovative and charismatic work. Collaborations blend genres and disciplines, take risks, involve community, promote optimism, and celebrate individuality and humanity. The New Yorker and The Village Voice describe him as "a choreographer of high spirits and skill," and "an abundantly inventive artist with a subtle defiance of gender roles." The New York Times writes "Mr. Gwartzman does know that in dance less can be more. He can evoke strong feelings with a few gestures." He has been awarded commissions, residencies and fellowships nationally and abroad. He is a professor at Ithaca College's School of Music, Theatre and Dance and contributes nationally to the dance education field through his service as a Board Member of the National Dance Education Organization and as Chair of the University of Michigan's School of Music, Theatre and Dance Alumni Board, his alma mater.

Gwartzman's short dance film Charged, which premiered in 2021 and has since been screened in ten festivals including those in Ireland, Greece, Venezuela, London and the American Dance Festival, will screen November 1 and 2 as part of the Moving Images Festival at the Egomio Performing Arts Centre in Nicosia, Cyprus, selected from over 300 submissions.

Daniel Gwartzman Dance Company, known for its optimistic ethos, was formed in 1998. Since its inception, it has demonstrated a commitment to education operating with the philosophy and programming that everyone can join the dance. Incorporating dance and story into the film medium has been a consistent practice along with creating original programming for the stage. His repertoire has earned praise for its humor, musicality, stylistic diversity, and accessibility. The Company's acclaimed recent creation, Dance With Us, a free online educational resource received leadership support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and is designed to demystify choreography and increase comfort viewing and speaking about dance. The digital resource showcases the Company's decade-long practice working in the dance for camera genre. Lincoln Center and The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts presented the Company in 2023 during its 25th Anniversary season in a stand-alone program called Everybody Can Dance. In the summer of 2024 DGDC was in residence at the American Dance Festival where it developed its newest evening-length dance Flashpoint. Highlights include performances at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, The Kennedy Center, Battery Dance Festival, Fire Island Dance Festival, Bryant Park, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and Jazz at Lincoln Center. The Company's AI-themed theater/dance work e-Motion, a collaboration with playwright Saviana Stanesco, was presented in April 2025 during the La MaMa

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Schedule
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