

DISABILITY. DANCE. ARTISTRY.

Wednesday, July 8, 2015

Disability. Dance. Artistry.

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When: Wednesday, July 8, 2015, 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Where: John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 860 11th Avenue, New York City, (MTA Bus: M57, M31, M11)

Join keynote speaker Simi Linton and leaders in the dance and disability communities to discuss the state of the art form. What are the opportunities for educating, developing, collaborating with and presenting disabled artists? How can disability advance innovation, excellence, and impact in dance?

This free, day-long series of convening focuses on a future for dance created and experienced with disabled New Yorkers. Commemorating the 25th anniversary year of the Americans with Disabilities Act, this event is hosted by Dance/NYC in partnership with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, Art Beyond Sight, and Inclusion in the Arts. It builds on recent Dance/NYC research, [Discovering Disability: Data and NYC Dance](#) and is part of a three-year [Dance/NYC initiative](#) to increase inclusion and access to the art form.

[#disabilitydance](#)

Schedule of Sessions

[\(Participants' Bios\)](#)

11:00 a.m. Welcome from Lane Harwell, Executive Director, Dance/NYC, and Victor Calise, Commissioner, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

11:15 a.m. Keynote: Simi Linton, Disability Advocate/Author

12:15 p.m. Session I: Dance Makers on Disability
Deborah Jowitt, Dance critic, author (moderator)
Sidiki Conde, Founder, Tokounou Dance Company
Heidi Latsky, Artistic Director, Heidi Latsky Dance
Kitty Lunn, Artistic Director, Infinity Dance
Alice Sheppard, Dancer, Academic, Activist

The day's discussions lead off with a focus on the artistry and creation of work by disabled dance makers. Panelists will address how we can expand opportunities for dance making with and by disabled artists, and will also explore what are the opportunities that work with disabled artists open up for dance, artistry, excellence, and impact. Questions to be explored include: Will new understandings and hoped-for new creation help generate new meaning not only of disability but also of dance and of dancer? How can those be achieved? What are the biggest challenges and how can the dance community help remove them? What does the dance community need to learn, what action should they take? Panel discussion will be followed by a Q&A session.

1:15 p.m. LUNCH BREAK

1:45 p.m. Session II: Presenting Dance, Artistry, and Disability
Mario Garcia Durham, President and CEO of APAP (moderator)
Jerron Herman, Writer & dancer, Heidi Latsky Dance
Heidi Latsky, Artistic Director, Heidi Latsky Dance
Jed Wheeler, Executive Director for Arts & Culture, Montclair State University

Dance makers and their presenters will explore the dynamics around presenting physically integrated dance, exploring opportunities that deeper engagement with disabled artists open up for presenters and their audiences. Panelists will be encouraged to address barriers to presenting disabled artists and how can they be removed. Participants will explore such questions as: For both artists and presenters, what makes your relationship work? What have you learned by working together about the nexus of disability and dance? What are the opportunities you see for the presenting community and dance audiences? Biggest challenges and how can the dance community help remove them? Panel discussion will be followed by a Q&A session.

3:00 p.m. Address: Tom Finkelpearl, Commissioner, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs

3:15 p.m. Session III: Developing Artists: Opportunities for NYC Dance Spaces
Beth Bienvu, Director of the Office of Accessibility, NEA (moderator)
Cora Cahan, President, New 42nd Street Studios
John McEwen, Executive Director, NJ Theater Alliance and Cultural Access Network of NJ
Nicholas Viselli, Acting Artistic Director, Theatre Breaking Through Barriers
Alexandria Wailes, Actor

Many opportunities exist for the development and nurturing of dance makers. This session explores how space for the creation of dance and the training and development of dancers figure in. Participants will discuss how dance spaces (centers, residencies, studios) can better support the training and development of professional disabled artists and their work. Our panelists will address such questions as: What are the opportunities you see for dance spaces to support the training and development of professional dance artists and their work? What are the biggest challenges and how can the dance community help? Panel discussion will be followed by a Q&A session.

4:15 p.m. BREAK

4:30 p.m. Session IV: Creating Disabled Artists: Dance Education in the NYC Public Schools

Stephen Yaffe, Chairperson, Arts in Special Education Consortium (moderator)

Paul King, Executive Director, Office of Arts & Special Projects, NYC DOE

Zazel O'Garra, Artistic Director, ZCO Dance

Anna Rubenstein, Dance Educator, Manhattan School For Children PS 333

Sandra Stratton Gonzales, Dance Educator, The Children's School PS 372

Rounding out the day's discussions, this session explores the intersection of dance and disabled public schoolchildren, investigating solutions-oriented frameworks. Participants will address how dance instruction in the public schools can support the development of disabled and diverse students who may pursue lives as artists. Panelists will be encouraged to suggest the mechanisms by which the public schools can nurture the education and development of artistry, transferable learning and dance appreciation with disabled young people so that they can explore pathways to being professional artists as well as becoming life long dance learners and audiences. The panel will explore such questions as: What potential for teacher development exist and where? Where can collaborations with the dance community advance access, learning and artistry among disabled students? Panel discussion will be followed by a Q&A session.

Recordings of the event are available at the following links:

- [Welcome by Dance/NYC Director Lane Harwell](#)
- [Opening Remarks: Victor Calise](#)
- [Keynote Address: Simi Linton](#)
- [Address: Tom Finkelpearl](#)
- [Session I: Dance Makers on Disability](#)
- [Session II: Presenting Dance, Artistry, and Disability](#)
- [Session III: Developing Artists - Opportunities for NYC Dance Spaces](#)
- [Session IV: Creating Disabled Artists](#)

Dance/NYC's disability initiative is made possible with leadership support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. It is also made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; by the City of New York, Bill de Blasio, Mayor, and the New York City Council, Melissa Mark-Viverito, Speaker, through the Department of Cultural Affairs, Tom Finkelpearl, Commissioner; and by the National Endowment for the Arts.



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