

DANCE/NYC STATE OF THE ORGANIZATION & SUMMER BREAK

Thursday, August 13, 2020

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By Dance/NYC

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Dear Dance Community,

Today, I write to you, our constituents, to reflect on lessons learned and to establish clear grounds for accountability to what we as an organization can promise in the months and years to come. These reflections come as we close the second year of a period of Dance/NYC's leadership transition, which began on July 31, 2018 with Lane Harwell's transition from the organization.

I came to this position after being a member of the Dance/NYC family for nearly three years, first as the part-time Symposium Coordinator, to eventually serving as the organization's full-time Director of Programming and Justice Initiatives. Before my time at Dance/NYC, and over the past 15 years of working within and in service of the New York City arts community, I've sat in rehearsal rooms supporting the vision of theatre directors and choreographers as a stage manager and production manager, toured around the world, taught students across every generation in over 150+ public schools in NYC, and organized resources and support for members of my local community through faith-based organizations. I too, like many of you, have schlepped costumes and supplies from borough to borough, sought affordable rehearsal space, and pieced together job after job in a life made by freelance work, blood, sweat and tears.

My time at Dance/NYC has been no different, and over the past five years I've had the immense privilege of building on the work of my predecessors by establishing an infrastructure for our public programs, sustaining our Disability. Dance. Artistry. Initiative, launching our Immigrants. Dance. Arts. Initiative, deepening our Racial Justice work, advocating for dance as dignified labor, and redefining our values as an organization and member of the dance field.

Dance/NYC's present-day vision remains to narrow the gap between the community itself and what it needs to thrive--- for dance to thrive here, in New York City. In order to see this vision through, we are committed to timely response to urgent field issues such as racism, ethical work conditions, and equitable pay through open public discourse, rigorous research, and regranting efforts. Being authentically accountable to these services requires first and foremost an internal assessment of our own practices as an organization to ensure that how we function as an institution aligns with our mission. Taking an honest look at our operations, hiring practices, employee benefits and salaries, and all of our relationships including those with our beneficiaries, constituents, and advising bodies has come with both successes and challenges. Such a strategic evaluation of Dance/NYC's internal structures has resulted in many staff transitions and temporary capacity shortages while simultaneously creating stronger cohesion between our values and output.

Dance/NYC was already in its internal evaluation prior to the COVID-19 outbreak; however, the completion of this work has been elongated due to an urgent shift in priorities to offer emergency relief funding to freelance dance workers and small-budget dance making entities ([Coronavirus Dance Relief Fund](#)) and critical advocacy ([#ArtistsAreNecessaryWorkers Campaign](#)) amidst the global crisis. The rapid changes forced by the pandemic, namely shifting all of our public programs, including our entire operations and the 2020 Symposium, from in-person to digital in addition to an unforeseen workload implementing and managing several new regranting programs and accompanying research, drove our team of 16 (the largest it has been to-date) to exhaustion. While it is essential that we continue to deliver the services aligned with our mission of justice, equity, and inclusion, the consequential severe amount of overwork is something that we are decidedly eager to face internally. As the front facing leader of this organization, I believe that if the primary beneficiaries of the work that Dance/NYC undertakes are not our staff, then our work serving the dance community falls short of meeting our stated values and mission. In essence, we need to create and sustain an environment of equity, safety, and respect at home before we can authentically and wholly be in service to the dance community. We cannot give of what we do not have.

In our June [Open Letter To The Dance Community On Taking Action In Support of Black Lives](#) we listed a series of questions to guide actionable change for the field because those are the very questions we ask ourselves as an organization. In response to this, and to allow for our internal assessment to continue in the coming months, Dance/NYC is putting a brief pause on its public facing activity to rest and reset and deeply consider the questions we put forth to the field. As of this Saturday, August 15th through Sunday, August 30th, 2020, we will be closing for a much-needed summer break and in September we will be training new hires and setting intentions as an organization for our work moving forward. We recognize that as a service organization, our work is never finished, and yet also resist the capitalist notion that any single human being or entity is the only source in any community. We will return in the fall with one public event and a sustained focus on research and advocacy efforts. The rest of 2020 will then be spent focused on preparing for our projects in 2021, including our strategic planning process, the launch of a new initiative, the 2021 Symposium, and an upcoming Dance Workforce Census.

During this period of communal reflection we will also ask ourselves how we reframe boundary setting at an institutional level. Dance/NYC's staff is made up of artists, organizers, and workers that mirror the constituents and populations we serve, and setting healthy boundaries around the expectations built around us as an entity is central to dissolving an environment of overwork. In addition, while we have functional roles with titles in the organization, we have been working to diminish overreliance on hierarchical decision-making to deepen our collaborative and interdependent structure. We aim to demystify the idea that executive leadership is an all-knowing source of expertise in the organization. In reality, each member of our staff is a technician and expert in the field and equally as suitable to represent the work of the organization. So we invite you to use us as a resource and reach out with your inquiries to our knowledgeable staff while asking that you extend grace to us if we are unable to respond immediately.

So what does our summer-break mean in practice, and how does it impact you?

For Dance/NYC, it means that our entire staff will be taking a paid vacation to rest and restore. During this period, our remote office will be closed for internal and external activity which includes, but is not limited to, all public-facing communications: E-newsletter, e-blasts, social media, and email.

For your convenience, we have compiled a list of next steps and links where in the interim you can find the answers to your most frequently asked questions and resources until we return which you can find at the bottom of this page.

Thank you for continuing to believe in the work we do, showing up for our conversations and town halls, responding to our research surveys, and applying to our regranting programs.

We exist for you and because of you.

P'alante,



Alejandra Duque Cifuentes
Executive Director

Writing Credit: This letter was written in collaboration with Rosemary Reyes and the Dance/NYC Team.



DANCE/NYC FAQ's

Email Contact:

Please expect a delay in response to any email communications received during this time.

Advocacy:

1. Visit Dance/NYC's resource pages including:
 - a. [COVID-19 Resources](#)
 - b. [Racial Justice Resources](#)
 - c. [NYC Field-Wide Resources](#) - *note that calls are suspended but you can refer to the resources collected over the past few weeks*
 - d. [Sexual Harassment](#)
2. If you would like to continue to engage in discussions dealing with advocacy and other issues of concern to NYC's cultural community, you might consider joining the Culture@3 calls which happen at 3pm Mon-Thurs. These calls are for leaders of nonprofit cultural institutions in NYC to connect with each other. For more information on joining the Culture@3 calls, email Lucy Sexton of New Yorkers for Culture & Arts: lucy@ny4ca.org
3. See New Yorkers for Culture & Arts for more [action items](#)
4. Sign up for [Governor Cuomo's Coronavirus Updates](#) for the latest news and guidelines
5. Check out [Dance/USA's Key Advocacy Issues](#)

Research:

Our COVID-19 Impact Survey will be closed as of August 14, 2020 at 5pm. We are working on a second version of the survey, which we'll release as soon as possible after we return from this pause. In the meantime, you can see the results of the data we've analyzed on our [COVID-19 Impact page](#).

Leadership, Training, Networking and Convening:

There are no ongoing events at this time but included below are resources related to our major initiatives:

1. [#ArtistsAreNecessaryWorkers](#)
As of August 4th, Dance/NYC's [#ArtistsAreNecessaryWorkers](#) campaign conversation series concluded. You can find an archive of all #AANW conversations [not captioned] on [Dance/NYC's Facebook Page](#) and the growing archive of captioned conversation videos on our [YouTube page](#). Visit [Dance/NYC/ArtistsAreNecessaryWorkers/Tune-In](#) for full conversation recap information.
2. [Disability, Dance, Artistry, Initiative](#)
Visit this page for information related to this initiative that aims to advance inclusion and access to the art form for disabled people including: [research reports](#), [resources and accessibility guides](#) and [recent fellowship recipients](#).
3. [Immigrants, Dance, Arts](#)
Visit this page for information related to this initiative that aims to extend the role of dance artistry in fostering the inclusion, integration, and human rights of immigrants in NYC including: [research reports](#), and [resources](#).

Dance.NYC, Advertisements, Communications, and Press:

1. ADVERTISEMENTS: If you are interested in advertising with Dance/NYC during this period, please note the following:
 - a. E-newsletter and social media ads will not be available from Saturday, August 15th through Sunday, August 30th. If you wish to submit ad placements for social media or our e-newsletter for Monday, August 31, 2020 please be sure to do so directly on our website no later than Thursday, August 27, 2020 at 3:00 pm EST.

b. Listings and Free Dance.NYC Calendar: Listings and events added to Dance.NYC's event calendar will continue to be available during the summer break. To place a listing, please visit: <https://www.dance.nyc/place-free-listings-and-purchase-ads>

2. PRESS:

- a. If you are a member of the press, please direct your questions to Michelle Tabnick, Michelle Tabnick PR, michelle@michelletabnickpr.com, 646-765-4773.
- b. Learn more about the organization by browsing our website and/or download our media kit here.

Grantmaking:

There are no open grant applications at this time, but included below are resources related to our major regrantee programs:

1. [Coronavirus Dance Relief Fund for Freelance Dance Workers](#)

- a. Applicants
 - i. The Coronavirus Dance Relief Fund for Freelance Dance Workers closed on June 12, 2020. At this time, we do not have plans to reopen the application for future months, and we cannot accept new or updated applications.
 - ii. Due to the volume of applications received, we cannot provide feedback on unfunded applications. We encourage you to review the materials listed on the [fund page](#) which describe eligibility and evaluation criteria.
 - iii. We recommend you visit our [Coronavirus Preparedness Resources](#) page to find resources for support, including other funding opportunities.
- b. Grantees
 - i. Grant payments for the Coronavirus Dance Relief Fund for Freelance Dance Workers have all been processed. If you have not received your payment, please email covid19@dance.nyc and krudnick@dance.nyc with the month you were selected for funding as indicated in your award notification. We will follow up to verify your banking information upon our return.
 - ii. Grant reporting requirements will be provided upon our return.

2. [Coronavirus Dance Relief Fund for Dance Making Organizations](#)

- a. Applicants
 - i. The Coronavirus Dance Relief Fund for Dance Making Organizations closed on July 10, 2020. At this time, we do not have plans to reopen the application, and we cannot accept new or updated applications.
 - ii. Notification of award status for the second round of the program will be provided the week of August 31.
 - iii. If you would like to request feedback on your application, please email covid19@dance.nyc and we will accommodate your request as soon as possible upon our return. We also encourage you to review the materials listed on the [fund page](#) which describe eligibility and evaluation criteria.
 - iv. We recommend you visit our [Coronavirus Preparedness Resources](#) page to find resources for support, including other funding opportunities.
- b. Grantees
 - i. Grant payments for the first round of the Coronavirus Dance Relief Fund for Dance Making Organizations have all been processed. If you have not received your payment, please email covid19@dance.nyc and krudnick@dance.nyc with the amount of your grant as indicated in your award notification. We will follow up to verify your banking information upon our return.
 - ii. If you are planning to release a public announcement about your award or have a question about how to credit the award among your funders, please refer to your Grantee Contract, specifically the "Publications/Acknowledgement" section of the Grantee Requirements.
 - iii. The public announcement of grantees for the second round of the Coronavirus Dance Relief Fund for Dance Making Organizations will occur in September.
 - iv. Grant reporting requirements will be provided upon our return.

3. [Dance Advancement Fund](#)

- a. Grant reporting requirements will be provided in October.
- b. This program is in the first of a two-year grant cycle. New requests and applications to the Dance Advancement Fund are not accepted.
- c. For inquiries specific to the Dance Advancement Fund, please email danceadvancementfund@dance.nyc.

4. [Disability. Dance. Artistry. Dance and Social Justice Fellowship Program](#)

- a. Applicants
 - i. The Disability. Dance. Artistry. Dance and Social Justice Fellowship Program closed on July 14, 2020.
 - ii. If you would like to request feedback on your application, please email artistresidency@dance.nyc and we will accommodate your request as soon as possible upon our return. We also encourage you to review the materials on the [fellowship page](#) which describe eligibility and evaluation criteria.
 - iii. We recommend you visit our [Coronavirus Preparedness Resources](#) page to find resources for support, including other funding opportunities.
- b. Grantees
 - i. Grant payments for the Disability. Dance. Artistry. Dance and Social Justice Fellowship Program have all been processed. If you have not received your payment, please email artistryresidency@dance.nyc and krudnick@dance.nyc with the amount of your grant as indicated in your award notification. We will follow up to verify your banking information upon our return.
 - ii. There are no reporting requirements for your award as it is intended to reimburse expenses of dance and/or social justice activities undertaken during the fellowship period, March 11, 2020 through June 30, 2020, as detailed in your application.

5. [Rehearsal Space Subsidy Program](#)

- a. This program is in the second of a three-year grant cycle. New requests and applications to the Rehearsal Space Subsidy Program are not accepted.
- b. For inquiries specific to the Rehearsal Space Subsidy Program, please email rehearsalspacesubsidy@dance.nyc

Operations/HR

Dance/NYC is still in the process of reviewing resumes and conducting interviews. If you have applied to a position with us, expect to hear back via email around September 4th, 2020.

Funders and Donors:

We are so appreciative of our funders and donors and all they have enabled us to do historically, and particularly over the past several months.

1. Dance/NYC continues to advocate on behalf of the New York City metropolitan dance community. While donations will no longer be received for the Coronavirus Dance Relief Fund directly, donations can be made to Dance/NYC to support its work. If you or anyone you know is interested in donating, please visit [Dance.NYC/about/donate](#).

2. If you encounter any issues while attempting to donate online, please email kreynolds@dance.nyc and our Development team will support you in your generosity upon our return.
3. If you wish to donate, but prefer not to submit payment processing information through our secure online form, please email kreynolds@dance.nyc and our Development team will offer alternative methods of donation upon our return.
4. If you have donated previously and would like to request documentation, please email kreynolds@dance.nyc and we will accommodate your request as soon as possible upon our return.

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