



**BLACK CHOREOGRAPHERS FESTIVAL HERE & NOW  
CELEBRATES 20 YEARS!**

**SPIRIT OF SANKOFA: Bridging the Legacies of BCM & BCF**

*Featuring: Archival Exhibit & Panel Discussion*

**at**

**MoAD**

**Friday, February 7, 2025**

**Doors Open @ 6pm**

**6 – 7p Exhibit Viewing – 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> floors:**

**MoAD: *Liberatory Living: Protective Interiors and Radical Black Joy***

Features designs, artworks, and environments dedicated to the global necessity for Black people to cultivate domestic interiors not only as spaces of revolutionary action, but also of radical joy and revolutionary rest.

**BCF: *Spirit of Sankofa: Bridging the Legacies of BCM & BCF, Archival Exhibit***

An exquisite archival display that depicts the narrative of two iconic SF Bay Area Festivals: Black Choreographers Moving Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (BCM), founded by Dr. Halifu Osumare and presented from 1989 – 1995, and Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now (BCF) co-founded by Laura Elaine Ellis and Kendra Kimbrough Barnes, premiered in 2005, celebrating 20 years of presenting BCF!

*Designed & Curated by Visual Artists: Pete Belkin and Tiersa Nureyev*

**7p *Throwback to the Future*, moderated by Dr. Halifu Osumare, in conversation w/**

***Choreographers: Robert Moses, Raissa Simpson, Dazaun Soleyn w/ comments by Joanna Haigood***

Two generations of Black Choreographers dialogue about how the issues during the Black Choreographers Moving Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (BCM) a national dance initiative (1989-1995) have shifted, yet remain the same today, during the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now (BCF).

***Directly following the panel – stay for our Cake & Chat Event!***

BCF Production Team:

BCF Festival Co-Directors: Laura E. Ellis, Kendra Kimbrough Barnes

BCF Tech Crew: Terrance Holliday (Sound), Jazara Metcalf (Adm Assistant)

Imman Barnes, Jordon E. Dabney, Khalil Means (BCF Exhibit Load-in & Load-out)

MoAD Staff:

Monetta White, Executive Director and CEO

Key Jo Lee, Chief of Curatorial Affairs and Public Programs

Elizabeth Gessel, Ph.D., Director of Public Programs

Michael Hannan, Facilities Manager

Visitor Experience Associates: Alicia Chow, Guadalupe Pacheco-Gomez,

Gabriela Silva Myers-Lipton, Eden Tolico

## **Throwback to the Future, Panel Bios**

**Dr. Halifu Osumare** (Moderator) is Professor Emerita in the Department of African American and African Studies (AAS) at University of California, Davis, and was the Director of AAS 2011-2014. She has been a dancer, choreographer, arts administrator, and scholar of black popular culture for over fifty years. With a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, and an MA in Dance Ethnology from S.F. State University, she is also a protégé of the late renowned dancer-anthropologist Katherine Dunham and a Certified Instructor of Dunham Dance Technique. Dr. Osumare founded Everybody's Creative Arts Center in Oakland in 1977 and helped to establish California's multicultural arts movement. Between 1989-1995 she was the Founder and Executive Producer of her national dance initiative Black Choreographers Moving Toward the 21st Century. As an artist-scholar, Dr. Osumare has performed, taught, and conducted research not only in the U.S., but also in the African countries of Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi, and Kenya, and recently in Brazil. Her dancing, teaching and writing spans the traditional African to the contemporary African American. Like her mentor Katherine Dunham, Dr. Osumare has dedicated her life to the intersections of the arts and humanities for a better world. <https://www.hosumare.com/about>

**Robert Moses** (Panelist) is a Choreographer, Writer, and Composer who has created over 100 works of varying styles and genres for his highly praised dance company Robert Moses' Kin (founded in 1995), and has composed many of the sound and narrative scores for his works since 2008. Moses has choreographed for dance, opera, and theater companies including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, San Francisco Opera, Olympic Arts Festival, Ailey II, Philadanco, Lorraine Hansberry Theater, African Cultural Exchange (UK), Bare Bones (UK), Oakland Ballet, among others. He has taught on college campuses throughout the US, including UC Berkeley, Stanford, UC Davis, Cal State Long Beach, Mills College, Boston Conservatory at Berklee. Moses' work explores topics ranging from oral traditions in African American culture, contemporary urban culture, and the complexities of identity, to the simple joys and expressive power of pure movement. <https://www.robertmoseskin.org/robert-moses>

**Raissa Simpson** is a scholar and a post-disciplinary artist whose award-winning choreography is at the intersection of racial and cultural identities and centers around discourse on the complex experiences of racialized bodies. She holds mixed heritage by way of African-descended sharecroppers from Mississippi and as a daughter of an immigrant from the Philippines. She founded PUSH to examine the body as a site for racial discourse and since then has toured and performed in over 50 venues. Raissa Simpson (she/her) is a scholar and an post-disciplinary artist whose award-winning choreography is at the intersection of racial and cultural identities and centers around discourse on the complex experiences of racialized bodies. She holds mixed heritage by way of African-descended sharecroppers from Mississippi and as a daughter of an immigrant from the Philippines. She founded PUSH to examine the body as a site for racial discourse and since then has toured and performed in over 50 venues. Raissa is currently a Core Lecturer at Stanford University and in 2008, she founded a school, PUSH Conservatory. Raissa makes performances that are about personal stories that oftentimes remain unseen or unheard. These stories are lived experiences, oral histories, how we navigate this world and more. <https://www.pushdance.org/raissa/>

**Dazaun Soleyn** (Panelist), with an intention to create art that aims to illuminate the human soul, Dazaun (he/she/they), has presented work in the Bay Area since 2013. He received a BFA in Modern Dance Performance and Choreography from the University of South Florida and continued his dance education at the Alonzo King LINES Ballet Training Program. Recently, Dazaun graduated from California College of the Arts with a Masters in Architecture (MArch). Dazaun is an adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco, a Gyrotonic Instructor, Reiki Master and Apprentice Herbalists. His mediums include dance, architecture, sculpture and interactive installations. [dazaunsoleyn.org](http://dazaunsoleyn.org)

**Joanna Haigood** (Panelist | Comments Contributor) has been creating work, since 1980, that uses natural, architectural and cultural environments as points of departure for movement exploration and narrative. Her stages have included grain terminals, a clock tower, the pope's palace, military forts, and a mile of urban neighborhood streets in the South Bronx. Her work has been commissioned by many arts institutions including Dancing in the Streets, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Walker Arts Center, the Exploratorium Museum, the National Black Arts Festival, and Festival d'Avignon. She has also been honored with the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Herb Alpert Award in the Arts, the United States Artist Fellowship, and a New York Bessie Award. Haigood is also a recipient of the esteemed Doris Duke Artist Award and she is a Dance Magazine Awardee '24. <https://zaccho.org/?collaborators>

## **Spirit of Sankofa: Bridging the Legacy of BCM & BCF Archival Exhibit, Bios:**

**Pete Belkin** (co-designer and co-curator) is a visual artist, digital media engineer and exhibitions producer. He holds an MFA from San Francisco Art Institute and a BFA from California College of the Arts. His studio practice is rooted in investigations of natural phenomena, typically taking form in painting, sculpture and video installation. Pete has worked with numerous museums and nonprofit arts institutions in the San Francisco Bay Area and internationally and can often be found interviewing artists, producing public programs, or curating exhibitions. Previously, Pete worked with KADIST Art Foundation, Oakland Museum of California, and Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive. Pete is currently on staff at the San Francisco Arts Education Project and serves as Curator.

**Tiersa Nureyev** (co-designer and co-curator) is a multidisciplinary artist and designer that foregrounds fiber-based mediums and practices that require methodical handwork. Techniques such as weaving, braiding, and hand sewing, as well as painting and illustration that reference textile structures and surface design are common themes in her work. Nureyev is interested in revealing the psychological underpinnings, emotional pathology, and spiritual disconnection that accompanies being a descendant of the African American diaspora as well as simply a human and women in this world now. Nureyev has been a teaching artist with the San Francisco Arts Education Project (SFArtsED) since 2006. She is a recipient of a National Endowment of the Arts funded residency "The Lineal Project" via SFArtsED at the Minnesota Street Project. This project used the formal analysis of line as inspiration for an iterative body of work that included drawings, garments, fiber art, and in collaboration with choreographer laura e. ellis, and Dimensions Dance Theater, that explored the conceptual nature of line as it pertained to ancestral lineage. Nureyev was a selected artist included in the 2023 DeYoung Open and is currently producing *Soft Spaces For Hard Times: A Community Quilting Project* that engages San Francisco youth in the creation of a monumental textile collage funded by the SF Arts Commission and the Wattis Institute.

The Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now (BCF) @ MoAD events are in community partnership with and co-sponsored by the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD).

BCF's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season of Events and Performances are made possible in part by the support of the SF Arts Commission, Zellerbach Family Foundation, AAAPAC, K\*STAR\*Productions and community partnerships with Dance Mission Theater, Dimensions Dance Theater, SF Public Library, SFArtsEd | Minnesota Street Project, and Dance Film SF.

NEXT BCF at MoAD EVENT  
**Saturday, Feb. 8 @ 12p, 2p, & 4p**

### **Dynamic Performances of *Healing Intimacy***

Choreographers/collaborators **Dazaun Soleyn** and **Algin "Align" Sterling** create and perform an engaging structured movement & music improvisation.

With Special Guests: **Claire Fisher-Mendez** and **Jordon E. Dabney**

An immersive piece that activates MoAD's galleries in response to the current exhibition,

***Liberatory Living: Protective Interiors & Radical Black Joy.***

*Each iteration is different, come for one or stay for all three!*

*FREE to the Public*  
*RSVP via MoAD 's website*

## **Upcoming BCF 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events and Performances:**

BCF @ Dance Mission Theater, Feb. 22 & 23, Mar. 1 & 2

BCF @ SF Public Library, Koret Auditorium, Mar. 22

BCF @ Minnesota Street Project, May 3 – June 21

**For More Info: [bcfhereandnow.com](http://bcfhereandnow.com)**

### **SPIRIT OF SANKOFA: Bridging the Legacies of BCM & BCF, Co-Sponsors | Presenters**

**MoAD** is a contemporary art museum, celebrating Black cultures, igniting challenging conversations, and inspiring learning through the global lens of the African Diaspora. MoAD is essential to the Yerba Buena Cultural Arts District in San Francisco and plays a vital role in the local, national, and international arts community.

**the African & African American Performing Arts Coalition (AAPAC)** is San Francisco-based nonprofit founded in 1995 by a collective of artists looking to create better performance opportunities for African and African American performing artists, as well as produce shows that reflect the aesthetic and cultural representation of the African and African American experience. As AAPAC's executive director, laura elaine ellis has co-produced successful events such as the *Labor of Love Dance Series*, *The Quilt Project: Pieces of Me*, and the Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now.

**K★STAR★PRODUCTIONS**, founded in 1996 by Director Kendra Kimbrough Barnes, is a performing arts organization that presents the Kendra Kimbrough Dance Ensemble (KKDE) and co-presents the Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now. Our mission is to cultivate a diverse and dynamic arts environment that inspires and supports the growth of the arts through relationship-building, mentoring, and community partnerships. We aim to make cultural exchange accessible, with a focus on BIPOC communities, by offering professional development for emerging dance artists/companies, youth programming, and impactful workshops and performances.



**The Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now (BCF)**, with scheduled events throughout the year, is directed by Bay Area nonprofits AAPAC and K\*Star\*Productions. Since 2005, BCF has served local, national and international artists acknowledging the diverse artistic expression within the context of African and African American dance and culture. BCF incorporates live performance, mentoring, master classes, workshops and special events. BCF has been awarded commendations from the Alameda County Arts Commission and Board of Supervisors, the California State Senate for preserving African American Art & Culture.