

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival Round 3: Meet the Judges

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, September 4th, 2019

*Finally*, Round 3 of **Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival** is upon us... We are **one week away** from launching! **Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival (D2D in Public Film Fest)** is dedicated to dance that happens outside of stages and studios, dance that is bursting out like flowers in a cracked sidewalk. **D2D in Public Film Fest** is committed to short films that explore the intersection of dance and the camera, films that spread the wealth of dance and challenge the notion of a proper time and place to dance. By its very nature and content, **D2D in Public Film Fest** is asking the question:

*Why can't dance happen anywhere at any time?*

In advance of our launch, this week I am thrilled to share with you this year's extraordinary panel of judges. They come from all walks of the dance, performing arts, arts, film, and educational communities of Los Angeles and beyond. We are honored to have them join us! Please meet: **Katherine Helen Fisher, d. Sabela grimes, Ben Johnson, Renae Williams Niles, Tony Testa**, and of course, yours truly, (**Sarah Elgart**). These are people working NOW on the forefronts of dance, film, stage, and more... You'll want to get your work in front of these eyes!



Katherine Helen Fisher

**Katherine Helen Fisher** is a filmmaker, director, producer, choreographer and performer. She is co-founder of Los Angeles-based Safety Third Productions, a media company designing short-form movement-based digital content. Katherine was a member of The Lucinda Childs Dance Company between 2008 and 2019. She has also performed with Mark Morris Dance Group, MOMIX, ODC San Francisco, the Merce Cunningham Trust, Andrew Ondrejcek, and Ann Carlson among others and was an ensemble member of the Philip Glass opera *Einstein On The Beach* directed by Robert Wilson. She has movement directed music videos for Radiohead and Rufus Wainwright, as well as directed branded content for L' Official Magazine, Hermès, Microsoft, Biotherm, Nonesuch and XL Recordings. Her work has been featured by the New York Times, the Smithsonian, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, Danspace, Georgia Tech, the Palm Springs Art Museum, La Menagerie de Verre in Paris, Danspace Project, LA Dance Project, Judson Church, Art Basil Switzerland, The Hammer Museum, LA Dance Project, The National Center for Choreography and the New Original Works Festival at REDCAT. Her participatory performance garment, *Le Monstre*, won a Jury Prize for Best Paper at The 21st International Symposium on

Wearable Computers. Her film, *CEILING* won an award at The San Francisco Dance Film Festival. Katherine holds a BFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and is currently an artist in residency at the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University.



d. Sabela grimes

**d. Sabela grimes**, 2017 County of Los Angeles Performing Arts Fellow and 2014 United States Artists Rockefeller Fellow, is a trans-media storyteller, sonic ARKivist, movement composer cultivating a devoted interest in AfroBiquitous life practices. Sabela has conceived, written, scored, choreographed and produced several dance theater works including “BulletProof Deli,” plus “Philly XP,” “World War WhatEver,” and “40 Acres & A Microchip: Salvation or Servitude” from his EXPERIMENT EARTH sound-movement triptych. Recent creative projects include “ELECTROGYNOUS” (2017) and “Dark Matter Messages” (2018). “ELECTROGYNOUS” is a dance theater experience that articulates that Black gender qualities are infinite, multi-dimensional and distinct manifestations of wombniversal consciousness. “Dark Matter Messages” is a collection of live poetry, video projections and music interwoven with improvisational movement meditations that realize AfroFuturism as a means to play within the newness of impending futures. Moved by how Octavia E. Butler invents interrelated notions of humanness in her Parable Series, “Dark Matter Messages” dreams Butler’s unfinished manuscript, Parable of the Trickster, into a live performance experience. On faculty at USC’s Gloria Kaufman School of Dance, he continues to cultivate, Funkamental MediKinetics, a movement system he created that focuses on the methodical dance training and community building elements evident in Hip Hop, Black vernacular and Street dance forms. Sabela loves pancakes, declarative realness and his kinfolk.



Ben Johnson

**Ben Johnson** is the Director of Performing Arts for the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. Previously, he was the Program Manager at the Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA (CAP-UCLA) and Director of Programs at United States Artists Foundation. He was also the Director of Northrop Concerts and Lectures at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, and he was Director of Education and Audience Development at the University Musical Society at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (MI). He has also worked at the Ordway Music Theater (St. Paul) as part of the Planet Ordway Series.



Renae Williams Niles

**Renae Williams Niles** is currently the Associate Dean of Administration (COO) for the Gloria Kaufman School of Dance at the University of Southern California where she oversees all aspects of administration including communications, finance and operations. For close to 11 years, she worked for The Music Center in Los Angeles eventually serving as Vice President of Programming. There she curated the presentation of 50 internationally-acclaimed ballet and contemporary companies; led the commissioning of new works and projects such as LA Dance Project and Slow Dancing; established multi-disciplinary collaborations as well as created new programs including the site-specific “Moves After Dark” and main stage projects such as “BalletNow” and “Celebrate Forsythe.” She also oversaw family programming and participatory art-making. Before joining The Music Center, she served as the Director of Grant Programs for the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and participated in their artist selection process for the Ford

Amphitheatre. She also worked with the Lula Washington Dance Theatre as Company Manager as well as with Grand Performances as Special Projects/Marketing Manager. Renae has served as a grant review panelist for the Entertainment Industry Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, MAP Fund, National Endowment for the Arts, United States Artists, among many others and also continues to serve as an anonymous nominator and panelist for major national foundations. She is also an established moderator of conversations with renowned film, visual and performing arts artists and leaders including facilitating a panel of the entire creative team for the award-winning feature film *La La Land*. She served as the president of the Western Arts Alliance (WAA) and currently serves on the national Association of Performing Arts Professionals board. Renae also serves on the advisory boards for the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, Conga Kids and BODYTRAFFIC. She also served on the board of trustees for Dance/USA. She is the 2017 recipient of the WAA Service Award and currently adjunct faculty, teaching Performing Arts Management for Claremont Graduate University. She is an alum of USC and resides in Culver City, CA.



Tony Testa

Since moving to LA in 2005, **Tony Testa** has been an Artistic Director & Choreographer for Television, Film, Award Shows, Commercials, Theater, Music Videos, & Concert tours. He actively supports non-profits such as HOMEBOY INDUSTRIES, THE ADVOT PROJECT, THE WOODEN FLOOR, & THE PAINTED TURTLE. He was a guest speaker for TEDx, & has brought dance to The Parliament of the World's Religions. He was just awarded the "New Movement Residency" at University of Southern California, & is now preparing an installation at the Wynn Hotel in LV. Tony is trained in Tap, Ballet, Jazz, Contemporary, Partnering, Break-Dance, Flamenco, Butoh, & Hip-Hop. He was born & raised in Fort Collins, CO.

We welcome this fantastic panel. Stand by for next week's Rules & Regulations as well as official information on how to enter your films in **Round 3 of Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival!**

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\*Feature photo from the film **Casi**, by Casey Brooks.

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