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[ntomasofsky@jacobspillow.org](mailto:ntomasofsky@jacobspillow.org)**JACOB'S PILLOW RECEIVES \$300,000 GRANT FROM THE FORD FOUNDATION****FOR NEW *PITTSFIELD MOVES!* PROGRAM****WITH LEAD ARTIST PALOMA MCGREGOR**

November 8, 2017 – (Becket, MA) Jacob's Pillow has been awarded \$300,000 from the Ford Foundation as a strand of *Challenging Inequality through Creativity and Free Expression* to support the recently-imagined *Pittsfield Moves!* program. *Pittsfield Moves!* was conceived by Jacob's Pillow in collaboration with lead partner The Berkshire Bridges – Working Cities Pittsfield Initiative to help local stakeholders within educational, social, and economic justice organizations develop a practice of storytelling and relationship building through movement. The Ford Foundation is one the world's largest philanthropic foundations focused on global social change.

After key Community Conversations held in Pittsfield, choreographer Paloma McGregor, Director of Angela's Pulse, has been selected as lead artist for this year-long project. This selection process was implemented in a way that enabled community members to have direct agency in the project from its conception.

"A major strand of the Pillow's strategic plan, Vision '22, is deepening our commitment to being an active and engaged community citizen in our region. Our idea is to have an embedded choreographer who takes their cues from the issues and stories of the people in the city and co-creates a work that will have manifestations both at the Pillow and in Pittsfield. It's an honor to have our partnership with Working Cities given such an important vote of confidence through this generous support from the Ford Foundation" says Jacob's Pillow Director Pamela Tatge.

"The *Pittsfield Moves!* program is a brilliant way of engaging the community with the arts, and enabling a people-centered approach to creativity. We look forward to seeing the vision and imagination of Pittsfield residents come to life through this pioneering partnership with Jacob's Pillow," says the Ford Foundation.

*Pittsfield Moves!* will work to create community performance through multi-tiered partnerships over the course of the year. The project will present its first iteration at Jacob's Pillow as part of the Inside/Out Performance Series during Festival 2018 and will culminate in a performance in Pittsfield in the Fall of 2018. In the Spring of 2019, the Pillow will host a major international summit on dance and social change where *Pittsfield Moves!* will be presented as a case study alongside other projects from across the country and the world.

The project kicked off its initial introductory period with *Listening and Learning, Fall 2017*, which invited artists Paloma McGregor and Angela's Pulse core facilitator Meghan (MK) Abadoo to research and help guide community conversations in Pittsfield. During this week-long research residency, artists led workshops and community meetings that helped identify possible themes and focus for this project. This gave Jacob's Pillow, Working Cities, and Pittsfield community members the opportunity to test the potential of a long-term partnership.

"I am eager to be in collaboration with Working Cities, Pittsfield residents, and Jacob's Pillow as they pioneer a new way to be in community-centered partnership," says McGregor. "Art-making practice can create important platforms for diverse stories to be valued and for relationships to be deepened."

"It is very important when working in the community to create intentional, collaborative spaces where all individuals feel welcome and heard. Jacob's Pillow, in developing this program, has done all of these things, and we are excited to work together towards our shared goals," says Berkshire Bridges Working Cities.

### **About Paloma McGregor**

Paloma McGregor is a New York-based, Caribbean-born choreographer whose work focuses on centering Black voices through collaborative, process-based art-making and organizing. McGregor is Co-Founder and Director of Angela's Pulse, which creates and produces collaborative performance work dedicated to building community and illuminating bold, new stories. McGregor toured internationally for six years as a dancer with Urban Bush Women and two years with Liz Lerman/Dance Exchange; she continues to perform in her own work as well as collaborate on other projects in the realms of performance, visual arts, and social practice. [www.angelpulse.org](http://www.angelpulse.org)

### **About MK Abadoo**

MK Abadoo is a choreographer, educator, and cultural organizer. Her work explores the gatekeeping roles of dance artists in communities and the capacity for dance events to sustain transformative social movements. Her creative work is informed by more than a decade of experience as a performer with companies such as Gesel Mason Performance Projects, Dance Exchange, Urban Bush Women, and David Dorfman Dance. Abadoo is currently a core facilitator with Angela's Pulse and associate artist with the Dance Exchange and a Forty Under 40 awardee by Prince George's County, Maryland, for her leadership and achievement in the arts.

### **About Working Cities**

The Berkshire Bridges – Working Cities Pittsfield Initiative is designed to support the journey from poverty to sustainability by collaboratively building community resources and removing barriers. Their goal is to improve individual, institutional, and social fairness and respect in the community, and thus to support individuals moving out of poverty.

### **About the Ford Foundation**

The Ford Foundation is an independent, nonprofit grant-making organization. For more than 80 years it has worked with courageous people on the frontlines of social change worldwide, guided by its mission to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement. With headquarters in New York, the foundation has offices in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

Founded in 1936 by Edsel Ford, the foundation became the world's largest philanthropy in the late 1940s with the bequests of Edsel and Henry Ford. Guided by Henry Ford II to become an independent institution with a global mission of advancing human welfare, the foundation has through the years made more than \$45 billion in grants and improved hundreds of millions of lives.

**ABOUT JACOB'S PILLOW:** Jacob's Pillow is a National Historic Landmark, recipient of the National Medal of Arts, and home to America's longest-running international dance festival. While celebrating its 85th Festival in 2017, the Pillow announced its transition to becoming a year-round center for dance through a five-year strategic plan titled Vision '22. Each Festival includes more than 50 national and international dance companies and over 350 free and ticketed performances, talks, tours, classes, exhibits, events, and community programs. The School at Jacob's Pillow, one of the most prestigious professional dance training centers in the U.S., encompasses the diverse disciplines of Ballet, Contemporary, Musical Theatre Dance, an annual rotating dance program, Choreography, and Photography. The Pillow also provides professional advancement opportunities across disciplines of arts administration, design, video, and production through seasonal internships and a year-round Administrative Fellows program. With growing community engagement programs, the Pillow serves as a partner and active citizen in its local community. The Pillow's extensive Archives, open year-round to the public, chronicle more than a century of dance in photographs, programs, books, costumes, audiotapes, and videos. Notable artists who have created or premiered dances at the Pillow include choreographers Antony Tudor, Agnes de Mille, Alvin Ailey, Donald McKayle, Kevin McKenzie, Twyla Tharp, Ralph Lemon, Susan Marshall, Trisha Brown, Ronald K. Brown, Wally Cardona, Andrea Miller, and Trey McIntyre; performed by artists such as Mikhail Baryshnikov, Carmen de Lavallade, Mark Morris, Dame Margot Fonteyn, Edward Villella, Rasta Thomas, and hundreds of others. On March 2, 2011, President Barack Obama honored Jacob's Pillow with a National Medal of Arts, the highest arts award given by the United States Government, making the Pillow the first dance presenting organization to receive this prestigious award. For more information, visit [www.jacobspillow.org](http://www.jacobspillow.org).