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**JACOB'S PILLOW PRESENTS *LIFE ENCOUNTERS* BY MASTER CLUB AND SOCIAL
DANCER ARCHIE BURNETT ON THE HENRY J. LEIR STAGE
AND EMILY JOHNSON / CATALYST IN SITE-SPECIFIC WORK**

July 14, 2021 – (BECKET, Mass.) Jacob's Pillow presents the world premiere of a new work by legendary club dancer Archie Burnett entitled *Life Encounters* on the Henry J. Leir Stage from July 28 - August 1. *Life Encounters* explores New York City Club Dance styles through treasured memories from Burnett's own life with a cast of illustrious dancers including Abdiel Jacobsen, Princess Lockerkoo, Ephrat Asherie, Samara Cohen, Maya Llanos, and Deandre Browne. This Pillow-exclusive production was commissioned by Jacob's Pillow and produced by Jacob's Pillow Associate Curator Ali Rosa-Salas.

Also on-site this week are site-specific performances with Emily Johnson / Catalyst, a PillowTalk about Warren Davis, the local entrepreneur and craftsman who fashioned the Ted Shawn Theatre's immense beams, and Jacob's Pillow On The Road events throughout Berkshire County with Ladies of Hip-Hop Dance Collective. Online events include the digital premiere of Ballet Hispánico and a PillowTalk entitled Curatorial Voices.

"This will be one of the busiest weeks of the summer as we experience two new works created for our site and take dance off the mountain and into communities across Berkshire County," says Jacob's Pillow Executive & Artistic Director Pamela Tatge. "Legendary club artist Archie Burnett will take the Leir Stage by storm with his charismatic presence and generous spirit as he walks us through his dance life journey. Yu'pik artist Emily Johnson will a work-in-process that takes place across our campus and invites us to consider how we might come into a better balance with our non-human kin in order to build a better future."

Life Encounters journeys through cherished moments from Burnett's life by exploring the impressive variety of club and social dance forms he has mastered. The work begins with an homage to the iconic music and dance television program *Soul Train*. It also references Burnett's experience at The Loft, the first underground dance party hosted by DJ David Mancuso which led to the founding of famous dance clubs including the Warehouse and Paradise Garage, and continues through explorations of House, Hustle, Waacking, Soul Train, post-modern dance, and Vogue Ballroom. Revered as a master Vogue artist, Burnett is a founding member of the Vogue crew House of Ninja created by Vogue master Willi Ninja, who he met in a chance encounter after

leaving Mancuso's club one night in 1980. *Life Encounters* shows how social dance forms created by Black and queer communities are not only important political statements, but also vehicles for bringing people together. Burnett says, "in this world you have to make whatever little happiness you can" (*Spike Art Magazine*).

Bessie Award-winning choreographer Emily Johnson will present a site-specific in-process presentation of *Portals Into, Being Future Being* on July 30 and August 1. Featuring a newly commissioned soundscore by Raven Chacon and a cast of more-than-human creatures, the work builds a visual, aural, and ancestral landscape of Indigenous power created for Jacob's Pillow through two residencies on the Pillow campus and a residency at the Guggenheim Works & Process series with support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. By (re)building new visions of the forces that brought this world into being, Johnson brings forth new futures with the potential to reshape the way we relate to ourselves, and to the human and more-than-human cohabitants of our world. Johnson and her collaborators spent ten days on this work in the Pillow Lab at Jacob's Pillow in November 2020. "One of the elements [of *Portals Into, Being Future Being*] is the dancing, choreography, [and] embodiment of being in the future," said Johnson in an interview for *Inside the Pillow Lab*. "And last year, late last year, pre-COVID, pre-all of this, I just felt like we need that better future now, we just need to be in it, and so I want to create a work wherein we are in that better future." (*Inside the Pillow Lab*).

ABOUT ARCHIE BURNETT

First founding father of the New York City-based House of Ninja, Archie Burnett has been a well-respected force in the underground dance world for over 40 years. As a master of Whacking, Voguing, Hustle, and many other styles, Burnett moves with profound clarity and striking geometric body-lines. Burnett is an avid weightlifter and graphic artist, and splits his time between work, family, clubs, and teaching House dance at NYC's Peridance. He also teaches worldwide in countries including Germany, Austria, Poland, Belgium, France, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Italy, Japan, and Brazil, and has given lecture/demonstrations and been on scholarly panels at Yale University, Duke University, Harvard University, New York University, and Florida State University. His bodies of work range from music videos to features in magazines like *Dance Ink* and the former *Village Voice* dance section to performance coaching for up-and-coming recording artists. He is featured in the documentary *Check Your Body at the Door*, which chronicles the lives and lifestyles of six remarkable underground House dancers in New York City during the golden decade of the 1990s. Burnett also performs for concert-dance choreographers Doug Elkins, David Neumann, and Cori Olinghouse and he has shown his own work at Dance Theater Workshop, PS122, Danspace, Dixon Place, 92nd Street Y, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and Théâtre Suresnes JeanVilar in Paris.

ABOUT EMILY JOHNSON

Emily Johnson is an artist who makes body-based work. She is a land and water protector and an activist for justice, sovereignty, and well-being. Johnson is a Bessie Award-winning choreographer, Guggenheim and United States Artists Fellow, and recipient of the Doris Duke Artist Award. She is based in Lenapehoking / New York City. Johnson is of the Yup'ik Nation, and since 1998 has

created work that considers the experience of sensing and seeing performance. Her dances function as portals and care processions; they engage audienceship within and through space, time, and environment—interacting with a place’s architecture, peoples, history, and role in building futures. Johnson is trying to make a world where performance is part of life; where performance is an integral part of our connection to each other, our environment, our stories, our past, present, and future.

Johnson’s choreography and gatherings have been presented across the United States and Australia. Recently she choreographed the Santa Fe Opera production of *Doctor Atomic* directed by Peter Sellars. Her large-scale project, *Then a Cunning Voice* and *A Night We Spend Gazing at Stars* is an all-night outdoor performance gathering taking place amongst community-hand-made quilts. It premiered in Lenapehoking (NYC) in 2017, and was presented in Zhigaagoong (Chicago) in 2019. Her newest work, *Being Future Being*, considers future creation stories and present joy.

JACOB’S PILLOW CONNECTIONS

Archie Burnett co-directed the Street & Club Dances Program at The School at Jacob’s Pillow in 2020.

Emily Johnson was in residency at the Pillow Lab at Jacob’s Pillow in November 2020 developing *Being Future Being*. She also participated in the Festival 2019 week-long landmark celebration “The Land on Which We Dance.”

View Emily Johnson’s Inside the Pillow Lab feature:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLs1fGKF4o>

PERFORMANCE & TICKET INFORMATION

Henry J. Leir Stage, July 28 - August 1

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 6:00pm

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday at 2:00pm

\$45

Available to watch online August 12-16; Online premiere August 12 at 7:30pm Eastern. Tickets are on sale now; online at jacobspillow.org, and via phone 413.243.0745.

Emily Johnson / Catalyst; *Portals Into, Being Future Being* , July 30 - August 1

Friday, Saturday, Sunday at 12:00pm

Saturday at 3:30pm

\$25

Tickets are on sale now; online at jacobspillow.org, and via phone 413.243.0745.

This roving performance involves uneven terrain on gravel and grass paths.

ALSO THIS WEEK:

Jacob’s Pillow On the Road

July 31-August 1

Locations:

BECKET

North Becket Park – Maple Street

Saturday July 31 at 1pm

GREAT BARRINGTON

Town Hall Park

Sunday August 1 at 5pm

NORTH ADAMS

River Grove Park – Corner of River & Houghton St.

Sunday August 1 at 1pm

PITTSFIELD

The Common, 100 First St

Saturday July 31 at 5pm

ON-SITE EVENTS

Sunday Workshop: Archie Burnett

Sunday, August 1 at 10:00am

The Great Lawn

Tickets are \$20

Open to all levels, ages 16+.

Join Archie Burnett in a waacking workshop, highlighting the 70s dance form created in Los Angeles by the LGBTQ+ community. Waacking has made a popular reappearance since 2005 and now has a strong following internationally. *Please wear comfortable clothes to move in and sneakers.*

PillowTalk: Warren Davis

Sunday, August 1 at 3:30pm

Blake's Barn

FREE

This craftsman who provided the Ted Shawn Theatre's immense beams was a local hero, a pioneering Black businessman connected with W.E.B. DuBois. He is saluted here by local historian Bernard Drew and members of his family.

PillowTalks are a curated series of entertaining and informative discussions with choreographers, writers, filmmakers, and cultural experts. Moderated by Pillow Scholars, PillowTalks provide an opportunity to gain behind-the-scenes insight into the field of dance. Hour-long PillowTalks take place on-site at Blake's Barn Sundays at 3:30pm at Blake's Barn (next to the Box Office), and are free and open to the public with advance registration. Recordings of online PillowTalks will be shared throughout the summer, premiering Fridays at 4pm.

ONLINE EVENTS

Ballet Hispánico

Online premiere with live chat July 29 at 7:30pm Eastern

Digital Screening July 29 - August 12

FREE

A Festival favorite known for “piercing stereotypes” (*The New York Times*), Ballet Hispánico is celebrated as the nation’s renowned Latinx dance organization and one of America’s Cultural Treasures. Under the direction of former Company member, Artistic Director & CEO Eduardo Vilaro, the company is recognized for bringing communities together to celebrate and explore Latino cultures through innovative dance performances, transformative dance training, and enduring community engagement experiences. Their program celebrates five decades of lush and virtuosic dance, and includes: Jacob’s Pillow Dance Award winner Annabelle Lopez Ochoa’s *Tiburones*, three solos from Vicente Nebrada’s *Batucada Fantástica*, and *18+1* by Gustavo Ramírez Sansano.

Virtual Class: Families Dance Together

Friday, July 30 at 3:00pm Eastern

All Fridays July 9-August 27- ONGOING

FREE

All levels and ages welcome.

Experience the joy of creating simple dances from the comfort of your home in this intergenerational 45-minute movement class, designed for movers of all ages to enjoy together. From kids to adults, we invite you to get your whole household moving! Led by artists of Dance Exchange. No special preparation needed; simply register, gather your movers, click the Zoom class link, and start dancing. We encourage you to find a safe, open space to move in and make sure to modify any movement as needed.

Zoom link required to join class; link will be sent to RSVPs by 10:30am Eastern on the day of class or provided on the website after 10:30am the day of class.

Virtual PillowTalk: Curatorial Voices

Digital screening of live, on-site event debuts Friday, July 30 at 4:00pm Eastern

FREE

Executive and Artistic Director Pamela Tatge joins new Pillow associate curators Melanie George and Ali Rosa-Salas in discussing how Festival 2021 came into being and the role of dance in a changing world.

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place on-site at Blake's Barn Sundays at 3:30pm at Blake's Barn (next to the Box Office), and are free and open to the public with advance registration. Recordings of online PillowTalks will be shared throughout the summer, premiering Fridays at 4pm.

Jacob's Pillow Curriculum in Motion® Institute Presentation

Sunday, August 1, 8, 15 at 11:00am

FREE, Held on Zoom.

Witness the work of Curriculum in Motion® Institute graduates as they share their application of Curriculum in Motion® in their communities. These 7-minute presentations tell their stories. Different presenters each week. *Additional event details to be announced.*

FESTIVAL 2021 EXHIBITS & ARCHIVES—ONGOING

Jacob's Pillow Archives/Norton Owen Reading Room

Blake's Barn, June 30-August 29

***Build Me a Theater*; exhibition, open Tuesday through Sunday. Wed.-Sat. from 12-8 p.m., Tuesday and Sunday from 12-5 p.m.**

FREE

This spacious, informal library and reading room allows impromptu visitors to view videos, browse through books, access the Pillow's computer catalog, or peruse permanent collections of Pillow programs and photographs from the Pillow's Archives. The newly expanded Norton Owen Reading Room also features recent donations and more archival treasures from the Stephan Driscoll Collection. Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive, available on a popular touch-screen kiosk in the Reading Room, provides instant access to rare film clips ranging from the present day back to the 1930s.

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, currently in the midst of its transition to becoming a year-round center for dance through a five-year strategic plan titled Vision '22. Jacob's Pillow rests on the traditional lands of the Agawam, the Nipmuc, the Pocumtuc, and the Mohican and we honor their elders past, present, and future. Each Festival includes more than 50 national and international dance companies and over 500 free and ticketed performances, talks, tours, classes, exhibits, events, and community programs. The School at Jacob's Pillow, one of the field's most prestigious professional dance training centers, encompasses the diverse disciplines of Contemporary Ballet, Contemporary, Tap, Photography, Choreography, and an annual rotating program. 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 and online at danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org, 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. The Pillow's Director since 2016 is Pamela Tatge. For more information, visit www.jacobspillow.org.

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