

FOR IMAGES AND MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Elise Linscott, Public Relations & Communications Coordinator
elinscott@jacobspillow.org

**Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Welcomes
A.I.M by Kyle Abraham
in the Fourth Week of the 90th Anniversary Season**

Ballet Nepantla, Mina Nishimura and Kota Yamazaki, and Passion Fruit Dance Company with Baye & Asa to Appear in One-Night-Only Performances on the Henry J. Leir Stage

June 15, 2022 (BECKET, Mass.)— The fourth week of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival 2022 welcomes A.I.M by Kyle Abraham, performing *An Untitled Love* in the Ted Shawn Theatre, from July 13-17. Week 4 of the Festival will also feature several one-night-only performances on the outdoor Henry J. Leir Stage, including Ballet Nepantla, Mina Nishimura and Kota Yamazaki, and Passion Fruit Dance Company with Baye & Asa.

Ballet Nepantla opens the week on the Leir Stage on July 13; Mina Nishimura and Kota Yamazaki perform on July 14; and Passion Fruit Dance Company with Baye & Asa perform on July 15. On Saturday, July 16, The School at Jacob's Pillow Contemporary Performance Ensemble will also perform on the Leir Stage, available in person and as a free livestream.

In addition to these onsite and online performances, PillowTalks will be offered free of charge in Blake's Barn. On Saturday, accomplished choreographer Kyle Abraham discusses his journey in dance, including his new evening-length work *An Untitled Love*. On Sunday, *Remembering Kariamu Welsh* pays tribute to a late member of the Pillow's Cultural Traditions faculty who inspired generations with her work in the African dance field. Additionally on Sunday, A.I.M by Kyle Abraham will offer a workshop open to intermediate/advanced dancers, ages 16+.

"We hosted the first residency Kyle used to create *An Untitled Love* in the Pillow Lab in December, 2018," said Jacob's Pillow Executive and Artistic Director, Pamela Tatge. "And we all experienced the early stages of a work that invites us into the gestures, the glances, the humor and the physical banter that make up the language of Black love set to the R&B groove of D'Angelo...we knew this would become a signature work for A.I.M. Three and a half years later, I'm thrilled that Pillow audiences will finally have the chance to see this stunning work."

Kyle Abraham's highly anticipated work *An Untitled Love* is a creative exaltation that serves as a thumping mixtape celebrating culture, family, and community. Composed to the catalogue of R&B legend D'Angelo, the evening-length work is an ode to Abraham's intense, personal connection with the Grammy Award-winning artist's music. In his own words, Abraham explains, "That love has never waned. D'Angelo's music has played an integral part in my deep appreciation for the richness of Soul – R&B music. Within his music exists the histories and Neo-romanticism of Black love in America."

A Jacob's Pillow Dance Award winner, Doris Duke Artist Award winner, and a MacArthur Fellow, Kyle Abraham is one of today's most in-demand choreographers. His company's evocative, interdisciplinary work has been praised for its "lush mix of modern and hip-hop dance" (*The Boston Globe*). *An Untitled Love* is a Pillow co-commission and has been developed through two residencies in the Pillow Lab.

On the Leir Stage, Ballet Nepantla presents *Valentina*, a collection of stories that speak to the strength and resilience of women in Revolutionary Mexico. By fusing contemporary ballet with traditional Mexican folklórico, *Valentina* tells stories of hope and despair, struggle, loss, and triumph. Based in New York City, Ballet Nepantla is a contemporary dance company centered on stories from Mexican folklore. 'Nepantla,' an Aztec Nahuatl word meaning 'in-between,' speaks to the company's creative commitment to harmonizing contemporary ballet with traditional Mexican folk dance, and to bringing important Mexican and immigrant stories to multicultural audiences.

Also on the Leir Stage, Tokyo-born dance artist Mina Nishimura will perform excerpts from her new work, *Mapping a Forest while Searching for an Opposite Term of Exorcist*, which re-imagines a way of organizing a body and a space where multiple energies, traits, memories, and identities are bubbling up and disappearing. The program will also present *I, Ghost, the Other (self), or You*, a work in progress created by the Bessie Award-winning Japanese dance theater artist Kota Yamazaki with Nishimura.

Passion Fruit, a New York-based street dance theater company, will perform *Trapped* at Jacob's Pillow's outdoor venue. *Trapped* focuses on the stories of a mosaic of six women, ready to reveal their pain and their path to joy. With the intention of healing, the dancers use street and club dance styles to invite us to unfold, release, and clear mental blocks. This piece was commissioned by and developed during Guggenheim Works & Process bubble residencies made possible by the Mellon Foundation and Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Additionally, the New York City duo Baye & Asa will perform *John 4:20*, a 9-minute duet that interrogates the dancers' shared history and explores their identities as New Yorkers, Jews, Black youth, and male dancers. The personal dynamics of their relationships (Baye and Asa met at age six) address the larger political landscape of their upbringing. *John 4:20* captures their relationship as brothers working through these ideas as artists, struggling to show the reality of violence while communicating a necessity for empathy.

ABOUT A.I.M BY KYLE ABRAHAM

Contemporary dance company A.I.M by Kyle Abraham, considered "one of the most consistently excellent troupes working today" (*The New York Times*), provides multifaceted performances, educational programming, and community-based workshops across the globe. Led by acclaimed Choreographer and Artistic Director Kyle Abraham's innovative vision, the work of A.I.M is galvanized by Black culture and history, and grounded in a conglomeration of unique perspectives; described by Abraham as a "post-modern gumbo" of movement exploration.

A.I.M is one of the most active touring dance companies in the United States, with an audience base as diverse as A.I.M's movement vocabulary, drawing inspiration from a multitude of sources and dance styles. Since A.I.M's founding in 2006, Abraham has created more than 15 original works for and with the company. To expand its repertoire and offer a breadth of dance work to audiences, A.I.M commissions new works and performs existing works by outside choreographers, such as Trisha Brown, Bebe Miller, Andrea Miller, and current A.I.M dancer Keerati Jinakunwiphat.

Kyle Abraham's unique vision and illumination of poignant and relevant issues set him apart from his

generation of choreographers as a leading creative force in dance. A.I.M extends this vision and amplifies surrounding artistic voices to share movement and community-based work with audiences around the world.

ABOUT BALLET NEPANTLA

Since its inception in 2017, Ballet Nepantla has grown to feature more than 15 dancers trained in classical ballet and ballet folklórico, and has performed throughout the United States. The company originated from a series of pláticas—discussions or chats—between founders Andrea Guajardo and Martín Rodríguez, two artists whose early professional identities emerged from distinct genres: Andrea from classical ballet and contemporary dance, and Martín from traditional Mexican folklórico. Drawing inspiration from Gloria Anzaldúa’s borderlands theory, they envisioned a new form of expression that fused the two modalities; an aesthetic that would speak to the historical, cultural, and social realities of a broader narrative of being Mexican, Mexican American, immigrant, and trans-cultural.

Founder and Artistic Director Andrea Guajardo was born and raised in South Texas and received her training at The Ailey School, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in dance from Fordham University. She has worked as a teaching artist for Dance Theatre of Harlem and Ballet Hispánico and danced with Momix and Kazuko Hirabayashi Dance Theater. Founder and Associate Director Martín Rodríguez was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, México and began dancing folklórico at age 9, as well as traveling to rural Indigenous areas to learn the traditional dances of the local people. When he moved to Los Angeles he joined Grandeza Mexicana Folk Ballet Company, where he was a principal dancer, instructor, and choreographer.

ABOUT MINA NISHIMURA / KOTA YAMAZAKI

Dance Magazine calls Tokyo-born dance artist Mina Nishimura “a darling of the experimental dance scene.” Her works focus on ever-changing relationships between internal landscapes and external forms. Buddhism-influenced philosophies and butoh-based principles are reflected across her somatic, performance, and choreographic practices. Nishimura is a 2019 recipient of Foundation of Contemporary Arts Grants to Artists award. After graduating from Ochanomizu University in Tokyo with a Bachelor of Arts in Performing Arts Education, Nishimura studied at Merce Cunningham Studio in New York. She has performed and collaborated with groundbreaking New York-based choreographers and theater directors such as John Jasperse, Dean Moss, Rashaun Mitchell + Silas Riener, Vicky Shick, and more, while deepening her Butoh practice mainly with Kota Yamazaki. In the latest years in NY, she has also performed with Sia on *Saturday Night Live*, in *PRADA/Miu Miu Women’s Tales* directed by Celia Rowilson-Hall, and in *MV* of Late Sea.

The program also presents work-in-progress *I, Ghost, the Other (self), or You*, which was created by the Bessie Award-winning Japanese dance theater artist Kota Yamazaki in collaboration with Nishimura. Born in Niigata, Japan, Yamazaki was first introduced to butoh under the teaching of Akira Kasai at the age of 18 after training as a music conductor, then graduated from Bunka Fashion College with a Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design. Yamazaki and his company have been invited to perform internationally by theaters and festivals such as Place Theater (England), Yorkshire Dance Festival (England), Biennale de Nationale de Dane Val-de Marine (France), Buena Center for the Arts (CA), Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, and more. Additionally, Yamazaki is a recipient of The New York Dance and Performance Awards (The Bessie Award) in 2007, Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant award (2013), NYFA Fellowship (2016), and Guggenheim Fellowship (2018).

ABOUT PASSION FRUIT DANCE COMPANY / BAYE & ASA

Passion Fruit Dance Company is a New York-based street dance theater company with socially engaged art projects. Founded by Tatiana Desardouin, the group incorporates hip-hop, house dance, and other street dance styles; its mission is to promote the authenticity of street dance and clubbing styles, hip-hop and house cultures and their Black heritage, as well as its contribution to society, by exploring different social problems through their dance pieces and artistic practices. Passion Fruit had the opportunity to work as educators, both nationally and internationally. They performed the piece *Dance Within Your Dance* in places such as the Apollo Theater, Summerstage, Harlem Stage, Jacob's Pillow, the New Victory Theater, and more. They performed the piece *Trapped* at the Bridge Street Theater, Lincoln Center, and the Guggenheim. Passion Fruit Dance Company was recently featured in *The New Yorker* (April 2021). Desardouin was selected as one of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch.", featured in *Harper's Bazaar* (2021), and is one of the winners of the Vilcek Foundation Prize for Creative Promise in Dance (2022).

Desardouin, of Haitian origin, was born and raised in Switzerland. She is a professional dancer, dance instructor, dance consultant, choreographer, organizer, and curator, and is one of the core dancers of the pioneering street dance theater company Rennie Harris Puremovement since 2016. She is also a part of the Nefer Global Movement Collective, a core member of LayeRhythm Experiment ensemble, and part of the Black Dancing Bodies project.

For Baye and Asa, hip-hop and African dance languages are the foundation of their technique. The rhythms of these techniques inform the way they energetically confront contemporary dance and theater. Baye & Asa is a company creating movement art projects directed by Amadi 'Baye' Washington and Sam 'Asa' Pratt, who met when they were six years old. They say their long friendship gives them the freedom and safety to constantly disagree, expanding each other's artistic capacities. The physical aggression in their choreography is a representation of their political rage, and a yearning to personally implicate themselves. They use choreography to build theatrical metaphors, interrogate systemic inequities, and contemporize ancient allegories; the characters they shape are righteous, helpless, and fated to their cultural position. They have presented work at The Joyce Theater, 92nd Street Y, Mark Morris Dance Center, Battery Dance Festival, Dixon Place, Gibney Dance Center, and more; they have given lecture performances at The University of Maryland, Bard College (NY), Hunter College (NYC), The Dalton School (NYC), and The Hotchkiss School (CN). Individually they have performed with Akram Khan Company, Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*, Abraham in Motion, David Dorfman Dance, Gallim, Kate Weare Company, and the Francesca Harper Project. They are one of *Dance Magazine's* 25 to Watch for 2022, and are currently artists in residence at the 92nd Street Y.

Jacob's Pillow Connections

Kyle Abraham won the Jacob's Pillow Dance Award in 2012 and currently serves on the Board of Trustees for Jacob's Pillow. A.I.M made its Pillow debut in 2009 on the Inside/Out stage, and returned to the Pillow in 2010, 2011, 2013, and in 2017 with a performance of *Dearest Home* in the Doris Duke Theatre. In 2018, A.I.M participated in a Pillow Lab residency, and the company made its Ted Shawn Theatre debut in 2019, performing the works *state* (2018), *INDY* (2018), *The Quiet Dance* (2011), *Show Pony* (2018), and *Drive* (2017).

Abraham collaborated with Wendy Whelan, former principal dancer of the New York City Ballet, to create and perform in *Restless Creature*, which premiered at the Pillow in 2013. He also performed at the Pillow with the companies of Cherylyn Lavagnino (2008) and David Dorfman (2011). Abraham was on Faculty of The School at Jacob's Pillow for the Contemporary Program in 2015.

Kota Yamazaki appeared at Jacob's Pillow in 2000 with his company Rosy Co., performing *Chinoise Flower*. His work appeared at the Pillow again in 2010 when he collaborated with Yin Mei Dance and Dai Jan for *City of Paper*.

Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive:

A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in *Dearest Home* in 2018:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/kyle-abraham-abraham-in-motion/dearest-home/>

A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in *Pavement* in 2013:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/?s=kyle+abraham>

A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in *Inventing Pookie Jenkins* in 2010:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/kyle-abraham/inventing-pookie-jenkins/>

Yin Mei Dance and Dai Jan in *City of Paper* in 2010, in collaboration with Kota Yamazaki:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/yin-mei-dance/city-of-paper/>

Kota Yamazaki's Rosy Co. in *Chinoise Flower* in 2000:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/rosy-co/chinoise-flower/>

PERFORMANCE & TICKET DETAILS

— WEEK 4, JULY 13-17 —

A.I.M by Kyle Abraham

July 13-17, Wed.-Sat. at 8pm; Saturday and Sunday at 2pm

Ted Shawn Theatre

Tickets starting at \$55

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

Ballet Nepantla

Wed., July 13, 6pm

Henry J. Leir Stage

Tickets starting at \$15

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

Mina Nishimura / Kota Yamazaki

Thurs., July 14, 6pm

Henry J. Leir Stage

Tickets starting at \$15

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

Passion Fruit Dance Company with Baye & Asa

Fri., July 15, 6pm

Henry J. Leir Stage

Tickets starting at \$15

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

ALSO THIS WEEK

PillowTalk: A Visit With Kyle Abraham

Sat., July 16, 4pm

Blake's Barn

FREE

One of today's most accomplished and in-demand choreographers talks about his journey so far and the new evening-length work for A.I.M, *An Untitled Love*.

The School at Jacob's Pillow: Contemporary Performance Ensemble

Sat., July 16, 6pm

Henry J. Leir Stage

FREE - Reservations online at jacobspillow.org and via phone at 413.243.0745

The School at Jacob's Pillow Performance Ensemble provides an inside look at The School experience under the direction of Program Director Milton Myers. This presentation features works created on the dancers by guest choreographers Studio Wayne McGregor, as led by Antoine Vereecken, as well as choreographers Sidra Bell and Rena Butler.

Workshop with Festival Artists: A.I.M by Kyle Abraham

Sun., July 17, 10-11:30am

Open to intermediate/advanced dancers, ages 16+

Event details to be announced.

PillowTalk: Remembering Kariamu Welsh

Sun., July 17, 4pm

Blake's Barn

FREE

An icon in the African dance field, "Mama Kariamu" was part of the Pillow's Cultural Traditions faculty and she inspired generations of followers who pay tribute to her legacy.

Now & Then: Evocative Dance Portraits by Christopher Duggan

Blake's Barn

Tuesday-Sunday, noon through final curtain

FREE

Photography has been an integral part of Jacob's Pillow throughout its 90 seasons, and Festival Photographer Christopher Duggan has often mined this tradition for inspiration, culminating in these pairings of vintage and contemporary images.

The Ted Shawn Theatre: An Evolving Landmark

Ted Shawn Theatre Lobby

Open daily, noon through final curtain

FREE

While the unveiling of an entirely new stage house takes the focus in 2022, this landmark structure has been a "work in progress" ever since its opening in 1942. Through vintage imagery and artifacts on display, the rich history of America's first dance theater comes into view.

Jacob's Pillow Archives/Norton Owen Reading Room

Blake's Barn

Tuesday-Sunday, noon through final curtain

FREE

This spacious, informal library and reading room allows visitors to view videos, browse through books, access the Pillow's computer catalog, or peruse permanent collections of Pillow programs and photographs from the Archives. The Norton Owen Reading Room and new Special Collections Room also feature recent donations and more archival treasures from the Stephan Driscoll Collection.

Online Exhibit: Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive

This evolving online resource features breathtaking video highlights of Pillow performances from the early 1930s through today, with an expanded section of multimedia essays featuring talks, photos, and other exclusive content organized into various themes. danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org.

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 celebrating its 90th Anniversary Season. Jacob's Pillow acknowledges that it rests on the unceded lands of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok, and recognizes the Agawam, Nipmuc, and Pocumtuc who also made their homes in Western Massachusetts. We honor their Elders past, present, and future. Each Festival includes national and international dance companies and 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 Executive and Artistic Director since 2016 is Pamela Tatge. For more information, visit www.jacobspillow.org.

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