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Acclaimed Choreographer Pam Tanowitz To Receive 2024 Jacob's Pillow Dance Award

Tanowitz will be honored at the Season Opening Gala on June 22

March 19, 2024 (BECKET, Mass.)—Jacob's Pillow announced today that critically-acclaimed American choreographer Pam Tanowitz will receive the 2024 Jacob's Pillow Dance Award. Tanowitz will accept this award at Jacob's Pillow's Season Opening Gala in the Berkshires on Saturday, June 22.

The Jacob's Pillow Dance Award is presented each year to an artist of exceptional vision and achievement and carries a cash prize which the artist can use in any way they wish. Tanowitz, who creates "sublime dance theater of the highest caliber" (*The New York Times*), is an influential collaborative and creative force, admired for her abstract treatment of classical and contemporary movement ideas, informed by rigorous research.

Tanowitz has created or set work for New York City Ballet, The Royal Ballet, Martha Graham Dance Company, Paul Taylor American Modern Dance, Juilliard Dance, Ballet Austin, and more. She has been commissioned by Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival as well as The Joyce Theater, The Kennedy Center, The Barbican Centre, Vail International Dance Festival, New York Live Arts, Guggenheim Works & Process, and many other leading arts institutions.

This summer, her work *Secret Things* will receive its U.S. premiere at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival from July 3-7, commissioned and performed by The Royal Ballet of the United Kingdom in the company's only U.S. engagement this year. Tickets to this engagement go on sale to the general public on April 11.

Based in New York City, Tanowitz is also an Assistant Professor of Professional Practice at Rutgers University, and is the first-ever choreographer in residence at the Fisher Center at Bard. In 2000, she founded Pam Tanowitz Dance, an accomplished company of world-class artists working across disciplines.

"There are very few contemporary choreographers who have created their own singular and theatrical language as Pam has done," said Jacob's Pillow Executive and Artistic Director Pamela Tatge. "It's one grounded in ballet, but through the bodies of the amazing dancers she casts, it is transformed, personal, and new. When she creates on ballet companies, she gives those dancers the opportunity to

discover new ways to express themselves, and they are better for it. Her collaborations with artists from other disciplines have been hugely inventive and ambitious in ways that the field needs right now. It is an honor to celebrate her with this award.”

The Season Opening Gala in June marks a return to Jacob’s Pillow for Tanowitz. Following her Pillow debut on the outdoor Henry J. Leir Stage as part of the Inside/Out series in 2009, Jacob’s Pillow welcomed Pam Tanowitz Dance into the former Doris Duke Theatre for Festival 2016.

Tanowitz expressed her thanks for receiving this year’s Dance Award with a nod to the past as well as the future. “I am very much a dance history lover, and I am honored to be a part of the continuum of history at Jacob’s Pillow,” she said. “When I make my work, from day one, I never think of myself in a vacuum; I try to see the whole timeline of dance, and where I fit in. A lot of what drives my work is the constant question to myself of what has been done before, what I can do that is different, and what perspective I might add to history.”

Tanowitz added that she has many more dances to make. “Some will succeed, and some won’t,” she said, “but an opportunity that allows me the chance to make more dances is something I am grateful for. So, I am grateful for this honor from Jacob’s Pillow.”

Tanowitz joins a list of Jacob’s Pillow Dance Award honorees that include Misty Copeland, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Dormeshia, Ronald K. Brown, Annie-B Parson and Paul Lazar, Bill T. Jones, Merce Cunningham, Kyle Abraham, Michelle Dorrance, Camille A. Brown, Liz Lerman, and Faye Driscoll, among others. The Jacob’s Pillow Dance Award was established in 2007 and is philanthropically supported by an anonymous donor.

Alongside the presentation of the Award, the Jacob’s Pillow Season Opening Gala will include The School at Jacob’s Pillow Contemporary Ballet Performance Ensemble, performing a world premiere by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa. Additionally, in honor of the 100th Anniversary of George Gershwin’s iconic *Rhapsody in Blue*, the Gala will feature tap dancer and choreographer Caleb Teicher and pianist Conrad Tao in their highly acclaimed interpretation. This will be the second time the Pillow has showcased the creative collaboration between Teicher and Tao, whose work *More Forever* was developed in the Pillow Lab and had its world premiere at the Pillow in 2019.

In-person tickets to the Season Opening Gala are now on sale. In addition to in-person event tickets for the one-night only performance, dinner and dancing, the Gala performance will be livestreamed and accessible through a “choose what you pay” model. To learn more about the Gala, visit jacobspillow.org/gala.

Pam Tanowitz has received numerous grants and awards over her career, including a Foundation for Contemporary Arts grant in 2010, the Herb Alpert Award in 2019, a Doris Duke Award in 2020. In 2016, she received the Juried Bessie Award “for using form and structure as a vehicle for challenging audiences to think, to feel, to experience movement; for pursuing her uniquely poetic and theatrical

vision with astounding rigor and focus."

Tanowitz holds degrees from Ohio State University and Sarah Lawrence College, where she clarified her creative voice under former Merce Cunningham dancer and choreographer Viola Farber. She immersed herself in dance by working in administration at the New York City Center while also studying the Center's archived dance videos and developing her own work.

Her first international tour with Pam Tanowitz Dance came in 2018 with the Fisher Center world premiere of *Four Quartets*—her work inspired by T.S. Eliot's literary masterpiece and set to music by Kaija Saariaho—which was called "the greatest creation of dance theater so far this century" (*The New York Times*), and which toured to the Barbican Centre in London, the Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. *The Guardian* described *Four Quartets* as "unfussy but full of detail ... where you can never predict what happens next, but when it does it makes perfect sense."

In addition to her meticulous study of dance history, Tanowitz also brings curiosity and intellectual exchange into her collaborations with dancers and artists in the studio. "I have to fall in love with a dancer to work with them," she said. "We express ourselves by coming together with a concept, then separating, then coming back together. There is a back-and-forth between structure and intuition. I always want to work with people who have their own distinct vision and approach to work. When the work makes me look good, it's because I work with amazing artists."

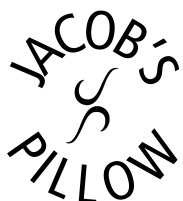
ABOUT THE JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE AWARD

The Jacob's Pillow Dance Award was created in 2007 by an anonymous donor whose commitment to an ongoing annual gift to Jacob's Pillow is generous and far-reaching in support of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Award as well as research and development funds for the creation of new work.

The Award, presented each year to an artist of exceptional vision and achievement, carries a cash prize of \$25,000 which the artist can use in any way they wish. In commemoration, the honoree also receives a custom-designed glass award sculpture by Berkshire-based artist Tom Patti, whose work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum and other major arts institutions around the world.

The remaining funds support the Pillow's commitment to the research and development of new work in the recently launched Pillow Lab. Year-round residencies at the Pillow Lab offer free housing, unlimited use of studio space, and access to the Pillow's rare and extensive Archives and resources.

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, which celebrates its 92nd

season in Summer 2024. Jacob's Pillow acknowledges that it rests on the ancestral homelands of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok or Mohican people. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors and elders past and present as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all. In addition, we acknowledge the Nipmuc, the Wampanoag and other tribal nations who also made their homes in what is now known as Massachusetts.

Founded by Ted Shawn in 1933, 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, a prestigious professional dance training center, advances the careers of the upcoming generation of performers and choreographers; during the Festival, 100 international dancers evolve as artists in ballet, choreography, contemporary, musical theatre, tap, and other genres, and year round, artist faculty and accomplished alumni nurture younger dancers in a series of Jacob's Pillow 360 workshops and intensives offered in partnership with leading dance institutions worldwide. 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. Through its 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 highlighted 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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