



NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS | NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

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**Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Presents  
the Return of Pillow Pride Weekend  
After Five-Year Hiatus**

**July 11-13 events are open to all  
with a special invitation to LGBTQ+ audiences**

**Performances, a historic tour, dining options, and a dance party  
featuring The Illustrious Blacks coincide with the Opening Week  
of the new Doris Duke Theatre**

April 22, 2025 (Becket, MA)—Jacob's Pillow is pleased to announce the return of Pillow Pride Weekend, a three-day itinerary of events centered on LGBTQ+ joy and visibility that will run as an extension of Pride month from Friday, July 11 through Sunday, July 13. While the longstanding dance festival has hosted a one-night-only Pride-themed dance party in recent summers, this will be the organization's first time hosting a three-day destination Pride celebration since 2019.

Audiences living locally, as well as those traveling from across New England and further afield, are invited to immerse themselves in a colorful and genre-blending weekend of dance, music, cutting-edge art, and community, with a variety of queer-oriented events in indoor and outdoor performance spaces, as well as special exhibits, the annual Pillow Pride Dance Party featuring musical artists The Illustrious Blacks, and a Sunday brunch.

Pillow Pride Weekend festivities coincide with the opening of the new Doris Duke Theatre, built to become one of the most technologically advanced theaters in the world dedicated to dance. Built on the site where Jacob's Pillow lost a studio theater to fire in 2020, the reimagined theater's Opening Week Celebration will include state-of-the-art performances and multimedia installations that explore the intersections of dance, technology, and the human body.

"Jacob's Pillow is thrilled to expand Pillow Pride into a celebratory weekend that will enrich audiences and celebrate the brilliance of LGBTQ+ communities," said Jacob's Pillow Artistic and Executive Director Pamela Tatge. "Countless queer artists have left an indelible mark on our festival, and have inspired our visitors and dance lovers for many decades."

Since its founding in the 1930s, Tatge said, Jacob's Pillow has served as a safe haven for members of the gay community to exist, make art, and be themselves. "This was first exemplified by our founder Ted Shawn and the cultivation of his Men Dancers," Tatge said. "As they toured the world, they forged a new performance style for men, and proved that dance could be an honorable profession for men in the United States. We are pleased to continue the Pillow's legacy of welcoming and elevating the queer community on our campus throughout our summer festival."

## **SUGGESTED ITINERARY FOR PRIDE WEEKEND TRAVELERS**

Visitors can make the most of their three-day Pillow Pride Weekend with the following suggested itinerary. Many of the listed Pillow Pride performances and events have limited availability and will be offered on multiple dates and times. Jacob's Pillow encourages book tickets and reservations in advance at [jacobspillow.org/festival](https://jacobspillow.org/festival).

### **FRIDAY, JULY 11**

#### **Exhibit: Dancing The Algorithm**

##### **Doris Duke Theatre | 12pm-final curtain**

Jacob's Pillow will present ***Dancing the Algorithm*** in the Doris Duke Theatre Gallery on July 11, curated by Emmy Award-nominated queer artist Katherine Helen Fisher. Through interactive artist installations, *Dancing the Algorithm* illuminates how the dancing body doesn't just adapt to technology, but shapes it, challenges it, and celebrates the new possibilities it creates.

#### **Performance: Calpulli Mexican Dance Company**

##### **Henry J. Leir Stage | 5:30pm**

Calpulli Mexican Dance Company by popular demand returns to the outdoor stage, celebrating their cultural legacy with folkloric storytelling, dynamic dance and music, and colorful costumes.

Described by *The New York Times* as “a terrific company of generous dancers [that] give a vibrant tour of Mexican traditions,” Calpulli will present an excerpt from *Monarcas*—which celebrates the real life contributions and sacrifices by Mexican immigrants to and for the United States—and *Viñedos*, which honors laborers who became vineyard owners and proud makers of California wine. Tickets are on a Choose What You Pay model.

## **SATURDAY, JULY 12**

*Attendees can prepare for the full day ahead by taking advantage of the Pillow’s various food and beverage options, which include the Pillow Pub, Pillow Café (OpenTable reservation required), and Pillow Coffee Bar.*

### **Leisure Walk**

#### **Doris Duke Theatre Grounds | all day**

Start your day ahead with a snack or coffee to-go from the **Pillow Coffee Bar** or **Pillow Pub** and enjoy a leisurely walk through the grounds of the new **Indigenous Garden** designed by Indigenous artists Misty Cook and Kathi Arnold—enrolled members of the Stockbridge Munsee Band of Mohican, and the outdoor **Fire Pit** created by Nipmuc tribal member Andre Strongbearheart Gaines, Jr.

### **Performance: Unwired Dance Theatre**

#### **Doris Duke Theatre | 10:30am, 12:15pm, 1:00pm, 1:45pm, 2:30pm**

In a series of short performances beginning at 10:30am in the Duke’s main theater, the U.K./France’s Unwired Dance Theatre will make its U.S. debut of ***Where We Meet***, an audio-based dance installation where audiences can experience the inner thoughts of a dancer. In this interactive and immersive dance theater performance, the spectator is in control to reveal the hidden stories behind each character. *Where We Meet* is a joyful and shared experience exposing how we are more alike than we are different, reimagining what community really means in a modern age. Unwired Dance Theatre is based both in London, England and Bordeaux, France, with collaborators all around the world.

Performances of *Where We Meet* are ticketed in advance for a limited-size audience, and will run at 10:30am, 12:15pm, 1:00pm, 1:45pm, and 2:30pm. Both seating and standing options will be available at this event.

### **Performance: Kinetic Light**

#### **Forest Studio, Doris Duke Theatre | Afternoon through 7:40pm**

After Unwired Dance Theatre, Jacob's Pillow presents internationally recognized disability arts ensemble Kinetic Light—a company working in the disciplines of art and technology, while teaching at the nexus of access, queerness, disability, dance, and race.

Kinetic Light will present **territory**—a virtual reality walk-up experience that surrounds the audience in movement, light, vibration, and sound. *territory*, described as “utopian and dystopian all at once,” was recently showcased at SXSW 2025 and is directed by Kiira Benz and Alice Sheppard with featured performers Jerron Herman, Laurel Lawson, and Alice Sheppard. Scenography is by Michael Maag, sound design/spatial mix by Q Department, sound technology by Mach1, and access design by Lawson and Sheppard.

### **Performance: Sydnie L. Mosley Dances**

#### **Henry J. Leir Stage | 5:30pm**

Enjoy a performance on the iconic Henry J. Leir outdoor stage featuring **Sydnie L. Mosley Dances**, a dance-theatre collective that explores the real-life experiences of women and the Black community through experiential dance performances that blend modern technique, verbal performance, and the movement traditions of the African diaspora. The company creates works designed to provoke a visceral response and spark dialogue around gender and racial justice.

### **Performance: Trinity Irish Dance Company**

#### **Ted Shawn Theatre | 7:30pm**

Following the outdoor performance, the historic Ted Shawn Theatre—the first theater in the United States built exclusively for presenting dance—will open its doors to present the Pillow debut of the female centric **Trinity Irish Dance Company** as they present a genre-defying program with live music and a hybrid of Irish step and American tap regarded as “everything you expect, but like nothing you’d imagine.” Among the works presented will be *Push*, an explosion of hard-driving percussive power that exemplifies the company’s consistent message of female empowerment. This will mark the first time Jacob’s Pillow has presented a full program of Irish dance on the Ted Shawn Theatre stage.

### **Pillow Pride Dance Party**

#### **Doris Duke Theatre | 9pm**

The night ends in high gear at this year's annual **Pillow Pride Dance Party**, sponsored by Berkshire Pride. Experience the new Doris Duke Theatre transformed into an immersive club experience with beats provided by self-proclaimed Afro-Electro-Disco-Space-Punk Monstah Black and their DJ/Music duo **The Illustrious Blacks**. This party will feature dancing, drinks, and projected visuals sourced from the Pillow’s rich, queer archival history.

Monstah Black—of The Illustrious Blacks—arrived with a mission: take a deep dive into the Jacob’s Pillow Archives with a focus on the unapologetically queer Black and brown bodies in dance. Monstah also unearthed allies and inspirations who have paved the way to bold self-expression throughout the Pillow’s history. That archival footage will inspire text, as well as physical and lyrical motifs, throughout this two-hour dance party, as The Illustrious Blacks guide the dance floor with radical human joy.

## **SUNDAY, JULY 13**

### **Pride Brunch & Pillow Pride History Tour**

#### **Pillow Café | 10am, Tour 11-11:45am**

Jacob’s Pillow closes out Pillow Pride Weekend on Sunday, July 13, by reviving audiences from a night of revelry with a communal, “morning-after” **Pride Brunch** (OpenTable reservations required) followed by the opportunity to discover little-known stories, such as the origin of the name “Jacob’s Pillow,” on a **Pillow Pride History Tour** led by Director of Preservation, Norton Owen. Owen celebrates his 50th year at Jacob’s Pillow this summer and is the most qualified Pillow member to “spill the tea” on the many queer artists who have graced the ground over the years.

Following the Tour, Jacob’s Pillow encourages audiences to visit the free exhibition on Owen’s Pillow career in Blake’s Barn, entitled ***Connecting Through Time: 50 Seasons with Norton Owen***, curated by former Dance Magazine editor-in-chief, Wendy Perron.

## **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 93rd season in Summer 2025. 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](http://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](http://www.jacobspillow.org).

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