

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 35

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

According to your 501(c)3 letter, in what town is your official office located?

Hartford

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

New Britain

Will this activity occur after February 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Organization Name

Judy Dworin Performance Project, Inc.

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

223064328

Principal Contact Name

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Title

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[Map It](#)

Website

<http://www.judydworin.org>

Amount requested this application

\$9,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

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Judy Dworin Performance Project (JDPP) is an arts non-profit that harness creative expression as a catalyst for positive change. JDPP uses dance theater performance and multi-arts engagement to examine social issues, build bridges of understanding across diverse communities, and inspire both individual growth and collective action.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

JDPP was founded in 1989, the same year that the Berlin Wall came down, and that spirit of breakthrough enthusiasm for empowering individuals to make change still pervades the organization three decades later. What began as a collective of professional performance artists is now a multi-faceted Hartford-based non-profit arts organization committed to building a healthy society, through dance and movement, visual art, music, song, and spoken word. For thirty years, JDPP has boldly and bravely tapped into the power of the arts to tell stories, reveal hidden and often uncomfortable truths, and connect people to each other.

Last year, JDPP reached 3,900+ youth and adults through its three program umbrellas: the JDPP Ensemble of professional performance artists; Moving Matters! Multi-Arts residencies for children in Hartford public schools; and the Bridging Boundaries Arts Intervention programs for individuals and families impacted by incarceration.

Describe the demographics of your audience/people served by your activities.

JDPP's primary focus is on serving and empowering disadvantaged populations, including under-resourced children in Hartford-area schools, and those impacted by incarceration. Rooted in performance as a means of connection and communication, JDPP's residencies, workshops, and other outreach programs share a goal of facilitating the personal growth and healing of the self and restoration of personal voice. The population served is 49% minority and 60% female; 88% from greater Hartford.

Describe your organization's governance.

JDPP's 14-member board meets five times annually (80% average attendance). All of the board members contributed financially in FY 2019, and are expected to attend and promote programs and performances as much as possible.

What percentage of your board makes personal financial contributions to your organization?

JDPP's 14-member board (93% identifying as female; 29% people of color) is composed of individuals representing the visual and performing arts, education, CT. Dept. of Correction, business, and nonprofit communities in Greater Hartford. Their mix of backgrounds and expertise combine to provide a solid governance and leadership foundation for guiding the organization's progress toward the goals laid out in the 2019-2021 strategic plan.

Project Name

Artistic Development & Production of ColorFields, a new original dance theater production

Project Description

JDPP seeks support for developing, rehearsing, and staging a new site-specific dance theater piece titled *ColorFields* inspired by the work of abstract expressionist painter Helen Frankenthaler, in partnership with New Britain Museum of American Art, and in cooperation with the Frankenthaler Foundation. This project is part of NBMAA's focus on women artists (2020-2021). While the museum is closed due to COVID-19, JDPP's Ensemble will develop video material to share via Zoom rehearsals, responding to prompts devised by Artistic Director Judy Dworin each week. After NBMAA reopens, development of the piece will move there during the show of Frankenthaler's previously unexhibited later work. Three open in-progress shows will take

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place for the general public Jan/Feb-Apr/May 2021, and JDPP will provide busing for groups from underserved area schools to view open rehearsals. The final live dress & performance will take place in spring 2021.

Project start/opening

07/01/2020

Project end/closing

06/30/2021

Project venue

New Britain Museum of American Art

Project town

Hartford; New Britain

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

JDPP will share video of Zoom and in-person rehearsals periodically on social media (1000+ followers). An est. 75 people will attend each of 3 in-progress performances at NBMAA, while museum visitors (paid; est. 50+ weekly) and school groups (free; est. 225 total) will watch weekly open rehearsals from Jan-May 2021. A dress rehearsal (\$15) & final live ticketed evening performance (\$30), est. 75 each, will take place in May/June 2021. Total estimated paid attendance: 775. Total free: 1225.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

We have learned that strong, frequent, and consistent messaging is essential to motivating audiences for dance theater. JDPP will hire a professional marketing consultant to develop a promotion strategy that includes social media, legacy media, and PR. This person will work with JDPP and NBMAA to facilitate communication with reporters, editors, and opinion makers in greater Hartford/New Britain and statewide. In-progress showings and open rehearsals will also promote the final performance.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

The Roberts Foundation has been a long-standing supporter of JDPP's artistic work. JDPP is pleased to recognize the Foundation on our web site (www.judydworin.org), in all Facebook and Instagram posts and our monthly email newsletters, in all publications and press releases relating to the project, in the final performance playbill, and as requested. Should public health restrictions require, we are confident we can produce an alternative experience that fulfills the intent of the grant.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

Dworin defines artistic excellence as collaborative creation in the fulfillment of an artistic vision. The strongest and best performance works are a result of trained and confident individual artists bringing their knowledge and experience together in the metaphoric telling of a story whose meaning is greater than the sum of its parts. The collaborative approach to devising work under Dworin's direction and choreographic vision informs the trajectory of *ColorFields* as it moves from video to studio rehearsal to performance and beyond. This work moves out of the social justice realm and allows Dworin to delve into the process and paintings of an artist whose own responsive, in-the-moment approach very much aligns with Dworin's method of listening and responding to the moment with movement being the seedbed for the material upon which she shapes the work. The addition of visuals, light, sound, and costume ultimately brings the work into a seamless whole.

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How does this project align with that definition, and how does it advance your mission?

As noted above, the *ColorFields* project will be guided by Judy Dworin's aesthetic vision and drawn from the collective wellspring of creativity of the JDPP Ensemble members, in response to Frankenthaler's art and process. The collaborative exchange of ideas will coalesce into a translation of Frankenthaler's paintings and method into the three-dimensional dance theater medium. This kind of bottom-up artistic direction follows JDDP's mission of empowerment and centrality of voice. Dworin will highlight and shape what she and the members of the Ensemble see in Frankenthaler's work as universally resonant themes to create a narrative thread connecting the images, dance, and scenic elements and illuminating who she was as an artist and a person. Our hope is that this project and will lead to other future multi-arts collaborations that offer the opportunity to connect people, communicate ideas and provide cultural and aesthetic insight.

How will your audience and the community benefit from this project?

Helen Frankenthaler and her color soaking technique are fairly well known among enthusiasts of 20th century American art and abstract expressionism, but her contribution to the field and her art itself has not received the attention of her male counterparts or her mentor Jackson Pollack. Thus the NBMAA's important focus on women artists. The Frankenthaler works included in the exhibit have not been publicly displayed before, making this show a unique opportunity for even her most informed fans. *ColorFields* will be JDPP's first performance in a museum, exposing our work to new audiences and raising the Ensemble's visibility. Students in nearby New Britain schools will likely have their first opportunity to watch live dance theater and to study Frankenthaler in their art classes. The audiences that know JDPP for our prison-related performance will be able to experience the Ensemble's range. And all audiences will be inspired to learn more about NBMAA, JDPP, and Frankenthaler.

How will this project be evaluated?

JDPP is working with Dr. Anita Baker of Evaluation Consultants to collect and analyze data on all of our programs, especially performances. In December, we piloted a new audience questionnaire at the premiere of our 30th anniversary performance, *She Speaks Her Peace*, which will be adapted to be used with *ColorFields*. Our plan is to evaluate the project throughout the entire development of the piece, from initial online concept videos through open rehearsals to final performance. Indicators of success may include numbers of online viewers; numbers of attendees at open rehearsals, in-progress performances, and the final premiere; socioeconomic diversity of audiences; and numbers of people who report feeling motivated and/or inspired to see more JDPP performances and/or learn more about Frankenthaler and her work. The goal of our evaluation strategy is to answer, "How effective is this piece in nurturing personal, cultural, and community growth and understanding?"

Cover letter

- [Roberts-cover-letter.pdf](#)

Board list

- [JDPP-Board-members-FY-20.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [JDPP-IRS-Determination-Letter.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [JDPP-6-30-19-FS_final.pdf](#)

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Last year operational budget

- [JDPP-2018-19-BvA.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [JDPP-2019-20-BvA.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [JDPP-Balance-Sheet.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [JDPP_colorfields_projectbudget.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

Yes

Annual report

- [January-Donor-Newsletter-2020.pdf](#)

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Yes

Strategic plan

- [Strategic-Plan-Final-2019_21.pdf](#)

Other materials?

- [Summary-of-Responses-to-30th-Anniversary-Performance-Event.pdf](#)
- [SSHPP-financial-report.pdf](#)

The Helen Frankenthaler exhibit at NBMAA was originally scheduled to run Nov. 13, 2020-Jan. 24, 2021. The Museum was forced to closed due to COVID-19 restrictions in March 2020. Reopening is expected in late summer/early fall 2020. They are currently in discussion with the Frankenthaler Foundation regarding a revised loan schedule that will allow the exhibit to open in Jan/Feb 2021, and run through May/June 2021. Exact dates for the *ColorFields* rehearsals and performance will be determined once the exhibition run is determined.

Have you contacted the Executive Director by email or phone to discuss this proposal?

Yes

Is your cover letter signed by your senior executive? on your letterhead? with your official office address?

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Yes