

Chicago Dancemakers Forum

CDF was initiated in 2003 by a consortium of three organizations: Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago, and Links Hall. Today, CDF is led by representatives of those organizations, two independent dance artists, and a director, all of whom are stakeholders in the contemporary dance community.

Artist Program I: Lab Artist Awards

The CDF **Lab Artists Program** awards grants and professional support to select artists for research and development of new directions in their work.

- CDF awards are distinctive in that they emphasize **artistic growth** through the **creative process**.
- Geared toward a **focused scale and high quality**, the Lab Artist Program gives four individuals each year **\$15,000 grants** for research, development, and presentation of a new project.
- Grant funds are bolstered with a **yearlong program of mentorship and feedback** from the CDF consortium and peer artists. Roundtable meetings and progress showings **foster exchange** about artistic, critical, and resource issues. These meetings also nurture new artistic and peer relationships among Lab Artists and consortium members.
- Three intrinsic qualities of CDF – **confidence, validation and the permission to fail** – permit artistic transformation and deeper exploration. In an evaluation study, former Lab Artists said that CDF helped take them to **a new artistic level**. They added that CDF motivated and encouraged them to **focus on their personal visions**, and **to experiment in integrating new artistic elements into their dance**.
- To date, CDF has awarded **\$480,000 to 32 Artists**. This is **the single largest source of funding and support for new dance development in Chicago**. Lab Artists represent a broad array of artistic interests, cultural backgrounds, and ages. More information about the Lab Artists is available on our website.
- Over **160** dancer/performers and **65** collaborators, including videographers, costume and lighting designers, and musicians, have been involved with the various CDF projects.

Artist Program II: Greenhouse

Greenhouse is a new CDF program that launched in January 2011 and responds to the need for more mentorship and financial support opportunities for emerging choreographers in the Chicago dance community. The Greenhouse Program promotes artistic development in emerging choreographers through financial support for the creation of new work and by fostering a mentorship relationship from an established/mid-career artist in the city. Mirrored on CDF's yearlong Lab Artist Award program, the intent of the six-month Greenhouse program is to support **creative research and process**. In early 2011 five artists were awarded \$5000 each for the development of new work. Of this amount, \$4000 is unrestricted (to be used at the discretion of the emerging artist), and \$1000 is awarded to the mentor. The program recently concluded its successful inaugural cycle with a modestly produced, shared concert featuring Greenhouse Works in Progress in June 2011.

Public Programs: Workshops and Discussions

In addition to our artist funding and mentoring programs, CDF facilitates dynamic interactions among a broader dance community with professional workshops, public showings, and critical forums and discussions. These activities are designed to create critical space for individual learning and for sharing process-oriented discoveries. CDF aims to foster critical engagement and to advance artistic development for dancemakers and their collaborators working in fields such as dramaturgy, music and video.

Since 2004, **35** different workshop and discussion events with over **900** participants have taken place. As a cornerstone since 2006 to our Public Programs, CDF has worked in partnership with Silverspace Studio and the Chicago Seminar on Dance and Performance, to host a monthly series of *Salons*. The *Salons* achieve twin purposes. First, the presentations provide the Chicago dance-engaged community with ways to see “behind the curtain” of different artists. At each salon, a different artist offers perspective on their creative practice and ideas through discussion, video documentation, and/or demonstrations, followed by lively process-based discussion. Second, each Salon concludes with a networking reception, which offers attendees a regular opportunity to engage and connect with their peers. Recent *Salon* artists have included Ann Carlson, Raimund Hoghe, David Dorfman, Tere O’Connor, Carrie Hanson, Diego Pinon and Joe Goode.