



ARTIST BIO

Choreographer Taja Will is a queer, Latina artist. Her body of work includes multi-dimensional contemporary performance and holistic therapy. These two parallel worlds come together in her artistic work through modalities of somatic movement and structured improvisation. Will's aesthetic is one of spontaneity, bold choice making, sonic and kinetic partnership and the ability to move in relationship to risk and intimacy. Her practice and performance works are deeply rooted in exploring a visceral connection to current socio-cultural realities. Recent works have been commissioned by the Right Here Showcase and Candy Box Festival and presented at the Walker Art Center. Support for recent projects has come from the Minnesota State Arts Board, Jerome Foundation, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and Metropolitan Regional Arts Council.

Will maintains a private healing practice blending modalities of healing justice work with developmental psychotherapy and somatic bodywork and is a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion consultant and facilitator.

REPERTOIRE AVAILABLE FOR TOURING

Bruja//Fugitive Majesty is evening length solo woven from Will's personal mythology. Will creates the magical world of her genetic and artistic identity. As a queer, transracial adoptee she has come to know herself as a cultural fugitive, taking on personality as it fits; shape-shifting as way to escape displacement; this is the preservation of identity.

Performers: 1 dancer, 1 pianist

Tech:

- Theatrical lighting
- LED lights provided by the artist, they need to be connected to light board
- Acoustic piano preferred, or electric piano (full scale, weighted keys required)
- Capacity to run a small amp and sound equipment from an on-stage location
- Stage support to move the piano on and off stage in a stylized way

Gospels of Oblivion To the End

Set in Oblivion, the era immediately before humans become extinct; an in-depth viewing of a decaying culture in future times. *Gospels* is a dazzling swan song, it believes the world is still glamorous. It is an act of preservation. This work imagines entertainment, collective mannerisms, and basic human needs of this time. It is a narrative of memories, absurdist humor, a bizarre history lesson, and intimate look at humanity on its edge.

Performers: 3 dancers

Tech:

- Projector
- Lighting, including an on stage unit which can be controlled by the booth
- Props and scene design provided by company and tailored to space measurements



Photo: Tim Rummelhoff

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS?

Blood Language is a new ensemble work, it is a ritual of identity personified by archetypes; this work centers experiences of otherness and belonging authored by an ensemble of BIPOC, queer and artists with invisible disabilities. *Blood Language* is designed for an intimate audience relationship with seating on all sides of the performance space. Performers will engage multi dimensionally with movement, text, song and in relationship with objects and each other for a work which values spontaneity, risk and intimacy.

This work is being developed beginning in 2019 with the support of the Cowles Center for Performing Arts Generating Room Residency (MN), Candy Box Dance Festival (MN), New Movement Collaborative (MA, Fall 2019 residency), the National Center of Choreography Akron (OH, Spring 2020) and will be ready to premiere in a 2020/2021 season.

MCKNIGHT ARTIST FELLOWSHIPS

The McKnight Fellowships for Dancers and Choreographers awards mid-career dance artists whose work is of exceptional artistic merit, who have created a substantial body of work over a period of time, and who are at a career stage that is beyond emerging. Six fellows are selected each year to receive a substantial unrestricted cash award, as well as additional support for career and artistic development.

The McKnight Fellowships for Choreographers is a program of The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts and is funded by the McKnight Foundation. Support for individual artists has been a cornerstone of The McKnight Foundation's Arts program since it began in 1981. The foundation recognizes that the arts cannot flourish or enhance community life without the ideas, energy, and drive of individual artists, and that artists cannot make these contributions without unfettered creative time. Awards are made in ten disciplines through eight arts organizations and presenters.

THE COWLES CENTER

The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts is the flagship institution for dance in Minnesota. Centrally located in Downtown Minneapolis, The Cowles Center includes the 500-seat Goodale Theater, a historic Shubert building and the oldest theater in Downtown; the former Hennepin Center for the Arts, home to 20 leading dance and performing arts organizations; the state-of-the-art Target Education Studio, housing The Cowles Center's innovative distance learning program; the Illusion Theater; the James Sewell Ballet TEK Box; and the U.S. Bank Atrium. The Cowles Center is a catalyst for the creation, presentation, education, enjoyment, and celebration of dance and the performing arts in the Twin Cities.