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**NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHOREOGRAPHY-AKRON
AWARDED \$500K GRANT IN HONOR OF
CHRISTY BOLINGBROKE'S LEADERSHIP**



Photos L to R: Christy Bolingbroke with Rosie Herrera and Pioneer Winter in Miami, FL (photo Passion Ward); at NCCAkrón's Making Moves event at The Strand Bookstore in New York City (photo Cherylynn Tsushima); and with Raja Feather Kelly in Akron, OH (photo Dale Dong).

Akron, OH (September 15, 2026) — The National Center for Choreography–Akron (NCCAkrón) has received a **\$500,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation in honor of Executive/Artistic Director Christy Bolingbroke's decade of visionary leadership**. NCCAkrón is currently celebrating its 10th anniversary as a connector, an incubator and research lab for artists, and a hyperagent for the national dance field.

Established in 2015 in Akron, OH, [NCCAkrón](#) is one of only two national centers for choreography in the U.S. Nationally recognized for redefining support for dance artists and thought leaders, NCCAkrón has worked with [800+ choreographers](#) and arts leaders from 100 U.S. cities as they explore, experiment, and shape the future of the art form.

Christy Bolingbroke joined NCCAkron in the Fall of 2016 as the organization's first and only employee. Over the past decade, the nonprofit has grown from one employee to a team of eight staff and contractors. NCCAkron has launched national research and development opportunities, including the Creative Administrative Research think tank, the Knight Choreography Prize, a book series with The University of Akron Press, multiple podcasts, events across the U.S., and more.

This support from the Mellon Foundation will ground NCCAkron's work supporting dance artists and the dance field at large, while the organization continues to imagine its next decade.

"For ten years, the National Center for Choreography-Akron has been a hub for dance artists from across the U.S.—a place where artists research new ideas, experiment, and embrace rigorous play, and positive failure. Under Christy Bolingbroke's leadership, NCCAkron has maintained a vision of abundance, challenged conventional approaches to arts administration, and built its work with a commitment to care, relationships, and connection. We are grateful to the Mellon Foundation for recognizing Christy's visionary leadership and for this investment in NCCAkron's future," shares **Eduardo Vilaro, NCCAkron Board Chair and Artistic Director and CEO of Ballet Hispánico.**

NCCAkron Beginnings

Three key organizations, DANCECleveland, The University of Akron, and Knight Foundation, partnered to establish NCCAkron. Under Pamela Young and DANCECleveland's leadership, beginning in 2012, the Doris Duke Foundation and Knight Foundation supported a Blue Ribbon Panel, pilot residencies, and a feasibility study to address the question of where and how the future of dance might be strengthened in the U.S.

A lead gift of \$5 million from Knight Foundation in 2015 officially established NCCAkron as a discrete nonprofit organization. In 2016, as NCCAkron's first employee, Christy Bolingbroke was named Executive/Artistic Director and charged with setting a curation as well as forging a business model to realize this new nonprofit organization. Local, regional, and national funds are raised each year, and Knight Foundation continues to support NCCAkron, including the establishment of the annual Knight Choreography Prize in 2023.

About The National Center for Choreography-Akron at Ten Years

Over the past decade, NCCAkron has **invested nearly \$3 million in dance artists, performing arts thought leaders, and arts workers.** The organization has hosted 105 Research, Creative, Technical, and Dancing Lab residencies for artists across the U.S., in addition to 62 [Creative Administrative Research](#) Investigative Retreats. NCCAkron has facilitated activities and convenings across the country, including Boston, MA; New York, NY;

Pittsburgh, PA; Baltimore, MD; Akron, OH; Chicago, IL; Nashville and Memphis, TN; Houston, TX; Miami, FL; Albuquerque, NM; and Seattle, WA.

NCCAkron continues its 10th anniversary celebration with a **full slate of 2026-2027 programming, including numerous research and development residencies and public events highlighting the intersection of dance and film**. NCCAkron 2026-2027 artists include **Stefanie Batten Bland** (New York, NY), **Vie Boheme** (Minneapolis, MN), **Art Bridgman and Myrna Packer of Bridgman|Packer Dance** (Valley Cottage, NY), **Dance Heginbotham** (Brooklyn, NY), **Katherine Helen Fisher** (Brooklyn, NY), **Cara Hagan** (New York, NY/Union City, NJ), **Sarah Beth Oppenheim of Heart Stück Bernie** (Silver Spring, MD), **Alice Sheppard and Laurel Lawson of Kinetic Light** (Brooklyn, NY), **Ali Kenner Brodsky & Andy Russ of Motion State Arts** (Providence, RI), **Mitchell Rose** (Asheville, NC), **Kate Weare** (New York, NY/Asheville, NC), and **Pioneer Winter** (Miami, FL).

Under the NCCMedia umbrella, NCCAkron co-created the [NCCAkron Series in Dance](#), working with the University of Akron Press to publish *Artists on Creative Administration: A Workbook from the National Center for Choreography* (Editor Tonya Lockyer, 2024) and *Shifting Cultural Power: Case Studies and Questions in Performance* (Author Hope Mohr, 2021). NCCMedia podcasts include the short-form [Inside the Dancer's Studio](#) (Seasons 1-7) and the long-form research series [How People Move People](#) (Series 1-4).

NCCAkron created the **Creative Administration Research (CAR)** program, with lead support from the Mellon Foundation. Launched in 2020, CAR was intentionally designed to build a bridge between 20th-century working knowledge and the 21st-century arts ecosystem. Based on the premise that there is no one way to make art, so there is more than one way to manage business and administration, the CAR program interrogated typical “best practices” to imagine other ways forward with artistic ethos at the center of administrative thinking. By 2026, NCCAkron curated 25 artist teams and hosted three CAR National Summit Convenings, with choreographers and thought leaders from across the U.S., among other virtual and in-person meet-ups.

Funded by Knight Foundation, the **Knight Choreography Prize** is designed to support the artistic experimentation and career longevity of choreographers in the United States. The next recipient of the Knight Choreography Prize will also be announced in Fall 2026.

Christy Bolingbroke Bio

As the Executive/Artistic Director for the National Center for Choreography-Akron, **Christy Bolingbroke** (she/her) is responsible for setting the curatorial vision and business model to foster research and development opportunities in dance.

Previously, she served as the Deputy Director for Advancement at ODC in San Francisco, overseeing curation, performance programming, marketing, and development organization-wide. Prior to ODC, she was the Director of Marketing at the Mark Morris Dance Group in Brooklyn, NY.

She earned a B.A. in Dance from the University of California, Los Angeles; an M.A. in Performance Curation from Wesleyan University, and is a 2006 graduate of the arts management fellowship program at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (now recognized independently as the DeVos Institute for Arts and Nonprofit Management). Bolingbroke co-authored the essay “The Practice of Questioning & Generating Revenue” with Delphine Lai in *Artists on Creative Administration: A Workbook from the National Center for Choreography* (2024). Bolingbroke also currently serves as the NCCAkron Series in Dance Editor for The University of Akron Press.

Additional service to the field includes initiatives such as: SouthArts Momentum; Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Arts Innovation Management Initiative; the New England Foundation for the Arts National Dance Project; the Ohio Arts Council ArtsNEXT; the National Endowment for the Arts Challenge America; and the John S. & James L. Knight Foundation New Works panels.

For more information, visit nccakron.org.

A discrete nonprofit organization, separate from The University of Akron but with offices based there, the establishment and general operation of NCCAkron are made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

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