

Just Dance!: Inaugural Motion State Dance Festival to take place at the WaterFire Arts Center



Mar Parrilla performs

Dancers both local and national will converge in the Creative Capital to showcase the latest in contemporary dance at the inaugural Motion State Dance Festival, held Thursday, March 5, through Saturday, March 7, 2020. Hosted by the WaterFire Arts Center, Thursday, Friday and Saturday night will feature award-winning, genre-busting artists in solo performances. Interspersed between pieces will be short films of dances specifically made for video, followed by post-show conversations and parties. *Motif* spoke to festival co-producer Lila Hurwitz about this founding venture:

Heather Bryant (*Motif*): How do you describe contemporary dance to someone who isn't well-versed in the field?

Lila Hurwitz: Contemporary dance refers to dance that pushes the boundaries of the traditional form. The Motion State Dance Festival centers on artists who create performances that suggest an evolution from what has come before, as well as what dance can be in the future. While the Festival artists have

traditional dance backgrounds, they are all pushing their discipline, asking questions about what art is, and encouraging audiences to do the same.

HB: Why did you decide to intersperse the dance performances with dance films?

LH: We love how dance films offer another way of looking at the art form. Interspersing films with the live performances allows us to showcase artists from all around the world, and sets us apart from other festivals in the region. The Motion State Dance Film Series (formerly known as Kicking & Screening) is now the only year-long, traveling short film festival in New England devoted to showcasing the diversity of contemporary creative voices and exploring the medium of choreography made for the camera.

HB: How did the partnership with WaterFire Arts Center come about?

LH: Barnaby Evans [executive artistic director of WaterFire] has been talking about bringing dance to WaterFire for years. The main hall of WaterFire Arts Center is a 37,000-square-foot cathedral-like space, built in 1929 for the US Rubber Company as a manufacturing facility. It's truly spectacular, and embodies the modern look and feel that we want for this festival.

HB: What kind of workshops and artist conversations will be offered?

LH: Master classes will be held throughout the week: Sokeo Ros at Roger Williams University; Beth Gill and Miguel Gutierrez at Brown University; and Bebe Miller at WaterFire (all are free and open to the public, except at RWU). These classes are a great opportunity to hear more about the artists' creative process. In addition, conversations with all the artists will follow each night's performance.

HB: What do you see as your audience for this festival? And what do you hope the attendees come away with?

LH: Whether someone regularly attends dance performances or has never been to a dance performance, we want every person in the audience to walk away feeling invigorated, intrigued, challenged, moved — and especially inspired to come back the next night for more!

The Motion State Dance Festival takes place Mar 5 - 7, 2020 Festival Artists: Rhode Island: Heidi Henderson, Orlando Hernandez, Sokeo Ros; Boston: McKersin Previlus, Jenna Pollack, Mar Parrilla; New York City: Beth Gill, Miguel Gutierrez; Beyond: Bebe Miller (Columbus, OH); Cunningham Solos: Erin Dowd (NJ), Eleanor Hullihan (NYC), Vanessa Knouse (NYC). WaterFire Arts Center Main Hall, 475 Valley St, PVD. For ages 12 and up. Wheelchair accessible. For more information on nightly performance line-up, ticket purchases and master classes, go to motionstatearts.org.