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Wideman Davis Dance to Receive Grant through the Mellon Foundation's Monuments Project

Wideman Davis Dance has been awarded a grant to support the three-year project *Migratuse Reimagined*. This project will consist of three, one-year engagements with communities in Montgomery, AL, Harpersville, AL, and Columbia, SC, respectively. Wideman Davis Dance will use the residency and performative installations to implement a community-oriented residency curriculum that introduces, integrates, and expands the themes of their site-specific, transdisciplinary dance project *Migratuse Ataraxia*, while focusing specifically on the themes of monuments, memorialization, and collective memory.

The Monuments Project is an initiative by the Mellon Foundation to enable artists, educators, and communities to radically reimagine the place and purpose of monuments in the United States. The Foundation writes on their website:

“The Monuments Project is an unprecedented \$250 million commitment by the Mellon Foundation to transform the nation’s commemorative landscape by supporting public projects that more completely and accurately represent the multiplicity and complexity of American stories. Launched in 2020, the Monuments Project builds on our efforts to express, elevate, and preserve the stories of those who have often been denied historical recognition, and explores how we might foster a more complete telling of who we are as a nation.”

Project Description-

Migratuse Reimagined is an extension of the site-specific performance *Migratuse Ataraxia* that Wideman Davis Dance has toured and performed throughout the southern United States over the last three years. *Migratuse Ataraxia* is an interdisciplinary dance installation that activates the latent and silenced histories of Black experience and embodiment in antebellum plantation homes. With the performance, WDD has visited multiple sites and offered structured dialogue to audiences through site-specific experiences. During these installations, performers call upon practices of Black resistance, including song, movement, and storytelling to engender forms of expression untethered to white-supremacist forms of power. WDD developed *Migratuse Ataraxia* to engage the intimate histories of antebellum spaces, while also ameliorating the pervasiveness of Black erasure from them. With the support of the Mellon Foundation, WDD will expand *Migratuse Ataraxia* into a series of extended and immersive residencies that use performance, community engagement, and collaboration

to explore the connections between the pervasive memorialization of white supremacy's past and sites of ongoing Black resistance.

The Mellon Foundation's commitment to educating communities and reimagining a collective monumentalizing of marginalized pasts is aligned with the work WDD undertakes as choreographers, dance artists, and educators. We create spaces of dialogue, refuge, and support for the audiences we engage so we might collectively reimagine what is possible while mired in the afterlife of the Confederacy. *Migratuse Reimagined* shifts to open performances in public spaces that emphasize and juxtapose the memorialization of Black lives and histories to broaden perspectives on sites of public memory across the South. WDD has goals of creating experiences for communities that citizens can take great pride in. By curating site-specific performances, installations, and community conversations to disrupt single white narratives often experienced in spaces and give value to everyday life for Black people in the South.

For more information on the Monuments Project, please visit <https://mellon.org/initiatives/monuments/>. For more information on Wideman Davis Dance, please visit: www.widemandaviddance.org