

SMUSH Gallery Curatorial Fellowship in Dance (2020-2021)

Info Sheet

Overview of the SMUSH Gallery Curatorial Fellowship in Dance

The SMUSH Gallery Curatorial Fellowship in Dance is a new artist-centered dance program created by SMUSH Gallery in Jersey City, NJ and funded by the Jersey City COVID-19 Relief Fund Committee and the Jersey City Economic Development Corporation. The Curatorial Fellowship will host 4 dance curators across the 2020-2021 season, each of whom will participate in community-building practices and produce a dance event of their own imagining - concerts, immersive events, durational works, virtual projects, community involvement, educational experiences, and more. Events will be produced in alternating months from November '20 - June '21 and will take place at SMUSH Gallery (unless live events are prohibited by COVID measures or the Fellow has elected to design a virtual event). The Fellowship cohort will engage in mutual support, skill shares, and professional aid throughout the program. The Curatorial Fellowship is intended to increase support for, and grow the presence of, dance - a consistently under-supported and under-produced art form - here in Jersey City. This Fellowship will be administered in line with our mission, vision, and anti-racist and equity commitments, [which are available here](#).

About SMUSH Gallery + Dance

SMUSH Gallery is an art space dedicated to creative and community work in Jersey City. We produce a range of events and exhibitions in the disciplines of visual art, dance, literary arts, music, and more. We also host rehearsals, community events, and performance rentals. Visit smushgallery.com to see what we're up to.

SMUSH Gallery is a storefront, street level space in the Journal Square neighborhood of Jersey City. It is 12' wide by 35' long with high ceilings, a bathroom and small storage space in the back, and a large bay window facing the street in front. We are located at 340 Summit Ave, Jersey City, NJ, a ten minute walk from the Journal Square PATH station. Street parking and pay lots are available near the gallery.

Since opening in February 2018, dance has been an integral part of SMUSH Gallery's creative endeavors. Owner, Artistic Director, and Curatorial Fellowship administrator Katelyn Halpern is a contemporary choreographer and performer, and has frequently curated dance in the gallery; the second event SMUSH ever hosted was a mixed bill concert called SMUSH Moves which went on to have nine volumes with a tenth planned; it was subsequently canceled due to the coronavirus crisis. Since that first SMUSH Moves, we have consistently produced dance in our small storefront, including solo productions from innovative choreographers, summer artist residencies in dance, a two night triple-bill concert, and the SMUSH Moves series.

Thanks to our grant funding, we are able - for the first time - to offer substantial financial support to dance artists in the form of stipends, operating funds, and earned revenue, and this in addition to the space use, administrative, and promotional support offered through our previous programs. We are fortunate to be part of a regional dance community that is extraordinarily socially engaged and forward thinking, and at this moment of profound social change we are grateful to share resources that can amplify these artists' voices and visions for our world.

Who Should Apply?

Dance artists who:

- have expertise and who have cultivated a community in a contemporary dance form, including cultural, street, folk, participatory, and/or modern/contemporary. All styles and forms are welcome.
- have at least 2 years of professional experience performing, choreographing, curating, and/or producing dance; who are 18 years or older; and who are not currently enrolled in a full-time educational dance program.
- are enthusiastic about fellowship, specifically participating in a cohort and giving/receiving support.
- are as eager to share skills and expertise as they are to listen and learn from one another.
- have, or are committed to building, relationships in Jersey City.

Fellows will be invited into the program based on the strength of their professional history, curatorial vision, artistic statement, and interest in building or furthering relationships with SMUSH Gallery and Jersey City. Artists of color are

strongly encouraged to apply. We endeavor to host a diverse cohort representing a variety of styles, range of professional experiences, and existing communities, all of whom are united by their commitment to further the gallery's anti-racist and equity work (see link above).

What is the Commitment for Curatorial Fellows?

Curatorial Fellows commit to participate in the Fellowship from October 15, 2020 - June 30, 2021; develop, curate and co-produce with SMUSH Gallery a dance event of their own imagining; provide marketing materials such as photos, bios, and event descriptions as requested by SMUSH; support their Fellows in monthly meetings, with their presence at one another's events, and with a written review or interview covering another Fellow's event and/or process; enthusiastically participate in audience development for Fellowship events; and make connections to Jersey City. Given the uncertainty of the future with regards to the pandemic, Fellows must develop a plan for COVID resiliency as they formulate their event. Fellows are also asked to engage in thorough, timely communication with SMUSH Gallery.

Fellows will be asked to complete Fellowship agreements and paperwork, attend an orientation related to space use, and act as ambassadors of the gallery when appropriate. All SMUSH artists, including Curatorial Fellows, are asked to attend the SMUSH Gallery Birthday Party (our major fundraiser of the year), scheduled for February 26 or 27, 2021.

What Is Provided to Curatorial Fellows?

First and foremost, Fellows can expect that their curatorial visions will be nurtured and supported, and that they will work in an environment of mutual respect and appreciation. Curatorial Fellows will also receive a \$500 stipend, a budget of \$120 for concert-specific supplies and dancer hospitality, and 65% of ticket sales; 22 hours of dedicated studio time in the gallery and 4 dedicated production days at SMUSH Gallery in their designated timeframe; event support from a SMUSH Gallery representative (ex. house manager); event documentation; promotional development and support, including digital and print media; and ongoing practical and personal support from the Curatorial Fellows and SMUSH Gallery.

Key Dates & Deadlines

Applications Open	August 15
Application Info Session	September 5, 12p edt
Applications Close	September 15
Notification	October 1
Program Start Date	October 15
Fellow 1's Event	November/December*
Fellow 2's Event	January/February*
Fellow 3's Event	March/April*
Fellow 4's Event	May*/June
Program End Date	June 30

*Indicates preferred month for event, but flexible depending on needs and availability

Accessibility & Accommodation

All interested dance artists are encouraged to apply. As a venue, SMUSH Gallery has specific limitations and opportunities, and we encourage applicants to talk with us about their accessibility needs. We recognize the relationships between dance, ableism, and our venue, and we are eager to support dance artists in this program.

We also want to ensure that artists are able to participate easily in the application process. Here are some tangible ways we are working to make the application process more accessible:

- This program has no application fee.
- If any applicant would like assistance in completing the application, has questions about the process or program, or would like to schedule a time to meet with Katelyn (SMUSH Gallery Artistic Director and Curatorial Fellowship Administrator), they are invited to email hello@smushgallery.com.
- If any applicant needs access to wifi, a computer, or a quiet space to work on submitting their application, please email hello@smushgallery.com to make arrangements.

FAQs

What is the application process like?

The application process consists of an optional Zoom info session on September 5 at 12p edt, the application form, and a phone/zoom interview with SMUSH Gallery. While not all applicants will be invited to interview, we commit to interview as many artists as possible in an effort to gather the strongest, most dynamic cohort available. Fellowship invitations, wait-list notifications, and declensions will be sent on October 1.

Artists are encouraged to read through all the application materials carefully, and to visit our website smushgallery.com and our Instagram @smushgallery to get to know us and our space before applying.

Can I apply with my group/collective/dance partner/company?

Yes! We welcome applications from individuals as well as creative partnerships, collectives, companies, etc. Applications made together (ex. a collective) will be considered for a single fellowship, meaning the group will share a single \$500 curatorial stipend and other fellowship resources, and they will all be expected to attend meetings, concerts, and to meet other fellowship responsibilities.

Can I curate my own work?

Yes, if you'd like! Fellows may elect to produce a concert of their own work, present their work on a mixed bill, present their work in collaboration with other artists, or something else that works for them. Fellows are not required to curate their own work, and may develop an event based entirely around other artists' work.

Do I have to have a complete curatorial vision when I apply?

No! The Curatorial Fellowship is designed to support dance development, starting with the seed of your curatorial vision which will be nurtured by Fellowship elements like monthly cohort conversations and 22 hours of in-gallery rehearsal provided at no cost to each Fellow. It is our hope that, by putting resources like these toward each Fellow's event development, we will be able to offer our Fellows the most fulfilling experience possible, and our geographic and creative community the strongest possible contemporary dance programming.

Am I producing just one concert?

That's up to you! We want Fellows to have as much flexibility as possible in designing their dance event, and we will do our best to accommodate your vision. Possible event formats include: an immersive durational performance run for 2 days; a single community-based experiential dance event; a split bill running for 4 performances over 3 days; micro performances happening every half-hour on a single date; and whatever else you're dreaming up! As long as your event can be mounted, executed, and struck within your 4 dedicated days, we will do our best to make it work.

Is SMUSH Gallery a theater? Do you provide designers and technicians?

No, we are not a theater! We are a storefront artspace that hosts a range of art activities including visual and performing art events. We have a hardwood floor, a sound system for playing recorded audio, and a low-fi lighting set-up, and we welcome Fellows to arrange the space as they like and in consideration of the visual art that is on display. Fellows should assume that there will be visual art up during their events. Designers and technicians are not provided, and if your event requires specific staffing or equipment, you will be responsible for providing it and getting approval. We will happily share our expertise running events in the space, and we provide one gallery representative to help run your event(s).

If my event is in February, why does my commitment extend through June?

The Curatorial Fellowship is conceived to be as much about community building and mutual support as it is about executing a curatorial vision. Fellows with later event dates will provide support for and learn from the experiences of Fellows who produce early, and Fellows who produce early will share their expertise with Fellows producing later in the program. Having intense periods of planning and slower periods of rest and reflection are intentionally built into the group dynamic.

When are the monthly cohort meetings?

Meetings are set for the 2nd Monday of each month (except October, when we will meet the 3rd Monday) from 6:30-8p eastern via Zoom. These meetings are an integral part of the fellowship, and applicants are expected to attend all meetings. Once the cohort has been established, the group may elect to move the monthly meetings to a different mutually acceptable time or meet in person at the gallery (COVID-permitting).

How does the financial support work?

Fellows will receive a \$500 stipend, a \$120 supplies and hospitality budget, and 65% of tickets (should they choose to ticket their events or solicit contributions). Fellows receive 50% of their \$500 stipend upon signing their agreement and paperwork and 50% upon completion of Fellowship responsibilities at the conclusion of the program in June 2021.

The \$120 supplies and hospitality budget breaks down into concert specific supplies (\$70) and hospitality for cast and crew (\$50). Fellows may arrange for SMUSH to make purchases for them or may make purchases independently and submit receipts for reimbursement. We encourage Fellows to buy from, and reinvest in, local outlets whenever possible.

Should Fellows elect to ticket their events, they will receive 65% of ticket sales for their event(s) after taxes and fees, which will be distributed within 30 days of the final event date.

For all of the above, PayPal is our preferred method of distribution; we can also deliver payment by check.

How will ticketing work? Can I sell merch at my event?

Yes! Each Fellow will develop their ticketing plan in collaboration with SMUSH Gallery, and will keep 65% of ticket sales after taxes and fees. This percentage of ticket sales is greater than our standard co-production split, and is made possible because of the grant funding supporting this program. If you elect to sell merchandise or other artwork at your event, you may process sales yourself and keep 100% of the proceeds. When appropriate, SMUSH will make concessions available for a suggested contribution and keep 100% of those proceeds.

Is there money to pay my dancers and designers?

No, beyond the stipend and percentage of ticket sales, there isn't additional funding to pay dancers and designers. Since Fellowship events can take so many forms, we leave it to the Fellows to design their events and allocate their resources in the way that works best for them and their collaborators. We encourage Fellows to seek additional funding for their projects as needed, and we are happy to serve as a reference or provide letters of support. We also acknowledge that a huge amount of labor goes uncompensated in the dance field and that we, as a young arts organization, are not currently where we want to be in terms of funding projects. The Curatorial Fellowship is a step in the right direction, and yet we still anticipate that most everyone involved, including SMUSH representatives, Fellows, and other artists, will make contributions to the Fellowship that exceed their financial compensation. We consider this to be volunteer labor and encourage Fellows to record it as such in their accounting.

What do you mean when you say that Fellows must have a plan for COVID resiliency?

Each event needs to have a way to proceed on time in light of the developing COVID crisis. Fellows may build in back-up plans or anticipated adjustments to translate events to an online format, plan to run multiple performances for small and socially-distanced audiences, formulate virtual events, or otherwise conceptualize a dance event that does not rely exclusively on the traditional live concert model.

Can I plan something for kids and families?

Yes! Fellows have the option to provide youth arts education through a family-oriented program that is aligned to their event. This is not required, but we are enthusiastic about helping you incorporate it if you are interested.

I've read the materials and I still have questions! Who do I contact?

You may join our Zoom info session September 5 at 12p edt or email Katelyn at hello@smushgallery.com.

Thank you for considering this opportunity. We look forward to receiving your application!