DANSPACE PROJECT GALA 2021
REBEL ANGELS

APRIL 26, 2021
AN EVENING HONORING

BEBE MILLER
ANNIE-B PARSON
PAT STEIR

FOR THEIR FIERCE COMMITMENT TO SINGULAR VISIONS AND TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT ACROSS ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES.
Land Acknowledgment

Danspace Project pays respect to Lenape peoples. We acknowledge that this work is situated on the Lenape island of Manhahtaan (Mannahatta) in Lenapehoking, the Lenape homeland. We pay respect to Lenape land, water, and ancestors past, present, and future.

Site Acknowledgment

“Before we begin, let’s take a moment to acknowledge that the construction of this building, Saint Mark’s Church-in-the-Bowery, was completed in 1799. That same year, New York State enacted the Gradual Emancipation Act 1, so it is reasonable to assume that this building where we are when we stand, sit, dance, and some still worship, was built by enslaved individuals on what was the homeland of the Lenape people.”

– Ishmael Houston-Jones
Welcome and thank you for joining us this evening for what is our first ever virtual Gala.

We are elated to finally be together to celebrate our Rebel Angels - Bebe Miller, Annie-B Parson, and Pat Steir - after the pandemic shut down the Gala in 2020. As this past year unfolded, Danspace Project’s Staff and Board spent a great deal of time looking inward at the organization to think about how we might begin to envision the future. This has been a devastating year for the dance community. We dedicate this Gala to dancers and to the audiences who bear witness to their work. While much is uncertain, we are recommitted to our mission to support dance artists and to follow the lead of visionary Rebel Angels like Bebe, Annie-B, and Pat.

With love,

Judy Hussie-Taylor
Executive Director & Chief Curator

Text REBELANGELS TO 44-321 to donate in honor of Rebel Angels Bebe Miller, Annie-B Parson, and Pat Steir!

#RebelAngels #Gala2021 #HalfGown
PROGRAM OF EVENTS

6:15pm
Honoree Toast

7:00pm
Welcome & Main Event
David Thomson, Host

Remarks & Introductions
Judy Hussie-Taylor, Executive Director & Chief Curator
Helen Warwick, Board President

Introductory Remarks
Elizabeth Streb for Pat Steir
Maurine Knighton for Bebe Miller
Philip Bither for Annie-B Parson

With offerings from
Joan Jonas, Molly Davies, Anne Waldman, Ishmael Houston-Jones,
Ralph Lemon, Abby Zbikowski, Okwui Okpokwasili and David Thomson,
Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Darrell Jones and Angie Hauser,
Paul Lazar and Black Eyed Susan, Young Jean Lee, Tendayi Kuumba,
Chris Giarmo, Meg Harper, David Neumann, Thomas F. DeFrantz
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Bebe Miller**’s (Honoree) vision of dance and performance resides in her faith in the moving body as a record of thought, experience, and beauty. Her aesthetic relies on the interplay of a work’s idea, its physicality, and the contributions of company members to fashion its singular voice. She has collaborated with artists, composers, writers and designers along with the dancers who share her studio practice and from whom she has learned what dancing can reveal. Seeking to expand the language of dance, Bebe Miller Company’s work encompasses choreography, writing, film, video and digital media.

A native New Yorker, Bebe first performed her choreography at NYC’s Dance Theater Workshop in 1978. She formed Bebe Miller Company in 1985 to pursue her interest in finding a physical language for the human condition. Since then, Bebe has created more than 50 dance works for the company that have been performed in nearly 400 engagements worldwide. BMC has been commissioned and presented by leading venues including 651 ARTS, BAM Next Wave, DTW, Jacob’s Pillow, Joyce Theater, PICA, REDCAT, Walker Art Center and Wexner Center for the Arts. Her choreography has been performed by Kyle Abraham’s A.I.M. (Abraham In Motion), Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Oregon Ballet Theater, Boston Ballet, Philadanco, Salt Lake City’s Repertory Dance Theater, the UK’s Phoenix Dance Company, PACT Dance Company of Johannesburg, South Africa, and a host of colleges and universities.

Over the last decade the Company has produced a variety of digital archive projects that share the company’s creative practice with artists and audiences. Committed to keeping dance available to a wide spectrum of people and to further the conversation about the role of arts and creativity in our culture, BMC is dedicated to providing access to the creative process and expression to diverse communities.

Named a Master of African American Choreography by the Kennedy Center in 2005, Bebe has been a Movement Research honoree, has received four New York Dance and Performance “Bessie” awards, the David R. White Award from New York Live Arts, United States Artists and Guggenheim Fellowships, honorary doctorates from Ursinus College and Franklin & Marshall College, and is one of the inaugural class of Doris Duke Artist Award recipients. Bebe is a Distinguished Professor Emerita in The Ohio State University’s Department of Dance and lives in Columbus, OH.

**Annie-B Parson** (Honoree) co-founded Big Dance Theater with Molly Hickok and Paul Lazar in 1991. She has choreographed and co-created over 20 works for the company, ranging from pure dance pieces, to adaptations of found text, plays, and literature, to original works combining wildly disparate materials. Her work with Big Dance has been commissioned by The Old Vic/London, Sadlers Wells/London, Les Subsistances in Lyon, The Brooklyn Academy of Music, The

Outside of Big Dance, Ms. Parson has created choreography for opera, pop musicians, television, movies, theater, ballet, marching bands, symphony orchestras and augmented reality. Most recently, Parson choreographed for St. Vincent’s recent music video, and for David Byrne’s *American Utopia* for the world tour, for Spike Lee’s documentary, and for Broadway. Other work for David Byrne includes his musical *Here Lies Love* at the Public Theater and The National Theater in London; David Byrne’s 2012 world tour with St. Vincent and a marching band; and for Byrne’s 2008 Brian Eno world tour. For Byrne she also made dance for his appearances on Colbert, SNL and Jimmy Kimmel. She created the choreography for St. Vincent’s 2014 world tour, as well as her performances with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra; the solo iteration of St. Vincent’s Masseduction tour, The David Lynch Festival, and for St. Vincent appearances on The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon and SNL. Parson created two large scale works for The Martha Graham Dance Company, and she choreographed a solo for Wendy Whelan commissioned by the Royal Ballet/Lynberry Theater.

Her work for theater, opera and film includes the David Bowie/Ivo Van Hove’s *Lazarus* which played in London and NYC. She has made dances for playwrights including: Anne Carson, Lucas Hnath, Sarah Ruhl, Suzan-Lori Parks, Enda Walsh, Gogol and Chekhov to name a few. She has made dance for music artists including: a full evening work for the string quartet ETHEL, Salt n Pepa, Laurie Anderson, Nico Muhly and Esperanza Spalding. Annie-B also choreographed one thousand amateur singers for a work by David Lang at the Mostly Mozart Festival. Her dances are featured in the film *Ride, Roar, Rise* about David Byrne, the Jonathan Demme movie *Ricki and the Flash*, among others.


Since 1993 Parson has been an instructor of choreography at New York University’s Experimental Theater Wing. Additionally, she has taught dance-making at countless universities and internationally including Ballet Rambert and La Mama Umbria. Parson has written articles for Ballet Review, Movement Research Journal, Theater Magazine, Dance Magazine, The Brooklyn Rail, and many other publications. Parson gave a talk on the use of Poetics in the adaption of text at the Poetry Center. As an artist curator, she has curated shows including: Merce
Cunningham’s memorial We Give Ourselves Away at Every Moment, Dancer Crush, and Sourcing Stravinsky at NYLA. Parson tours a lecture on abstraction called The Virtuosity of Structure. Her recent book, Drawing The Surface of Dance was published this year by Wesleyan Press. In 2015 her book Dance by Letter, was published by 53rd State Press. She has an upcoming book to be published by Verso Press in 2023.

Big Dance is premiering a new work entitled The Mood Room in 2021, co-commissioned by The Kitchen and BAM, with additional commissioning support from Carolina Performing Arts, FringeArts Philadelphia, and The Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, MN).

Pat Steir (Honoree), studied art and philosophy at Boston University and received her BFA from the Pratt Institute in 1962. In 1963, she was invited to participate in her first group show at the High Museum in Atlanta. The next year, her work appeared in group exhibitions at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, making her a key figure among the first wave of women artists to gain prominence in the New York art world.

Over the past 50 years, she has exhibited extensively in America and Europe, with solo exhibitions at institutions such as The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, The Hague, The Netherlands; P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, New York; The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Musee d’art Contemporain, Lyon, France; the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York; and Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, Amsterdam, among others. Her most recent solo exhibitions include Considering Rothko at Lévy Gorvy Gallery in Palm Beach, and Color Wheel, currently on view at The Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC. In 2019 she was selected to design the backdrop for Merce Cunningham’s centennial performance at Brooklyn Academy of Music.


Steir is the recipient of numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship (1982), as well as grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1976, 1973). In 1991, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the Pratt Institute, New York, and in 2001, she received the Boston University School for the Arts Distinguished Alumni Award. Steir received the Visionary Woman Award from the Moore College of Art & Design in 2015 and in 2016 was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts in Letters. In 2017, she was awarded the International Medal of Art by the United States Department of State.

Steir is a founding board member of
Printed Matter, HERESIES: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics, and Semiotext(e). She is the subject of *Pat Steir: Artist*, a documentary film directed by Veronica Gonzalez Peña, streaming on all major platforms.

**Philip Bither** (Speaker) has served as Senior Curator of Performing Arts at Minneapolis’s Walker Art Center since April 1997, spearheading one of the country’s leading contemporary performing arts programs. During this time, he has overseen the building of the McGuire Theater, a distinctive theatrical space and production laboratory within the Walker expansion (April 2005); establishing the Walker’s first dedicated performing arts endowment; the commissioning of nearly 200 new dance, music and performance works; and the annual residency and presentation support of many contemporary performing arts creators. Prior to this, he served as Artistic Director of the Flynn Center in Burlington, VT and Associate Director/Music Curator for BAM’s Next Wave Festival. In 2011, he helped co-found, along with Danspace Project’s Judy Hussie-Taylor, the Institute for Curatorial Practice in Performance (ICPP) graduate program at Wesleyan University, envisioned and established by Sam Miller. He regularly sits on foundation arts panels and actively travels globally to research new performance and speak about trends in the contemporary performing arts.

**Maurine Knighton** (Speaker) is the program director for the arts at the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. In that capacity, she is responsible for developing and overseeing grant-making programs that fund contemporary dance, theater, and jazz artists and the organizations that present and support them.

Prior to DDCF, Knighton was the senior vice president for grantmaking at the Nathan Cummings Foundation. She also served as Senior Vice President for Program and Nonprofit Investment at the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone. In the field of arts and culture, she was executive producer and president of 651 ARTS; program manager at the Nonprofit Finance Fund; managing director of Penumbra Theatre Company; and executive producer of dance & be still arts. She is a former board member of the Association of Performing Arts Professionals and of Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA), where she chaired GIA’s Racial Equity Committee. Knighton has also served as panelist, speaker, and advisor to the National Endowment for the Arts, Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC), New England Foundation for the Arts, the Association of Performing Arts Professionals, South Carolina Arts Commission and many others. She currently serves on the board of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation, chairing its Cultural Investment Fund Committee.

**Jodi Melnick**, choreographer/dancer/teacher/ has been part of the NYC dance community since 1985. Melnick designs intricate movement to explore the exquisite nature and dynamic relationships between human beings. She uses the profound expression of the dancing body and lucid performing instincts to drive the creative process.
Since the early 90’s, Melnick has performed in this incomparable container of art, Danspace, with such luminary artists as, Sara Rudner, Jon Kinzel, Vicky Shick, Susan Rethorst, Donna Uchizono, Sondra Loring, Dennis O’connor, Beth Gill, Irene Hultman, Yoshiko Chuma, Rashaun Mitchell, Sara Mearns, Sally Silver, Yves Musard, and Patricia Hoffbauer.


Melnick is honored with a Doris Duke Impact Award (2014), a Guggenheim Fellow (2012), a Jerome Robbins New Essential Works Grant (2010-2011), a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant (2011), two Bessie Awards for sustained achievement in dance (2001 and 2008), a Gibney DIP Residency Grantee, a two year extended Life grantee awarded from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Center (LMCC), and a Center for Ballet Arts residency fellow(2019).

Currently, Melnick is an adjunct professor of dance at Barnard College at Columbia University, Sarah Lawrence College.

Elizabeth Streb (Speaker), has dived through glass, walked down London’s City Hall, dumped a ton of dirt on her head, and set herself on fire, among many other feats of extreme action. She founded the STREB Extreme Action Company in 1979 and established SLAM (STREB Lab for Action Mechanics) in Brooklyn, NY in 2003. Streb holds a MA in Humanities and Social Thought from New York University, a BS in Modern Dance from SUNY Brockport, and honorary doctorates from SUNY Brockport, Rhode Island College and Otis College of Art and Design and has received numerous honors including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation ‘Genius’ Award, the Guggenheim Fellowship, a Doris Duke Artist Award and a USA Fellowship Award.

A board member of the Jerome Foundation, Streb has been a featured mainstage speaker at TED2018: The Age of Amazement in Vancouver, BRAINWAVE at The Rubin Museum, TEDxMET, the Institute for Technology and Education, POPTECH, the Institute of Contemporary Art, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Rochester Institute of Technology, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, the Penny Stamps Speaker Series, Chorus America, on NPR’s Science Friday, and she gave the 2019 Commencement Speech at Otis College for Art and Design. Streb was profiled by Alec Wilkinson in an extended essay for the New Yorker magazine, was featured in the Smithsonian Magazine (“The New American Circus”), and in 2019 was featured on the front page of the Wall Street Journal. Streb is the subject of two documentaries: Born to Fly, directed by Catherine Gund (Aubin Pictures), which premiered at the SXSW Festival and was featured at the Film Forum in NYC and OXD, directed by Craig Lowy, which premiered at Doc NYC. In 2010, Feminist Press published her book, STREB: How to Become an Extreme Action Hero.
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*Board member
On behalf of Danspace Project, I would like to share the following special thanks:

Our utmost appreciation, respect and gratitude to the 2021 Rebel Angels honorees: Bebe Miller, Annie-B Parson, and Pat Steir. We echo the tributes offered this evening, toast you yet again, and continue to be inspired by your visions.

To the artists and speakers who so generously shared your words and offerings - thank you from the bottom of our hearts for illuminating all the reasons we have gathered here this evening to honor our Rebel Angels. And to Jodi Melnick and David Thomson - your grace and guidance are immeasurably important to us.

We are additionally honored to have received such a wonderful response from so many Gala honorees with their recipe contributions to the Rebel Angels Cookbook - looking forward to cooking our way through the whole thing!

Thank you to Honorary Chairs, Joan Jonas and Glenn Ligon, and the Gala Co-chairs, Suzanne Bocanegra and David Lang, for lending your leadership to this evening and helping to make it a success. And to the Benefit Committee, table sponsors, and all those who gave a donation before and during this Gala to the Rebel Angels Fund - we are truly grateful for your generosity.

To the Danspace Project Board of Directors who have stood up for, and stood behind, the organization's staff and artists through a challenging time for all - what has been accomplished this year would not have been possible without your leadership and guidance.

Many thanks to the entire Danspace Project staff - Benjamin Akio Kimitch, Jodi Bender, Lily Cohen, Seta Morton; to our indomitable leader, Judy Hussie-Taylor; and extra special thanks to Yolanda Royster for being the wizard behind the curtain, and Nora Thompson and Severine Kaufman who have brought this virtual event to life beautifully, gracefully, and with astonishing attention to detail.

A special shout-out to the Danspace Project family: Emma Rose Brown, Toni Carlson, E G Condon, Jordan Morley, and Ella Wasserman-Smith who have spent countless hours and days when we’re “in-person” taking care of audiences, and providing invaluable support to staff and board; and hats off to Danspace Project resident lighting designers Kathy Kaufmann and Carol Mullins for countless years of expertly transforming Danspace Project performances and events into whole new worlds.

Lastly, we want to express our thanks for the many local businesses who have partnered with Danspace Project for successful events over the years: Canard, Inc., Elise Bernhardt / fleur elise bkln, Fresco, MUD, Insomnia Cookies, Ozone Design, Paddle8, Pangea Restaurant, Porsena Restaurant, Sky Frame Inc., and Veniero’s.

We hope you have all enjoyed the evening and continue to find ways, little or big, to celebrate.

In gratitude,
Peggy Cheng
Director of Development
Mission & History

Danspace Project’s mission is to present new work in dance, support a diverse range of artists in developing their work, encourage experimentation, and connect artists to audiences. Since its founding in 1974, Danspace Project has supported a vital community of contemporary dance artists in the historic landmark St. Mark’s Church in Manhattan’s East Village.

Since the launch of its Platforms series in 2010, Danspace Project has used a responsive framework for programming. Danspace Project emphasizes flexibility in the support resources offered to artists, new and ongoing program partnerships in the cultural community and our local East Village neighborhood, and print and online publications that disseminate our work to a wide audience.

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Danspace Project’s Online Journal

Issue #11: trembling archive is ongoing with new posts weekly!
danspaceproject.org/journal
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Danspace Project is located inside the historic St. Mark’s Church in-the-Bowery at 131 East 10th Street
(at 2nd Avenue) in New York City’s East Village.

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