

MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN

DANCE

SARAH
LAWRENCE
COLLEGE
GRADUATE
STUDIES

HISTORY

Sarah Lawrence College was one of the first dance programs in the United States and has been renowned throughout its history. In the 1930s, the Sarah Lawrence dance program was graced with legendary guest teachers who pioneered the form of modern dance including Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Louis Horst and Martha Hill. A number of celebrated dance artists have directed the program including Bessie Schönberg, for whom the New York Dance and Performance “Bessie” Awards are named; Viola Farber, founding member of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company; Sara Rudner, a founding member of the Twyla Tharp Dance Company; and, at present, John Jasperse, described by *The New York Times* as “quite possibly the most important American contemporary dance choreographer of his generation” and himself, a Sarah Lawrence alumni.

OUR PROGRAM

The dance program is founded on a creative approach to the physical, compositional and analytical aspects of dance. The goal of the program is to develop a progressive, experimental, creative community and to prepare individuals to become critically thinking artistic citizens. Many of our alumni have gone on to be prominent artists in the dance field.

An integrated program, dance at Sarah Lawrence encompasses studies for both graduate and undergraduate students. MFA candidates enjoy seminar laboratory courses designed solely for them, while also taking courses with undergraduate dance students. The dance program embraces an expansive vision of dance practice, bridging various styles and genres, as well as an interdisciplinary approach to performance.

OUR FACULTY AND APPROACH

The dance program is unique in its commitment to integrating the richness of the adjacent dance community in New York City into the curriculum, featuring a distinguished faculty, many of who are acclaimed, award-winning professional dance artists with active creative practices. Interdisciplinary approaches to performance development are a key interest of the new Director, including collaborations with the other arts departments in the College. The Director of the dance program is strongly interested in the development of a progressive, experimental, creative community and training individuals to be critically thinking artistic citizens.

COURSE OFFERINGS:

MOVEMENT PRACTICE

- Contemporary
- Ballet
- African Diasporic Dance
- Hip-Hop
- Somatics, Improvisation & The Athletics of Intimacy
- Graduate Seminar in the Foundations of Dance Practice
- Yoga
- Contact Improvisation
- Feldenkrais: Awareness through Movement
- Conditioning

CREATIVE PRACTICE

- Improvisation
- Composition
- The Choreographic Idiom: Instinct & Action in the Creative Process
- Dance Music Improvisation
- Dance Making
- Graduate Seminar in Choreographic Practice
- Visiting Guest Artist Lab
- Dance In Frame

ANALYTIC STUDIES

- Dance History
- Dance & Performance Theory
- Anatomy
- Contemporary Culture Critique
- Teaching Conference
- Lighting Design
- Making It Work

2017-18 FACULTY

Director: John Jasperse

Tenured Faculty: Peggy Gould & Sara Rudner

Guest Faculty: Patti Bradshaw, Kyle Bukhari, Rosane Chamecki, Lacina Coulibaly, Dylan Crossman, Beverly Emmons, Barbara Forbes, Beth Gill, K.J. Holmes, Eleanor Hullihan, Kathy Kaufmann, Andrea Lerner, Matt Lopez, Merceditas Mañago-Alexander, Aaron Mattocks, Juliana May, Jodi Melnick, Dean Moss, Jenn Nugent, Efeya Sampson, Paul Singh, Charmy Wells, Sasha Welsh, Kathy Westwater

Visiting Guest Artists: Nora Chipaumire, Pepper Fajans, Raja Feather Kelly, Beth Gill, Diane Madden & Lance Gries (Trisha Brown Company), Silas Reiner, Eleanor Smith & Molly Lieber

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Students in the graduate dance program have the opportunity to participate in five formal dance performances per year, which include:

- Winter Performance, Spring Performance and MFA Thesis Performance are comprised of graduate and undergraduate student choreography developed in the Dance Making course.
- Performance Projects are works staged or created by noted Visiting Guest Artists. In Fall 2017 Diane Madden, Associate Artistic Director of the Trisha Brown Dance Company, will set a work based on *Set and Reset* and *Line Up*; in Spring 2018 Raja Feather Kelly will create a new work on students. 2016-17 featured a Merce Cunningham MinEvent arranged and staged by Holley Farmer and a new work created on students by Lacina Coulibaly. MFA students are encouraged to take part in at least one Performance Project during their 2 years in the program.
- Additionally, the dance program produces an Open Performance each semester, in which any student, including MFA students, may present work independent of Dance Making projects.

All graduate students participate in the production and technical support of department performances, affording them the opportunity to learn all aspects of the dance making process.

ADMISSION & FINANCIAL AID

Candidates who possess a strong creative and practical foundation in dance and who are interested in pursuing aspects of dance as a profession are encouraged to apply. Admission to the program is on a full-time basis. Auditions and interviews, preferably in person, are required of qualifying candidates. Applicants are welcome to apply for financial aid, which is awarded on the basis of need.

ABOUT SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE

Sarah Lawrence College is located on a wooded campus just 30 minutes north of midtown Manhattan. Offering both graduate and undergraduate degrees, the College is nationally known for academic rigor and commitment to developing students as individuals. Sarah Lawrence is also noted for cross-disciplinary study and integrated learning, making it an ideal academic setting for the MFA in Dance program.

GRADUATE STUDIES

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sarahlawrence.edu/dance-mfa

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