



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 13, 2013

Contact: Cathy Welborn, Program Coordinator  
804/225-3132, [catherine.welborn@arts.virginia.gov](mailto:catherine.welborn@arts.virginia.gov)

## **Virginia Commission for the Arts Awards \$20,000 to Virginia Choreographers**

**RICHMOND, VA** - The Virginia Commission for the Arts is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2013-2014 Artists Fellowships. Fellowships are awarded annually to artists residing in Virginia in recognition of creative excellence and to support their pursuit of artistic excellence. This year, four Virginia artists have been honored in the field of choreography. The awarded artists will each receive fellowships of \$5,000.

### **Fellowships in *Choreography* were awarded to:**



**Diane Coburn Bruning (Alexandria)** is an award-winning choreographer who has worked with dance, theatre and opera companies throughout the U.S. and abroad. She has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, a two-year fellowship from The National Endowment for the Arts, two fellowships New York Foundation for the Arts, the McKnight National Fellowship, Sundance Film Institute Fellowship and grants from Meet the Composer, Harkness Foundation, New York State Council for the Arts, The Carlisle Project, Strauss Fellowship and a Helen Hayes Award nomination for Outstanding Choreography. Diane has worked with Atlanta Ballet, Pacific Northwest

Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, Boston Ballet, Juilliard Dance Ensemble, American Repertory Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet, Joffrey II, Nashville Ballet, Ballet Chicago, Ballet Memphis, Daghdha Dance (Ireland), Minnesota Ballet, Chautauqua Ballet, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Studio Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre, Pittsburgh Opera, Washington National Opera and Glimmerglass Opera among others. She founded Chamber Dance Project, dancers & musicians in New York in 2000 and is re-establishing it in Washington DC with their first season at the Kennedy Center in June. Diane graduated with honors from Butler University's Jordan College of Arts and from NYU, and studied lighting and scenery on a post-graduate fellowship at Yale University School of Drama with Jennifer Tipton and Ming Cho Lee. She has been a guest artist at over twenty-five university dance departments. Diane is represented by Roger Yoerges.



**Courtney Harris (Richmond)** Assistant Professor of Dance at Virginia Commonwealth University, Ms. Harris hails from Texas where she danced professionally with the Houston Ballet under the directorship of Ben Stevenson from 1993-1999. During her tenure in Houston, she had the opportunity to perform a diverse spectrum of roles in many classical and contemporary ballets and worked with several renowned choreographers, including Jiří Kylián, Christopher Bruce, Trey McIntyre, and Stanton Welch. Some of her favorite roles include Odette/Odile from Stevenson’s “*Swan Lake*” and Manon from Sir Kenneth McMillan’s “*Manon*.” Harris additionally performed as a guest artist with Carlos Acosta and the Stars of the Houston Ballet, as well as Seattle-based modern dance choreographers Wade Madsen and Deborah Wolf. Also a certified instructor in the Pilates mat and equipment work, Harris has enjoyed training dancers, helping them access movement efficiency

and healthy movement patterning. Interested in developing her choreographic voice after her dancing career, Harris earned a BFA in Dance from Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle and an MFA from The Ohio State University’s Department of Dance, while also receiving a minor in pedagogy through the Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization in College and University Teaching. Her passions for teaching and choreography currently inform her creative practices. Harris has presented her research “Classical Ballet Technique: The Inclusive Dance” and “Re-imagining the Sylph: Extending, Reinstating, and Subverting *La Sylphide*” at CORPS de Ballet International’s annual conferences. More recently, her satirical film “*Pas*”—co-created with her collaborator Charli Brissey—has screened nationally and internationally at dance and LGBTQ film festivals. Harris is delighted to return as teaching faculty to the American Dance Festival in Durham, NC for her second summer.



**Vanessa Owen (Richmond)** is a freelance dance artist based out of Richmond, VA and holds a B.F.A. in Dance from Wright State University. She has danced with Wylliams/Henry Contemporary Dance Company (Kansas City, MO) and the Washington Reflections (Washington, DC). She has performed works by choreographers such as Adam Hougland, Kiesha Lalama White, Gary Abbot, Shapiro and Smith, Beth Iguchi, and Justin Gibbs. Vanessa’s choreography has been presented at Wright State University, the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Choreographer’s Showcase in College Park, MD, and at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual YES! Dance Invitational produced by K Dance in Richmond.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XSpiGc0tI0&feature=c4-overview&list=UUSRYYyjWqd8HGc2H3uHSRFA>



**William Smith (Manassas Park)** Originally from Camden, New York, Mr. Smith started dancing under Delia Foley (A.R.A.D.) and completed the Royal Academy of Ballet's advanced syllabus with merit. He then attended the University of Missouri-Kansas City on a talent and merit scholarship. Mr. Smith graduated with a B.F.A. in dance, ballet emphasis. He has danced with the Albany Berkshire Ballet, Kansas City Youth Ballet, Montgomery Ballet, Richmond Ballet, Ballet Theater of Maryland, Roanoke Ballet, and is now in his second season with Manassas Ballet.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oS6hTZ29ALg>

**The Virginia Commission for the Arts** supports the arts through funding from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Commission distributes grant awards to artists, arts and other not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, educators and local governments and provides technical assistance in arts management.

For additional eligibility information and other Commission requirements contact the Virginia Commission for the Arts, 1001 East Broad Street, Suite 330, Richmond, VA 23219, (804) 225-3132, or visit our website: [www.arts.virginia.gov](http://www.arts.virginia.gov)

###