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GIBNEY COMPANY NAMES RENA BUTLER CHOREOGRAPHIC ASSOCIATE



February 25, 2021, New York, NY—Gina Gibney, Founder, CEO and Artistic Director of the dance and social justice organization Gibney, announced today that Rena Butler has been named Choreographic Associate for its resident dance troupe, Gibney Company. This new position was created to allow Butler, who joined Gibney Company as an Artistic Associate in 2020, to continue her career as a professional dancer while further developing her talent and experience as a choreographer and leader in the dance field.

“Too often, professional dancers at Rena’s level who are also bold choreographic voices have to choose one career path over the other. At Gibney, we have been working to adapt our model to create new flexible frameworks that are supportive and sustainable for dance artists,” said Gina Gibney. “Through this new position we hope to empower Rena as a dancer, entrepreneur, and arts leader. She has so much to offer the field and we are thrilled to be her creative home.”

Butler said, “Gibney is an incredibly impressive model for what dance institutions everywhere could actually be. They prioritize equity in every sense of the word by holding and sharing space for the various communities within the field and beyond. The momentum of this new position is in harmony with the conversations now taking place around moving systemic structures forward, and I am so proud to be a part of an organization that is actively and continually doing the work!”

The three-year, full-time position will provide time and space for research and travel as Butler develops new works for Gibney Company and for dance companies in the U.S. and abroad, while she continues to rehearse and perform with Gibney Company. As Choreographic Associate, she will be mentored by a choreographer of her choosing, and will develop a choreographic mentorship program for aspiring young dance makers from various socioeconomic backgrounds through Gibney’s Moving Toward Justice Fellowship program.

Butler hails from Chicago IL, and previously performed with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, from 2017 to 2020. She has also performed with A.I.M by Kyle Abraham, Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company, David Dorfman Dance, Manuel Vignouille/M-Motions, and The Kevin Wynn Collection. She trained at The Chicago Academy for the Arts, studied at Taipei National University of the Arts in Taiwan, and received her BFA from SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Dance in New York. As a choreographer, Butler was awarded the Princess Grace Award for Choreography in 2019. Her work has been presented at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago; BalletX; Boston Dance Theater; The New Orleans Museum of Modern Art, in a collaboration with Academy Award-Winning composer Terrence Blanchard; in CHTV Stories in Switzerland, and more. Butler is currently creating works for Dance Theater of Harlem, Charlotte Ballet, Whim Whim, GroundWorks DanceTheater, Norrdans, among others, and is working on a new film produced by Jacob Jonas, The Company, featuring famed ballerina Michaela DePrince. Butler has served on the consortium for Chicago Dancemakers Forum, was on the annual panel for Black Girls Dance in Chicago, and co-directed DanceLab, a free, choreographic course for Chicago teens, empowering participants of varying socioeconomic backgrounds and identities to find commonality in creation. She currently serves as a dance and choreographic mentor for young, aspiring artists as part of the Pointe People Mentorship Program.

In January of 2020, the Gibney organization announced a major gift from Andrew A. Davis, a Trustee of the Shelby Cullom Davis Charitable Fund, for the transformation of Gibney Company into a commission based, repertory company that works with renowned and rising international choreographers representing a broad range of aesthetics and techniques. As part of this transformation, Gibney Company doubled in size with the hiring of six new Artistic Associates last fall, including Butler. Plans for Gibney Company's debut at The Joyce Theater this November will be announced at a later date.

Gibney Centers, located in Chelsea and Lower Manhattan, remain temporarily closed.

Gibney Company Support

Gibney Company is grateful for leadership support from Andrew A. Davis, a trustee of the Shelby Cullom Davis Charitable Fund. The Company also receives generous support from The Bay & Paul Foundations; Con Edison; the Howard Gilman Foundation; the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund; the Mertz Gilmore Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts; the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; the New York State Council for the Arts; the O'Donnell Green Music and Dance Foundation; the Office of the Manhattan Borough President; the Omomuki Foundation; The Ready Foundation; the Seth Sprague Educational and Charitable Foundation; the Shubert Foundation; The SHS Foundation; Symbio Physiotherapy; and Virginia and Timothy Millhiser, among others. Gibney's full community of individual and institutional supporters can be viewed here: <https://gibneydance.org/support/#thankyou>.

About Gibney

About Gibney Founded by Gina Gibney in 1991, Gibney is a New York City-based performing arts and social justice organization that taps into the vast potential of movement, creativity, and performance to effect social change and personal transformation. Gibney deploys resources through three strategic and interwoven program areas: Gibney Center, a meeting ground for New York City's artistic community comprising 23 studios and 5 performance spaces that provide critical space for training, rehearsal, professional development, performances, and convenings; Gibney Community, programs that use movement to help address a range of social issues with a focus on gender-based violence and its prevention; and Gibney Company, a commission based, repertory company representing a broad

range of aesthetics and techniques and with an unrelenting focus on artistic excellence and social integrity. Gibney supports movement-based artists in every aspect of their creative development: classes, residencies, low-cost rental space, entrepreneurial training and incubation, presentation opportunities, commissioning, and operating a professional dance company.

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