

NEWS

WALKER ART CENTER TO PREMIERE MAJOR NEW WORK BY DANCE PIONEER DIANNE McINTYRE

CO-PRESENTED AND CO-COMMISSIONED BY NORTHROP

***In The Same Tongue* Explores the Power of Language in Black Culture
As Expressed in Dance, Music, and Poetry**

October 5 – 7, 2023

MINNEAPOLIS, September 11, 2023— Dance pioneer Dianne McIntyre will premiere a major new work at the Walker Art Center this fall. Titled *In The Same Tongue*, the performance explores how language and meaning are created through dance movement, music, and spoken word. The work is an expression of Black creatives, weaving narratives of the past, present, and future. The piece is informed by McIntyre's profound relationship to these arts forms developed over the course of her 50-year career and embodies her groundbreaking work at the intersections of Modern, Concert, Avant Garde, and Black Arts movements. It features an evening-length score by celebrated composer Diedre Murray and poems by Obie-winning playwright Ntozake Shange. The performance offers a captivating evocation of the significance of language, to personal experience as well as to creating moments of disconnection and connection or misunderstanding and understanding. The dance and jazz performers in the DIANNE McINTYRE Group will be joined by dancers from the Twin Cities-based CULTIVATE program of TU Dance. *In The Same Tongue* is co-commissioned and co-presented by the Walker and Northrop at the University of Minnesota. It will open at the Walker from October 5 through 7, with performances at 8:00 p.m. each evening. Tickets and additional information are available on [Walker website](#).

"I've admired the way Dianne McIntyre's groundbreaking work seamlessly fuses vanguard jazz with contemporary dance for decades," said Philip Bither, the Walker's McGuire Director and Senior Curator, Performing Arts. "In my second year at the Walker, in 1998, we commissioned and premiered *Invincible Flower*, one of Dianne's major works created in collaboration with trumpeter and composer Lester Bowie and his Brass Fantasy. Since then, I've continued to be inspired by her incredible imagination, the singularity of her vision, and the power of her performances. She is a true pioneer, combining creative Black movement, sound, and word to create something entirely new and always compelling."

"It is encouraging to see her finally receive the national awards and attention she deserves, and to have the opportunity to support her work once again by co-commissioning *In The Same Tongue*—a truly must-see experience this fall," Bither added. "With *In The Same Tongue*, the Walker is also proud to continue our commitment to experimental and evolutionary dance forms and to the vitality of contemporary Black dance in America."

"When Philip invited Northrop to participate in this project, my answer was an immediate and enthusiastic 'Yes!'," said Kristen Brogdon, Director of Programming at Northrop. "Ms. McIntyre has a legacy of collaborative and brilliant movement, with decades of influence on dance and improvisatory music. I'm thrilled to co-present the premiere and to continue our work with TU Dance for *In The Same Tongue*."

The DIANNE McINTYRE Group is composed of a company of five dancers and four jazz musicians. *In The Same Tongue* features sixteen distinct but interrelated vignettes that examine how the different languages that human beings create can lead to beauty, alienation, harmony, tension, or peace. The work embraces music, dance, and poetry as different modes of speaking and captures how they can relate to each other to evoke greater meaning. The featured vignettes flow from one into another through the stories of McIntyre's experiences with a spectrum of creative Black American music and with the poetry of Ntozake Shange, which is about what McIntyre simply calls "the music," about totems, and about the "new world." Diedre Murray's composition brings forward the stories of the music, through its history in the Americas and in its many nuances in lyricism, rhythm, freedom, and uncategorizable moods.

At every stop of the upcoming tour of *In the Same Tongue*, the production will include sections featuring several local artists performing alongside the DIANNE McINTYRE Group, creating singular cross connections among national and local communities of movers and creators on stage. McIntyre is pleased to be collaborating with dancers from the CULTIVATE program of TU Dance (under the direction of Toni Pierce-Sands) for the world premiere of the work in Minneapolis.

ABOUT DIANNE MCINTYRE

A 2022 Dance Magazine Awardee, Dianne McIntyre is happy to return to Minneapolis with her new choreography. In 2012, she was in residency at University of Minnesota to set *How Long, Brethren?*, the master work by dance pioneer Helen Tamiris. In 1998, the Walker presented McIntyre and ensemble with Lester Bowie's *Brass Fantasy*. In 2021, she was a McKnight fellowship panelist for choreography.

For five decades, McIntyre has been creating groundbreaking work across dance, theater, music, and film. Her distinct movement style is grounded in a vision that often captures dynamic experiences of Black culture, whether in personal narratives, cultural evolutions and developments, or broader histories. Her genre-defying work often combines bold, freeing movement with jazz composition and poetry. She has performed on stages across the world, including at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Joyce Theater, Lincoln Center, Jacob's Pillow, and the Walker, among numerous others, and been commissioned by an incredible range of dance companies, including the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble.

In 1972, McIntyre founded the company Sounds in Motion and shortly thereafter the Sounds in Motion School. The Harlem space became a cultural hub, engaging not only dancers and musicians but artists, scholars, and activists from across disciplines committed to advancing Black consciousness. Guided by McIntyre's singular vision and innovative approach, the company performed extensively in New York and across the globe. In 1988, McIntyre closed her company to pursue independent choreography.

Over the course of her illustrious career, she has received numerous honors. Most recently, she was the recipient of a 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Martha Hill Dance Fund. Other awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Doris Duke Artist Award, a Dance/USA Honor Award, a United States Artists Doris Duke Fellowship, National Black Theatre Teer Pioneer Award, Def Dance Jam Community Butterfly Award, American Dance Festival Endowed Chair for Distinguished Teaching, Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award/College of Arts and Sciences the Ohio State University, two Audelcos, and three Bessies. McIntyre holds a BFA in Dance from The Ohio State University, where she studied under Helen Alkire, Vera Blaine, James Payton, and Lucy Venable. Her other mentors are Gus Solomons Jr. and Elaine Gibbs Redmond. She has also been awarded two honorary doctorate degrees from SUNY Purchase and Cleveland State University. McIntyre is also the co-director, with Risa Steinberg, of the Jacob's Pillow Hicks Choreography Fellows Program.

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ABOUT THE WALKER ART CENTER

The Walker Art Center is a renowned multidisciplinary arts institution that presents, collects, and supports the creation of groundbreaking work across the visual and performing arts, moving image, and design. Guided by the belief that art has the power to bring joy and solace and the ability to unite people through dialogue and shared experiences, the Walker engages communities through a dynamic array of exhibitions, performances, events, and initiatives. Its multiacre campus includes 65,000 sq. ft. of exhibition space, the state-of-the-art McGuire Theater and Walker Cinema, and ample green space that connects with the adjoining Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. The Garden, a partnership with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, is one of the first urban sculpture parks of its kind in the United States and home to the beloved Twin Cities landmark *Spoonbridge and Cherry* by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen. Recognized for its ambitious program and

growing collection of more than 15,500 works, the Walker embraces emerging art forms and amplifies the work of artists from the Twin Cities and from across the country and the globe. Its broad spectrum of offerings makes it a lively and welcoming hub for artistic expression, creative innovation, and community connection.

Visit walkerart.org for more information about upcoming presentations, programs, and opportunities to experience the art of our time.

ABOUT NORTHROP, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Located in the heart of the University of Minnesota campus, [Northrop](#) presents world-class dance and music performances, speakers, comedians, films, exhibits, and more. Northrop has opened new worlds to generations of diverse audiences and has been a catalyst for innovation and learning since 1929.

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