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Dance Artists' and Choreographers' Financial Sustainability in New York City Under the CreateNYC Cultural Plan

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New York City is brimming with a plethora of diverse art, performances, exhibits, and communities, sparking many people to regard it as the Cultural Capital of the World. The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) has been a longtime supporter of the arts in New York City. In 2017, the DCLA released the CreateNYC Cultural Plan, which was intended to increase equity and sustainability in the art and culture sector of New York City. At the core of the plan lies its mission:

> CreateNYC is the first-ever comprehensive cultural plan for the City of New York. It is intended to serve as a roadmap to a more inclusive, equitable, and resilient cultural ecosystem, in which all residents have a stake. Its strategies for supporting arts and culture throughout the city lay out roles for stakeholders at all levels— from residents on a single block to City agencies that encompass all five boroughs…CreateNYC was envisioned as a plan to map support for arts and culture throughout the five boroughs, to coordinate existing and future programming, to meet established needs and fill gaps in services, and to ensure growth, excellence, and equity now and long into the future. (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 11-25)

The CreateNYC Cultural Plan's essence and goals are welcomed by art makers and NYC residents, as NYC's communities and artists long craved the ideas proposed in the Plan. CreateNYC's goals as they are stated, would ease artists' hustle in supporting themselves with their work and begin disassembling antiquated inequities like prejudiced and exclusionary practices. Overall, the CreateNYC Cultural Plan could improve artists' quality of life and viewers' experiences if it reaches its full potential.

New York City-based artists face social and economic disparities that make it difficult to make a living wage that supports a sustainable life. Historically, artists in NYC face wide ranges of compensation, career longevity, and respect within society when trying to support themselves. In the dance world specifically, artists are often asked to perform or produce work for 'exposure' or nominal monetary compensation. The term ‘fair pay’ does not always meet the minimum wage; rehearsals may be unpaid, or dancers could be paid a flat rate disproportionate to number of hours contributed. Being paid *something* is often enough for the sake of being paid. The Journal of Dance Medicine and Science summarized this phenomenon swiftly in 1999, demonstrating the prolonged nature of dancers’ employment realities for over twenty years:

> …dancers and choreographers working at a professional level are employed throughout the year on a part-time basis, often earning a fee for performance with or without rehearsal pay. Despite long hours of rehearsal and performance, dancers who are paid on a part-time basis usually cannot support themselves solely from their dance work or, alternatively, do not have a contract for their dance work. They represent another group of the dance population that is not counted in Bureau of Labor census information. (Bronner and Worthen, 1999, 151-152)

Financial sustainability factors contribute to the longevity, or lack thereof, of dancer and choreographer careers. When their craft is not supporting them, it becomes increasingly difficult to perform at a high level and priorities may shift to opportunities that are financially supportive. This dilutes one’s dedication to their craft, which is necessary to build a career as an artist. Hopes of growing artistic reputation and more substantial pay become less likely when less time is spent in the field. These artist-specific realities are not to discount other issues pressing today’s NYC society and artists. Dancers are also affected by issues like gentrification, societal pressures surrounding gender norms, education budget cuts, and divided communities and politics, complementing and intensifying arts-specific pressures they are facing. These realities place additional burdens on the respect dancers receive personally and professionally.

Combatting social and economic disparities facing New York City-based artists, including those surrounding making a living, are within the goals of the CreateNYC Cultural Plan. Some action items and strategies included in the Plan pertain to increased and specifically designated funding, increased access to rehearsal and performance spaces, housing and neighborhood preservation, building communities, and improving accessibility to viewing art. If fulfilled as described in its literature, the CreateNYC Cultural Plan's goals have intentions rooted in extensive research that could significantly shift artists' and dancers' realities positively. Additionally, if the Plan comes to fruition in its several directions and across many art forms, it could improve the entire city's cultural exposure and thus quality of life for all residents.

Despite the DCLA's good intentions, the CreateNYC Cultural Plan's broad language, wide-reaching goals, and grand anticipations make it unrealistic to execute. CreateNYC is now three years old, with one follow-up Action Plan released in 2019, and has yet to clearly implement many of its intended strategies. In addition, it has not effectively spread awareness of its offerings to those who could be applicable, leaving many artists without a working knowledge of CreateNYC. The following research on CreateNYC's efficacy depicts the Plan's impact on dance artists and choreographers, positively, negatively, or at all. In order to unpack the following realities faced by dance artists and makers in New York City and the ways in which the CreateNYC Plan is generally ineffective in addressing these challenges, the following research evaluates of CreateNYC's analyses and strategies for the arts and dance fields, discusses how leading dance and arts advocacy organizations interface with CreateNYC and artists, and references primary source interviews with three dance industry professionals: Katherine Maxwell, Ephrat Asherie, and Jordan Demetrius Lloyd. CreateNYC's attention to dance artists' and choreographers' ability to make a living, inequities in the arts with DCLA's Cultural Institution Group, equities for fiscally sponsored organizations, and scarce operational funding frame the plan as capitalistic, with negative implications on arts economy.

Contributing to the CreateNYC Cultural Plan's broad nature and inefficacy, its literature frequently repeats some terms in various contexts, decreasing their specific meaning. Among the vague terms, the Plan uses the words *arts*, *artists*, *culture*, and *employed artist* interchangeably without clarifying what each means. Each of these words can have distinct meanings to every individual, but in order to implement change involving these groups, it is important to come to a common understanding of what each entail. Without defining these words, it is impossible for CreateNYC's expertly constructed strategies to hold real value. The only instance where the DCLA defines a term is when consolidating their research on the word *culture* by writing that "the [CreateNYC] engagement process reinforced that New Yorkers consider culture to be history, food, art, painting, theater, quilts, museums, dabke, fairs, music, libraries, poetry, science, fashion, parades, drum circles, festivals, zoos, gardens, and more!" (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 59) Listing this wide array of activities reflects NYC's beautiful breadth of cultural influence, but it does not lend any information to the direction of the Plan, deterring focus from any particular group receiving attention.

Due to the varying and inconsistent nature of a dancer's often freelance and "gig"-based career, there are a plethora of ways in which artists fund their work. A dance company's operations are usually funded by a combination of some of the following: corporate partnerships and sponsorships, special fundraising events' revenue, trustee contributions, government grants, private foundation grants, individual contributions, and earned revenue. There is a drastic range of budgets among competing dance organizations. According to Dance/NYC[1], large, leading

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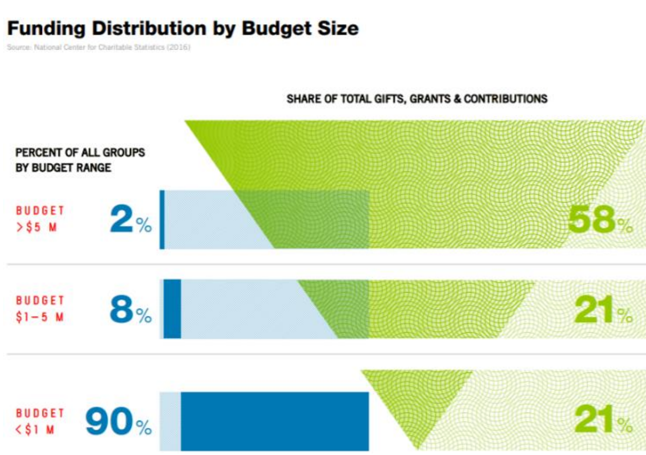
[1] "Dance/NYC's mission is to promote the knowledge, appreciation, practice, and performance of dance in the metropolitan New York City area. It embeds values of justice, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of the organization. It works in alliance with Dance/USA, the national service organization for professional dance." (Dance/NYC, 2020)

companies like the New York City Ballet have budgets greater than $5,000,000, and the second largest level, including The Mark Morris Dance Group, have annual operating budgets of $1M-$5M. “Mid-sized” companies have total budgets of $500K-$999K or $100K-$499K, while “small” companies generate less than $100K annually. Most companies operate off significantly less than the lowest $100K threshold, with fiscally sponsored projects having small annual budgets averaging around $24,500. (Dance/NYC, 2016, 11)

Dance and choreographic artists and organizations in all levels of Dance/NYC’s financial tiers face shocking realities surrounding making ends meet. Funding sources, financial organization, and employment conditions are in most need of improvement among small companies. The CreateNYC Cultural Plan alleges to ease these and other struggles of artists’ realities, but their systematic structure prevents dance artists and choreographers from supporting artistic and administrative autonomy. Nationwide, 2% of all cultural institutions in the United States receive 60% of foundation giving. (Helicon Collaborative, 2017, 5) The NYC Department of Cultural Affairs is structured similarly, with 41% of funding going to only thirty-three massive cultural institutions. The remaining 59% is available for over 2,200 active nonprofit arts and culture organizations based in New York City. Until a dance or choreographer develops a substantial reputation, gaining funding often relies on host organizations or altering artistic



visions to suit grant proposals with prescribed themes and messages. These practices limit artists' independence creatively and as a business, stunting their growth developing their own mission.

The DCLA's Cultural Institutions Group (CIG), the recipients of 41% of the annual budget "…is comprised of 33 institutions operating on City-owned property across the five boroughs." (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 21) The DCLA's major investment in the thirty-three CIG institutions make them very valuable to New York City. These organizations such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the New York Botanical Garden are very powerful in their reach, accessibility, artist residencies, equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and community programming. They serve as elevated examples for all other organizations but are structured so the rest of NYC's cultural organizations have weaker means to reach the financial level and strength as CIG organizations. Undoubtedly, there are many prosperous organizations with ample public and private benefactors, but most do not have the advantages of no-cost real estate and utilities, designated programs and growth initiatives, and millions of dollars towards operations and administration.

While many of the CreateNYC Cultural Plan's goals fail to come to fruition, the Plan achieves some of its objectives by exclusively incorporating additional elements and/or programs into CIG institutions, excluding all other organizations from these growth opportunities. Therefore, while the action: "Increase general operating funding to all members of the CIG, with a 17.5% increase for smaller institutions and an 8% increase for larger institutions." (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2019, 4) will improve organizational capacities in CIGs, smaller emerging and established organizations remain unassisted. This model is not an effective way to reach NYC's large scale of people, the creators, and viewers of art, alike. The DCLA boasts that, "in the United States, only the federal government spends more on culture each year.

DCLA's expense budget far surpasses the investment made by other cities…" (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 8). Much of that money boosts top organizations, continuing to exclude and underfund most other emerging and established organizations. The fact that the DCLA distributes the most funding, does not mean that they support the most people with that funding, which, makes it impossible for the CreateNYC Cultural Plan to support *all* New Yorkers.

The literature of the CreateNYC Cultural Plan places much emphasis on community based, small, and emerging artists. In contrast, the amount of money designated towards the CIG places power in these few, privileged institutions so they can continue to gain power as leading organizations. The Plan's words do not mirror the actions it backs with fiscal investments. While the money reserved for CIG institutions does, in fact, serve New Yorkers, it will not directly serve large numbers of art-makers in NYC, nor foster a diverse selection of well-funded art for audiences. This phenomenon is spelled out explicitly by the People's Cultural Plan:

> As it stands, CreateNYC lacks any funding commitments whatsoever for its "equity and inclusion" proposals. We foresee an alarming, if unintended, consequence: organizations with larger budgets and more paid staff — the same ones already attracting the vast majority of all public and private funding — will be better positioned to fund the creation and implementation of newly mandated diversity plans, thereby making them more competitive and ultimately *increasing* rather than mitigating existing inequity between large and small organizations. (The People's Cultural Plan, 2017)

An instance where the CreateNYC Cultural Plan falls short of its potential to effectively implement its strategies is with the Affordable Real Estate for Artists Initiative (AREA). To combat artists' financial and physical limitations on residential and rehearsal spaces in a compact and rapidly gentrifying city, the CreateNYC Cultural Plan includes the following strategy:

> Preserve and develop long-term affordable work spaces for the cultural community to advance the Affordable Real Estate for Artists (AREA) initiative. Support nonprofit organizations in the development and operation of affordable workspaces in City-owned or public-private partnership facilities. (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 100)

The AREA initiative was established in 2015 and was expanded upon the release of the CreateNYC Cultural Plan in 2017, creating 1,500 units of affordable housing for artists and 500 units of artist workspace. The goal of the initiative "…is to ensure the creation of long-term affordable workspaces across the city that are accessible to artists of all backgrounds and are beneficial for neighborhood needs and development." (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2019) Upon visiting the application for AREA, the spaces available include lucrative dance rehearsal locations like Gina Gibney Dance, Inc. and Spaceworks NYC, Inc. Unfortunately, the organization of application instructions, FAQs, and the application itself on AREA's website are unclear and confusing. When reviewing the AREA website with Ephrat Asherie, Artistic Director of Ephrat Asherie Dance[2], she reacted by stating, "I'm looking for the actual application. This is maybe not done in the best way. I'm excited that I learned about this, I'm just sort of perplexed…I think this is absolutely worthwhile because it sounds like a huge amount of money and resources that can potentially be available to artists." DCLA has fiscally invested so much to create and support AREA, it is a waste of efforts with the current application process and minimal advertising/public knowledge. DCLA must spread the word of AREA's existence and make the application accessible for all artists, then state that issues surrounding rehearsal space are being improved.

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[2] Ephrat Asherie Dance (EAD) is a fiscally sponsored small dance company rooted in street and social dance. Ephrat "Bounce" Asherie is a New York City-based b-girl, dancer, and choreographer and a 2016 Bessie Award Winner for Innovative Achievement in Dance.

Application eligibility for most grants and awards requires arts organizations to have nonprofit status. Obtaining and maintaining governmental 501(c)(3) nonprofit status is an expensive and lengthy legal process so it is often only held by long-standing and/or large organizations. Many dance companies and artists are registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, but a greater number lack necessary resources. To gain access to fundraising, resources, grants and awards, and increased credibility and visibility, many organizations opt for fiscal sponsorship.

> Fiscal sponsorship is a formal arrangement in which a 501(c)(3) public charity provides financial and legal oversight to an entity that does not have its own 501(c)(3) status. Sponsored artists and arts projects are eligible to solicit and receive grants and tax-deductible contributions that are normally available only to 501(c)(3) organizations…At 460, the estimated minimum number of sponsored dance projects is nearly three times the number of 501(c)(3) dance groups surveyed for State of NYC Dance & Workforce Demographics (Dance/NYC, 2017, 9-12)

As an arts organization or dance company grows, they face the option of applying for and obtaining 501(c)(3) status and weigh several factors. Depending on the organization's present endeavors and future goals, fiscal sponsorship often serves their needs and allows access to all desired opportunities. In other cases, organizations' leaders feel they could benefit from the knowledge and resources a board and 501(c)(3) status offer. Katherine Maxwell, whose company, Hivewild[3], is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, pointed out some differences from a fiscally sponsored organization that surpass technicalities like tax benefits. With a board's time,

[3] Katherine Maxwell established Hivewild in 2016 as a platform to create formal works, engage the Brooklyn community, and promote artistic partnerships between visual artists, musicians, costume designers, and beyond. Hivewild is a small, nationally registered non-for-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization that engages in community through primarily site-specific performances.

energetic, and financial investments, there is an "expectation that the company should function like an arts organization and needs to keep going. There is ephemeralness of an independent artist or even a fiscally sponsored company. If that company decided to not be around and not appear for a year, there's no board expecting them to stay the way it would be for a 501(c)(3)."

In the search for art funding, emerging and established dancers and choreographers apply to governmental, private foundation, and public organizational grants, residencies, and similar opportunities. With apparent inequities between 501(c)(3) nonprofits and fiscally sponsored organizations, fiscally sponsored organizations do not always find ample funding sources to afford all necessary elements of their projects. In a Dance/NYC study that investigates the needs and realities of Fiscally Sponsored dance projects, they found that "projects in the study sample run on lean annual budgets—approximately $18,400 on average—that are too small to incorporate many key artistic and operational costs. Worryingly, 32% of the sample reports going unpaid for its labor." (Dance/NYC, 2019, 9) Typically, fiscal sponsors charge a routine fee or take a percentage of the organization's income (grants received, donations, revenue, etc.) for their services. While this is an incurred operational cost (funds for which are difficult to come by), many still feel that the price is worth its benefits. In an interview with Ephrat Asherie, Artistic Director of Ephrat Asherie Dance, she defended fiscal sponsorship by expressing her hesitation to take on the additional financial and time expenses of becoming a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Becoming a registered nonprofit would include new responsibilities like forming and maintaining a Board. Currently, Asherie is satisfied by the high level of comprehensive support she receives from her Fiscal Sponsorship with Foundation for Independent Artists (FIA). Not only do they provide tax deductions for donors and allow Ephrat Asherie Dance to receive donations, FIA also provides payroll and workers comp insurance for

Asherie's dancers, liability insurance for the company, and initiate tax processes by sending out W-9 forms. On the other hand, Katherine Maxwell, of Hivewild, was ready to establish 501(c)(3) nonprofit status a few years after the inception of her company. Initially, Maxwell decided to apply for 501(c)(3) status for the potential to access a wider selection of grants. She recently noticed many granting organizations are expanding their eligibility requirements to include fiscally sponsored organizations.

A Dance/NYC survey found overarching trends about opportunities open to fiscally sponsored dance organizations that parallel DCLA funding structures. The survey revealed that "a chief hurdle for sponsored groups…is access to funding sources, for example, to overly restrictive foundation and government funding programs that exclude sponsored groups despite their tax-exempt status. While 93% of the dance sample receives charitable funding from individuals, 52% receives foundation grants, and only 28% receives government income from any source (City, State, or Federal)." (Dance/NYC, 2017, 9) This finding is consistent with the DCLA's actions and strategies reflected in the CreateNYC Cultural Plan. DCLA's governmental funds are allocated for established organizations far more frequently those that are emerging.

Inspired by the survey of nearly 3,000 artists, arts workers, and volunteers that work with fiscal sponsors, Dance/NYC, nine fiscal sponsor partners and CreateNYC conducted a town hall event exploring the characteristics, needs, and opportunities of the citywide community of arts workers involved in fiscally-sponsored projects. (Dance/NYC, 2017) Following this event, Dance/NYC compiled their findings, published, and sent *Recommendations for NYC Cultural Planning* to the writers of the CreateNYC Cultural Plan. The four strategies with detailed implementation strategies are as follows:

1. Address need for affordable space: in particular, artistic development space

2. Improve wages for artists
3. Strengthen Funding for Fiscally Sponsored Dance Artists & Projects
4. Increase Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in the Sponsored Dance Workforce (Dance/NYC, 2017, 40-45)

None of the proposed action-items made it into the final iteration of the CreateNYC Cultural Plan. This is a disappointment to the research and investment made in collaboration with planners for CreateNYC. Obviously the DCLA had to consider all artists' needs when developing strategies and action items, but the suggested strategies could have benefitted fiscally sponsored artists across all disciplines. This is disappointing to inclusion for dancers, as such a high percentage of dance and choreographic artists are fiscally sponsored. The only CreateNYC action-item that addresses fiscally sponsored artists, albeit by allusion, simply states, "Support groups beyond established 501(c)(3) organizations." (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 145) There are no specifics about what actions are specifically intended here, like those outlined in Dance/NYC's *Recommendations for NYC Planning.* Some details that would hold the DCLA accountable to supporting fiscally sponsored artists are: What actions or resources are implied by *support*? Who is being spoken about in *beyond established 501(c)(3) organizations*? This point is immeasurable, deeming it impossible to identify DCLA progress since 2017.

In interviews with several dance artists, interviewees repeatedly mentioned the scarcity of available funding for operational expenses. Most grants and funding opportunities designate their contributions towards the creation of a new artistic work. Funders are eager to fund works of art, but a dance company's longevity is rarely invested in. It is common for an artist to be commissioned to create a work and use most or all received funds to compensate dancers, rent rehearsal space, or contract production or costuming professionals. This often leaves the

Choreographer and/or Director with minimal to no pay for their choreography and administrative duties like cutting music, marketing their company and its performances, archiving media from past performances, or writing future applications for residencies, teaching, performing, and funding opportunities.

Although it is not backed by corresponding action, the DCLA acknowledges detriments that result from insufficient operational funding. The informational portion of the CreateNYC Cultural Plan states,

> The cultural community also faces other threats to longterm viability…Utilities, operations, and administrative costs can often mean death for cultural organizations…By implementing policies, programs, and projects that help reduce these costs, build capacity, and efficiently pool resources, the City can address some of these barriers and support the sustainability of organizations, individuals, and businesses in the cultural sector. (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 94)

Insufficient support for operational support and administration of dance companies has contributed to an abundance of project-based dance companies. Dance companies' growth is prolonged because Artistic Directors and Choreographers go through cycles when they are receiving grant or residency support and can pay dancers and create work. Once that funding runs out, there may be downtime until transitioning into a new process. This lack of consistency tends to prolong a company's growth while establishing itself. Attempts to combat this trend and continue consistent rehearsals without designated funding can lead to sticky, unjust financial situations and working relationships. The need for increased support towards operational expenses has led leadership of emerging and established dance companies to admit that they have contributed their personal savings and gone unpaid for projects.

In an interview with Katherine Maxwell of Hivewild Dance Company, she noted the frequency of funders' eagerness to commission new works. Maxwell expressed the abundance of resources and energy that go into creating a work which is often only performed only a handful of times. It would serve dance-makers to have avenues, including financial support, for re-staging existing pieces to new audiences, in new venues, and with evolved casts and choreography. Constantly brainstorming and creating new works can also lead to burnout for dance-makers, where restaging past works could pace a choreographer's creative energy. Unfortunately, such opportunities to revisit past works are not common.

Minimal funding for the operations and administration of dance companies intensifies pressure on Artistic Directors to balance their artistic and administrative responsibilities. In an interview with Ephrat Asherie, Founding Artistic Director of Ephrat Asherie Dance, her comments on maintaining the balance reflect the experience of an organization that has seen much growth in recent years.

> The artist-admin balance is hard. Ugh. There's so much admin that just takes so long, like all the regular stuff….I don't have a well-oiled machine. I'm still very much doing a lot of it but I'm trying to figure out how to delegate when I can, but I don't really have much of an infrastructure outside of a Booking Agent. Which I know is kind of crazy, but when there's limited resources, I'm like, 'Well I guess I could just do that myself and not have to spend money". It's not ideal because obviously it's taking away from your creative time, but it's kind of financially what I'm figuring out.

External professionals that dance companies bring onboard to assist the administrative side of their organizations are valuable assets. It is a challenge for organizations to afford to commission or hire a company manager, grant writer, social media manager, booking agent, website builder, accountant, or graphic designer. External support from administrative professionals also places extra imbalance within the dance field. If a Director finds out about an attractive grant application a few days before its deadline, a company with a grant writer would have an advantage over a company without one who would have to take time and energy out of creative processes to complete the application for funding. With operational funding for dance and arts companies remaining scarce, inequity is exposed in the dance field because organizations with higher levels of funding have the ability to continue growing and accessing further opportunities at a faster rate than those without the initial funding or staff. When prompted about hopes for future growth and assistance, Asherie shared: “Ideally, I would have someone who’s working with me regularly to make sure these things don’t fall through the cracks. To make sure I’m responding to emails in a timely fashion, that I’m sending in the program copy…all that stuff really adds up.”

Making operational funding increasingly available would recognize Founders’ and Directors’ work behind the scenes and enable them to make a living from running their dance companies. As it stands, leadership of dance companies and organizations often do not support themselves proportionately from the work they contribute and look to other industries for some or all of their personal income. During interviews, some artists revealed that while they make money from running their companies, they have accepted that it is not realistic to expect their company to pay the bills. The CreateNYC Cultural Plan is compassionately spot-on when they state:

> Artists and cultural workers understand their work better than anyone. This often leads to the cultural field to subsidize itself with free labor: visual artists install shows for one another; program staff double as grant writers and promoters within their own organizations; dancers document one another’s shows on video and in photography. This may allow for discrete programs and projects to succeed but limits the potential for

> individuals to earn a decent wage. In New York, this can be a major hurdle to a stable, sustainable artistic practice. (Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 141)

In the literature of the CreateNYC Plan, the DCLA understands artists' plea for funding opportunities that support operational expenses when they write,

> Administrative, operations, and financial challenges—for both organizations and independent cultural workers— are a significant burden on many in the field and can be addressed with programs focused on professional development, financial literacy, accounting, grant writing, and other supportive workshops and education." (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 99)

While the DCLA acknowledges gaps in funding and hypothesizes trainings that could reduce artists' need for operational funding in the CreateNYC Cultural Plan, they are not taking any action towards implementing these trainings. In addition, the DCLA overlooked allocating additional funding for arts organizations' operational expenses and urged private foundations and giving institutions increase and diversify who they give to, to close the identified gap. The DCLA does not identify specific external sources where this funding could come from, nor do they form relationships or programs with other institutions that could foster the type of operational funding that the DCLA identified need for. Only one of the CreateNYC Cultural Plan's strategies directly addresses artists' desperation for operational funding, which states that it will "support wages for cultural workers and artists that allow them to thrive and make a living in New York City. >Advocate for more general operating grants and/or the elimination of limits to administrative overhead from the philanthropic field." (Department of Cultural Affairs, 2020, 89) Based on DCLA's 2019 CreateNYC Action Plan, action has not been taken yet in following through on this valuable action-item.

While DCLA provides ample operational funding to their CIG institutions, they show weak investment in improving operational funding for other arts organizations. The DCLA's theories versus their lack of action makes their investment in small and medium, emerging and established organizations clear. Experiences among the thirty-three CIG organizations significantly contrasts experiences of most other arts organizations. For example, "in fiscal year 2017, DCLA allocated $72 million to these [CIG] institutions for general operating support and $39 million in energy subsidies." (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 21)

An additional area begging for improvement among dance and choreographic artists is a cohesive knowledge and communication of common practices and opportunities. Each interviewed artist recognized a disconnect among peers and industry professionals, collectively describing feelings of separation. Each artist and organization works independently where there could be collaboration and community, leading to missed social and professional connections. In many instances, the most relevant grant and performance opportunities are learned about through word of mouth with professional connections. Dance and choreographic artists note sometimes learning about opportunities they are eligible for only after deadlines have passed. A possible improvement to this dynamic was noted in an interview with Maxwell.

> There is no guidebook: Starting a Dance Company…you kind of have to figure it out and know the right people to provide you information, and on top of that discern what works best for you…It feels like there's all these organizations that exist to help, but there's no central database to find grants, arts management positions…it would be really cool to have a communal spreadsheet that offers lists of grants and organizations that exist to help dance companies, or open positions for folks looking to work in dance-arts administration. I feel like the [dance] community probably craves something like that.

Maxwell is accurate in this conclusion about a central database that could be highly useful. Organizations like Dance/NYC and The New York Foundation for the Arts have helpful boards with job, audition, and choreographic opportunity postings, but these are not comprehensive or holistically inclusive. These organizations could unite with actively working dance and choreographic artists to develop a comprehensive list of resources. This could also improve the reach and efficacy of actions put in place by the CreateNYC Cultural Plan. DCLA programs like the Affordable Real Estate for Artists Initiative (AREA) could reach so many more applicable dance and choreographic artists through a widespread, streamlined list of resources. In the CreateNYC Cultural Plan there is a strategy as follows: "Partner with City agencies and the cultural sector to better communicate cultural offerings across socio-economic, accessibility, and language barriers. Potential partnerships include City Council, the library systems, NYC Department of Education (DOE), and Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME)." (Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 80) This is a first step to unifying arts resources to make them accessible for everyone. It is indicated as a short-term action-item, although three years later no new developments have been made.

While the DCLA focuses their funds on larger, more prominent organizations, the CreateNYC Cultural Plan pressures private foundations to diversify who their funds support among small and medium arts organizations. Darren Walker, President of The Ford Foundation[4], is quoted in the CreateNYC Cultural Plan completely in support of funding all arts organizations.

[4] "The [Ford] foundation is an independent organization, led by a distinguished board of trustees whose 16 members hail from four continents and bring leadership and expertise in a wide range of disciplines. Today we are stewards of a $12 billion endowment, making $500 million in grants around the world every year. Led by Darren Walker, our 10th president, we remain committed to our enduring mission—and to our legacy of bold, creative support for social change." (Ford Foundation, 2020)

"If culture in New York only means large, rich organizations, then we lose the lifeblood, which are the small, innovative, entrepreneurial, off-the-beaten track kind of organizations with small budgets that the City should also be funding. If it is not possible for those organizations to thrive anymore, New York will have all of the features of an unequal city." (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 14) In 2020, Ford Foundation has allotted $6,215,500 to arts, culture, and media organizations. Most recipient organizations are academic institutions or large, established arts institutions many of which work directly with or impact established and emerging dance artists and choreographers. For example, Fractured Atlas Productions received $50,000 from the Ford Foundation for the 2020 fiscal year. This massive organization annually fiscally sponsors 75,000 artists, many of whom are artists who possess their own dance organizations; therefore, the Ford Foundation's investment is impacting the support of a large number of smaller dance organizations. This is like Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival's $200,000 grant which produces and commissions several dance companies and choreographers each year, causing a trickle-down effect of large institutions supporting smaller dance artists and companies. (Ford Foundation, 2020)

This trickle-down effect is not unlike the DCLA's distribution of the support they provide. As noted previously, the DCLA does not directly give significant funding to small, emerging, or medium dance companies themselves. DCLA funding for the Mark Morris Dance Group inherently benefits their community of artists, even though governmental funds are only directed towards the Mark Morris Dance Group. In an interview with Jordan Demetrius Lloyd[5], active choreographer in NYC, he noted how he benefits from DCLA funding as a faculty

[5] Jordan Demetrius Lloyd is a dance artist based in Brooklyn, NY. As a fiscally sponsored, independent artist, Lloyd performs, choreographs, collaborates, and teaches throughout the New York City area since 2016.

member at the Mark Morris Dance Group. Even though he is not receiving direct governmental funding as an individual artist, the DCLA is contributing to support for his position.

A major pipeline for DCLA funding to reach a wider range of artists is through the DCLA's Cultural Development Fund (CDF). The CDF tasks each of the five boroughs' Arts Councils with re-granting their money to younger art organizations. In 2017 the CDF supported "…more than 900 nonprofit organizations that provide cultural programming throughout the city. The agency encourages participation in the CDF process by the widest possible representation of the City's diverse cultural constituency." (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2017, 22) The Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC) is one of the agencies tasked by the DCLA with re-granting their funding, often to dancers. "In recent years, BAC has made a commitment to funding fewer projects at higher amounts. On average, 25% of our applicants are funded on some level. In 2017, our average grant size was $3,500." (Brooklyn Arts Council, 2020) This is significant support for awarded arts organizations, while remaining a small portion of a dance company's desired and actual annual budget.

Another instance how DCLA funding trickles down to impact independent dancers is through residencies and opportunities hosted in CIG institutions. Many of the heavily funded CIG institutions host artists in residencies and commission works in their spaces. This is a beneficial form of support and exposure for emerging and established artists, but it does not necessarily support a company's own elevation and autonomy as a standalone organization. Once the residency ends, there are few instances where support like rehearsal space, performance production, or funding for dancers continues, leaving the company defenseless without the larger institution. As a necessary step in the growth of an organization, participation in creative residency and presentational opportunities at larger venues allow artists to reach wide audiences, network, and show their work to new audiences. It is most beneficial for artists if opportunities provide support for growing organizations to stand on their own afterwards, rather than end dates signaling reliance on showing in others' spaces.

As referenced in Walker's quote above, there are countless artists who have 'failed to thrive' and have had to resort to another industry for sustenance, walk away from their art, move out of NYC, or resort to other measures that are not "thriving" for the art maker. Entities who hold the money, like the DCLA, are aware of these inconsistencies, as displayed in the *Research and Discovery* chapter of the CreateNYC Cultural Plan, though they have yet to act or propose combatting action-items. Change will not be ensued while massive organizations continue to receive primary funding and offer bounded support to smaller players. Direct investment in rising artists is imperative for them to rise to success. How does one break the traditional cycle of appealing exclusively to powerful institutions and begin owning one's own dance and choreography?

During interviews with dance artists and choreographers, two programs were highlighted which successfully support emerging artists and equip them with tools that serve long after the program ends. These programs designate money to artistic expenses as well as invest in resources that result in longevity and skills, rather than only funding that will be depleted in the short-term. Jordan Demetrius Lloyd shone light on New York Live Arts' Fresh Tracks Residency (Fresh Tracks). Dance and choreographic artists accepted to Fresh Tracks are provided with "a 50-hour studio residency, a professionally-produced shared evening bill in the New York Live Arts theater, an artistic fee, a one-on-one dialogue session with the program's Artistic Adviser, professional development workshops led by established professionals from the field and extensive support from Live Arts' Marketing, Production and Programming staff." (New York

Live Arts, 2020) Lloyd pointed out the benefits of being fiscally sponsored by New York Live Arts at the beginning of his career through Fresh Tracks and for a designated time afterwards. This gives him flexibility to create his art without the burden of paying for and sourcing a fiscal sponsorship right away. Ephrat Asherie, Founding Artistic Director of Ephrat Asherie Dance, noted the generous support of the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project Grant (NDP). Asherie attributed a pivot and elevation in her dance company's recognition and the opportunities she was being offered to her experiences under the NDP Grant. The NDP Grant offers recipients "$45,000 for the creation of a new work, $10,000 in general operating support for the artist/company, and up to $35,000 to support a U.S.* tour of the work." (New England Foundation for the Arts, 2020) Asherie extended her gratitude for the rare designation of 'general operating support' so she could "get a new computer, finally, that wasn't archaic…and helped me pay an admin person." The developments Asherie made to the business side of her organization while being supported by the NDP Grant continued benefitting her work even after the experience was over. Additionally, the powerful artistic funding included in the NDP Grant led to exposure and networking opportunities that continued growing and opened doors to future performances and works, leading to further autonomy and success for Ephrat Asherie Dance.

In addition to poor operational funding availability, inequity for fiscally sponsored entities, imbalanced funding distribution to CIGs, and insufficient communication of NYC arts practices and opportunities, another possible source for less than ample funding surrounds the question of arts organizations' and nonprofits' sustainability within the United States' capitalist business structures. Nonprofit organizations are unique because their missions, cultures, and values prioritize community, equity, and social support. The United States government has crafted nonprofit funding and organizational structures to defy capitalist principles, while technically being “set up for success” to survive in a capitalistic society. The contradiction between the nature and goals of nonprofit organizations and their capitalist habitat is a paradox that does not equal prosperity.

All in all, the CreateNYC Cultural Plan aims to achieve “art for all New Yorkers”, but is trapped in economic capitalism of “survival of the fittest”, therefore it will not realize its goals. The DCLA writes about establishing an “equitable economy” without acknowledging capitalism’s effect on arts organizations and artists’ lives, shifting the CreateNYC Cultural Plan’s perspective out of reality. The CreateNYC Cultural Plan lacks commitment to artists’ livelihoods by leaving issues outstanding like lackluster operational funding sources, disparities between 501(c)(3) and fiscally sponsored entities, institutionalized prioritization of CIG organizations, and widespread knowledge of arts opportunities. Without addressing the root of the issues which the CreateNYC Cultural Plan is trying to overcome, tangential problems mentioned in the CreateNYC Cultural Plan that result from capitalistic structures like neighborhood preservation, equity, diversity and inclusion, funding and hiring practices will only be bandaged, but not solved.

A Note About COVID-19

The CreateNYC Cultural Plan has not held weight in response to the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on artists, dancers, and choreographers. At the time of this writing, New York City is suffering major losses financially, socially, and in public health. Artists are taking major hits, losing nearly five billion dollars across the field. (Di Liscia, Valentina, 2020) Dancers and choreographic artists face a massive pause, as their forms rely on physical presence and proximity. While artists have displayed resiliency in the first two months, there is a long recovery process ahead, especially for performing artists who rely on live audiences. Fortunately, several dance and arts-focused organizations like Dance/NYC, New York Foundation for the Arts, and Americans for the Arts, as well as private philanthropies like The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and Ford Foundation have stepped up to create several Artist Relief Funds. Amid the crisis, New York State legislation was modified to include freelance and gig-workers in Unemployment Insurance, benefitting many artists.

As a source of creating equity for artists, the CreateNYC Cultural Plan should include emergency and disaster responses. Of course, no one could have predicted the COVID-19 crisis, but disasters happen. In looking out for the wellbeing, sustainability, and livelihoods of New York City-based artists, it is responsible for CreateNYC to form an emergency response fund for artists, and protocol and safety measures that look out for artists. As New York City's government agencies work hard to fight COVID-19, an epicenter of the virus, the DCLA has not taken any actions. Hopefully, the DCLA follows in the footsteps of organizations that are establishing relief funds.

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