

**Choreographer Leslie Parker in-residence at Danspace Project
September 26-October 1, 2022**

For Immediate Release, New York, NY, September 20, 2022 – Choreographer **Leslie Parker** will be in residence at Danspace Project from **September 26-October 1**. Parker’s multi-year, multi-city project considers multiple perspectives on improvisation through a Black femme lens. Parker will continue her exploration into Danspace’s archives focusing on its history with Black movement improvisation, its site in St. Mark’s Church in-the-Bowery, and its location in New York City’s East Village. Parker divides her time between New York City and Minnesota and cites forms derived from African Diaspora as formative aesthetics in her approach to improvisation. Parker’s residency at Danspace is in support of the world premiere of *Divination Tools: imagine home* at the Walker Art Center May 11-13, 2023 and the New York City premiere at Danspace Project in Fall 2023 (dates to be announced).

Residencies, artist cohorts, institutional partnerships, and new commissions shape this fall season at Danspace Project. Residencies at Danspace are provided to support artists’ development, research, and new work. Danspace began exploring new models for residencies in 2015, including a residency designed with *the skeleton architecture*, a collective of “Black womyn and gender non-conforming artists engaged in embodied research to support African Diasporic experiences” who were first brought together by writer/curator Eva Yaa Asantewaa as part of Platform 2016: *Lost and Found*. Leslie Parker was an original artist/member of the collective whose performances and subsequent residency first introduced Parker to Danspace’s curatorial team.

Danspace’s conversations with Parker began in 2019 before pandemic shutdowns and delays. Beyond Parker’s time in residence at Danspace this fall and next, Parker has been in discussions with the curatorial team over the last three years. She has also interviewed curators, artists, and scholars who have worked with Danspace and St. Mark’s Church over the years.

“Leslie Parker’s research into Black improvisational dance histories intersects with Danspace’s history of improvisation and movement experimentation,” says Judy Hussie-Taylor, Danspace Project’s Executive Director and Chief Curator. “Ishmael Houston-Jones, one of the great improvisers in contemporary dance, has a long history with Danspace beginning with his curation of *Parallels* here in 1982. Houston-Jones is one of the artists Leslie has been interviewing as part of her research.”

Parker's time at Danspace Project will include an exploration into Danspace and the cultural history of the East Village from the 1970s to the present day. Parker's research was initially inspired by the acclaimed, late performance artist Laurie Carlos, who moved from the Lower East Side to Minnesota in the 1990s, where Parker first met Carlos.

"Reflecting on divinity and lineage, *Divination Tools: imagine home* is the latest iteration of my epic work *Call to Remember*," writes Parker. "*Imagine home* features a powerful collective of Black musicians, visual artists, and femme dance artists and draws from Blackness in music, dance, and storytelling in real-time."

Her Danspace research, Parker explains, "is a way to link conversations about black bodies, improvisation, and a way to address complexity and multiplicity around improvisation and how artists are writing themselves into the future."

Divination Tools: imagine home is co-commissioned by Walker Art Center (MN), Pillsbury House Theatre (MN), Pangea World Theater (MN), Danspace Project (NYC), and Counterpulse (SF).

About the Artist

A St. Paul, MN Rondo, native, Leslie Parker is a dance artist with home art bases in Brooklyn, NY and the Twin Cities, MN. As a dance artist/maker, improviser, performer, director, collaborator, and educator, she is a 2022 McKnight Fellow and her work is awarded by National Dance Project (2021), National Performance Network Creation Fund (2020), National Performance Network Development fund (2021), National Performance Network community engagement fund (2021), and National Performance Network Storytelling & Documentation fund (2021). She is an Outstanding Performance Bessie Award recipient and an inaugural Jerome Hill Foundation Artist Fellow. Growing up in the Rondo community rooted her in socially engaged art and led her to hold a BFA in Choreography and Modern dance technique from Esther Boyer College of Music & Dance (Temple University) and an MFA in dance from Hollins University in partnership with the Künstlerhaus Mousonturm, The Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts and The Dresden Frankfurt Company in Frankfurt, Germany. Parker's original works have been presented by New York Live Arts, HarlemStages EMoves13, Thelma Hill Performing Arts Center, Tribeca Performing Art Center, University of Minnesota Dance, Southern Theater, Pillsbury House Theatre, Pangea World Theater, Walker Art Center, and Painted Bride Arts Center.

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Media Contact

Lily Cohen
Communications Director
(212) 674.5856
lily@danspaceproject.org