



# DANCE VICTORIA

THE WORLD'S BEST DANCE

111-2750 Quadra Street,  
Victoria BC Canada V8T 4E8

**DanceVictoria.com**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Chrystal Dance Prize Recipients Receive \$47,000 to Support International Projects**

*VICTORIA, B.C.* - Since 2010, Dance Victoria has awarded more than \$428,000 through its annual [Chrystal Dance Prize - Projects](#) to support western Canadian dance artists collaborating with international artists. Dance Victoria is excited to announce the recent recipients of this award, committing \$47,000 in commissioning support in 2023.

**Julia Taffe** of [Aeriosa Dance Society](#) in Vancouver receives \$22,000 to support site-specific vertical dance performances and public engagement activities with Croatian choreographer Marija Scekic of Histeria Nova Artistic Organization. Aeriosa is a vertical dance company that merges choreography, environment, and theatre with elements of rock climbing and contemporary performance art. Aeriosa's new projects, partially funded through the CDP, will be performed in Croatia at the Histeria Nova's Biennale of New Movement and in Canada at Aeriosa's Vancouver International Vertical Dance Summit from 2023 to 2025, with dance artists from the United Kingdom, France, Greece, and Canada.

**Shion Skye Carter** from Vancouver receives \$15,000 towards the second creation phase of *Threading Echoes*, a performance embodying the Japanese craft of Shifu (cloth woven from washi paper). Themes of community, belonging, and connecting to ancestral knowledge intersect through gestural tableaus and shadows in the work. Carter will collaborate with choreographer/performer Mayumi Lashbrook, and co-choreographer/dramaturg Ayumi Hamada in Ino, Japan. At the Kakishi-Seishi farm and artist residency, Carter and Lashbrook will learn the process to grow the kozo plant, make it into washi paper, and twist the paper into kami-ito (paper thread) which is woven into Shifu. Carter hopes to carry the disappearing cultural craft of Shifu away from extinction and bring the art form forward for younger generations to experience in a contemporary context.

**Amber Downie-Back** from Victoria, a resident dance artist at both Impulse Theatre and Dance Victoria Studios, receives \$10,000 towards the project, '*on the nature of...*' This interdisciplinary work explores themes of memory and nostalgia, while incorporating interactive and digital elements with dance performance and



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sound. Downie-Back will collaborate with Emilie van der Waals, a Netherlands-based contemporary dancer and choreographer from Sint Maarten, and sound designer Angus Gaffney, to push movement and sound in collaborative contexts with other media such as digital and video art.

#### **About Julia Taffe**

Julia Taffe (she/her) is the founder and artistic director of [Aeriosa Dance Society](#), a B.C.-based vertical dance company which uses rope and harness systems to dance on earth, in air, in nature, on architecture and on the stage. Aeriosa has created unique performances for numerous locations including Stanley Park, Pacific Rim National Park, UBC Botanical Gardens, Stawamus Chief Mountain (Squamish BC), Taipei City Hall, Cirque du Soleil Headquarters (Montreal), Vancouver Library Square, The Banff Centre, Scotiabank Dance Centre, and the L Tower (Toronto). In 2016, Julia was the Dancer-in-Residence at Memorial University and Gros Morne National Park. She received the Isadora Award for Excellence in Choreography from The Dance Centre in 2018, and the Canadian Dance Assembly Innovation Award in 2012.

#### **About Shion Skye Carter & Mayumi Lashbrook**

[Shion Skye Carter](#) (she/they) is a dance artist originally from Tajimi, Japan, who lives in Vancouver. Through choreography, heritage artforms and digital and sculptural objects, Carter's work explores facets of her intersectional identity as a lens to process the world around her. Carter has performed her work at The Dance Centre (Vancouver), Tangente (Montréal), Kinetic Studio (Halifax), and Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto). She has interpreted the works of artists such as Vanessa Goodman (Action at a Distance), Wen Wei Dance, and Ziyian Kwan (Dumb Instrument Dance). She holds a BFA from Simon Fraser University, and she was the recipient of the Iris Garland Emerging Choreographer Award in 2021.

Mayumi Lashbrook (she/her) is a Japanese Canadian settler in Tkaronto (Toronto) seeking to challenge and rectify oppression through innovative, introspective, and inclusive dance theatre. She is the Co-Artistic Director of Hamilton-based Aeris Körper, a Co-Artistic Associate of CanAsian Dance, mentee of Denise Fujiwara of Fujiwara Dance Inventions, and practitioner of Dreamwalker Dance's Conscious Bodies methodology.



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### **About Amber Downie-Back**

**Amber Downie-Back** (she/they) is an interdisciplinary movement artist who lives and creates on the unceded territory of the lək wəŋən Peoples. Interested in integrating dance in collaborative contexts with other media, such as sound and video art, Amber works frequently with sound artist Angus Gaffney. Amber's practice views the reflection of physical spaces in the digital world through transformative experiences that are at once intimate, communal, and atmospheric. Creatively, Amber focuses on Murphy's Law and the contrasting adage Yphrum, exploring the many combinations of what can and will be, investigating perceived boundaries between process/product, and performer/audience. Amber has a BFA Contemporary Dance from Concordia University and has performed professionally in programs such as Festival TransAmériques, among others, and has had creations exhibited at Toronto Harbourfront Centre, by Impulse Theatre, and more.

### **About the Chrystal Dance Prize**

The **Chrystal Dance Prize** is generated from a bequest made by Dance Victoria patron, Dr. Betty "Chrystal" Kleiman, to the Victoria Foundation. The Chrystal Dance Prize – *Projects* supports exceptional dance research and/or creation between a Western Canadian dance artist, collective or company and an international dance artist (interpreter or choreographer). A committee of dance professionals is assembled each year to select the recipients. The prize recipients may also have the opportunity for a two-week residency at Dance Victoria Studios. Recent Chrystal Dance Prize winners include David Ferguson, Stacey Horton, Dancers of Damelahamid, Kidd Pivot (*Revisor*), Ballet BC (*Romeo + Juliet*), OURO Collective, Ralph Escamillan and Kayla Henry.

### **About Dance Victoria**

Dance Victoria brings the *World's Best Dance* to the Royal Theatre and supports the development of new dance for the international stage from its studios in Quadra Village. As a non-profit charitable society, Dance Victoria operates with the mission to promote the appreciation of dance by developing and presenting diverse local, Canadian, and international artists, and by engaging the community in the celebration of dance. [DanceVictoria.com](http://DanceVictoria.com)

### **For photos of the prize recipients, contact:**

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