



BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC PETER JAY SHARP BUILDING 30 LAFAYETTE AVENUE BROOKLYN, NY 11217—1486

BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music) Announces Details on DanceAfrica 2024 with Cameroon, ‘Little Africa,’ in the Spotlight

The nation’s largest African dance festival returns with a panoramic exploration of Cameroon’s rich heritage, featuring Cie La Calebasse, on the Howard Gilman Opera House stage, May 24–27

Celebrating Community and Culture: Experience Free Events, Ancestral Honors, Artistic Presentations from Dance to Cinema, and the Unmissable DanceAfrica Bazaar

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor

DanceAfrica 2024

The Origin of Communities / A Calabash of Cultures

Artistic Director Abdel R. Salaam

The Billie's Youth Arts Academy Dance Ensemble

DanceAfrica Spirit Walkers

Women Of The Calabash

Lighting Design by Al Crawford

Sound Design by David Margolin Lawson

Costume Design by Wunmi Olaiya

Set Design by Jasiri AU Kafele

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House

Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Ave

Fri, May 24 at 7:30pm

Sat, May 25 at 2pm & 7pm

Sun, May 26 at 3pm

Tickets start at \$34.50 fees included (half-price for ages 16 & under)

Brooklyn, NY/April 4, 2024—BAM announces details on its 2024 DanceAfrica festival, *The Origin of Communities / A Calabash of Cultures*, a dynamic celebration of the rich tapestry of African arts and culture, with a focus on the traditions and contemporary innovations of

Cameroon, affectionately known as "Little Africa." For its 47th year, DanceAfrica 2024 invites the community to experience a multi-faceted exploration of dance, music, film, and art.

Cameroon, often called "Little Africa," is a vibrant mosaic of history, culture, and ecology. Home to the ancient Baka people and various indigenous groups, it boasts a rich blend of oral traditions and a deep connection to nature. From lush rainforests to vast savannas, its landscapes mirror Africa's diversity. Linguistically rich in Baka, English, French, and other indigenous languages, Cameroon mirrors the continent's cultural richness. At its heart is the calabash, symbolizing utility and artistry, deeply ingrained in daily life and expressive dance traditions. In dance, the calabash adds rhythmic sounds and dynamic movements, embodying Cameroon's vibrant heritage and connecting with its roots.

DanceAfrica 2024 Performances

The festival's anchor performance, *The Origin of Communities / A Calabash of Cultures*, under the artistic vision of **Abdel R. Salaam**, welcomes the illustrious Cameroonian dance company, **Cie La Calebasse**, founded by acclaimed choreographer and dancer, **Merlin Nyakam**. Cie la Calebasse is renowned for its captivating performances that blend traditional African dance with contemporary flair. The company will present an array of traditional Cameroonian dances and music, showcasing pieces such as *Mangambeu*, *Ambas-Bay*, *Bikutsi*, and *Bend Skin*.

This performance fosters a unique collaboration with the **DanceAfrica Spirit Walkers** and The **Billie's Youth Arts Academy Dance Ensemble**, enriched by the intricate sounds of the **Women Of The Calabash**, an ensemble known for their mesmerizing polyphonic sound created by playing calabashes of various sizes. Together, they showcase the diversity and creativity of Cameroon's musical and dance traditions. The program is further distinguished by its homage to ancestral legacies through the memorial tribute to the ancestors and elders. A traditional libation ceremony on the steps of the Peter Jay Sharp Building precedes the Friday, May 24 performance, at approximately 6:30pm.

The artistic vision of the show is brought to life with lighting design by **Al Crawford**, music and sound design by **David Margolin Lawson**, costume designs by **Wunmi Olaiya**, and set design by **Jasiri AU Kafele** creating an immersive experience that celebrates the depth of Cameroonian culture. Tickets start at \$25 and are available for purchase at [BAM.org](https://bam.org).

DanceAfrica 2024 Festival

BAM's longest-running program and the nation's largest festival of African dance, ignites with a procession of community and cultural events across Brooklyn, engaging partnerships with key local institutions including **The Billie Holiday Theatre** (formerly Restoration Arts), **Mark Morris Dance Center**, **Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservatory**, **Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA)**, and the **African Film Festival** in Manhattan. This borough-wide engagement encapsulates the soul of Brooklyn, fostering a vibrant mosaic of interaction and celebration among its diverse communities.

The festivities extend beyond performance to include the DanceAfrica Bazaar, a bustling outdoor marketplace that transforms BAM's corner of Fort Greene, Brooklyn into a nexus of African and diasporic creativity and commerce. Integral to the festival are engaging dance classes that open the floor to enthusiasts of all ages, fostering a hands-on appreciation for African dance traditions. This year, in partnership with MoCADA, DanceAfrica presents a visual arts installation featuring a newly commissioned work by Cameroonian artist Salifou Lindou, and a podcast live-listening experience that centers Cameroon's journey to independence, adding a layer of contemporary African art to the festival's diverse offerings. The cinematic companion FilmAfrica, curated by the African Film Festival, returns with a showcase of stories from across the continent, rounding out the celebration that extends beyond performance to embrace the full spectrum of African cultural expression and its diasporic connections.

This array of events transforms DanceAfrica into a vibrant celebration of African culture, fostering a space for learning, appreciation, and community engagement. For the complete DanceAfrica 2024 Festival line-up, to purchase tickets, and to register for free events visit [BAM.org](https://bam.org).

For press information, contact Cynthia Tate at ctate@bam.org or 718.724.8022.

Press Images: Download high-resolution images [here](#).

Programming Calendar

May 7—31	"Le course 2"
May 18	Tribute to the Ancestors
May 18	Community Day
May 23 –27	The Memorial Room
May 24 –27	<i>The Origin of Communities / A Calabash of Cultures</i>
May 24—30	FilmAfrica
May 25 –27	DanceAfrica 2024 Bazaar
May 25	DanceAfrica Community Class
May 25	Late Night Dance Party with DJ YB
May 26	Council of Elders Roundtable: Legacy & Preservation
May 27	DanceAfrica Family Class
May 27	DanceAfrica Physically Integrated Movement Class
May 27	DanceAfrica Masterclass
Ongoing	DanceAfrica and the BAM Hamm Archives

About the Events

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Tribute to the Ancestors

Sat, May 18 at 10am

Location TBD

Free

Under the guidance of artistic director Abdel R. Salaam and the DanceAfrica Council of Elders, this traditional tribute to those who have passed features music and drumming, dance performances, and a libation ceremony conducted by the Council of Elders.

Community Day

In association with The Billie's Youth Arts Academy

Sat, May 18 at 1pm

Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Plaza (1368 Fulton St)

Free

DanceAfrica 2024 gets started with our annual Restoration DanceAfrica Community Day Kickoff. This year's program celebrates The Billie Holiday Theatre's Youth Arts Academy's 27th year participating in DanceAfrica. The event includes performances by special guest artists, current Youth Arts Academy students, Pre-Professional Training Program members, and more!

The Memorial Room

Thu, May 23, 6pm-10pm

Fri, May 24, 1pm-10pm

Sat, May 25, 1pm-10pm

Sun, May 26, 12pm-6pm

Mon, May 27, 12pm-6pm

Devitre Lounge (Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Avenue)

Free and open to the public

The Memorial Room is dedicated to preserving the tradition of paying homage to the ancestors of DanceAfrica's past and present and the ancestors of the visiting companies. Curated by Mama Linda Evans and the DanceAfrica Council of Elders.

DanceAfrica 2024 Bazaar

Sat, May 25, 12pm—10pm

Sun, May 26, 12pm—8pm

Mon; May 27, 12pm—8pm

Ashland Pl/ Lafayette Ave

Free

Each year, the free outdoor DanceAfrica Bazaar serves as a gathering place for diverse crowds from all five boroughs of New York and the tri-state area, attracting an estimated 30,000 people throughout the weekend. The Bazaar includes nearly 200 local and international vendors, transforming the streets surrounding BAM into a global marketplace of African, Caribbean, and African American food, fashion, artifacts, jewelry, and crafts. *The New York Times* has called it "a colorful kickoff for the summer street festival season."

Council of Elders Roundtable: Legacy & Preservation

With members of the DanceAfrica Council of Elders

Sun, May 26 at 12:30pm

The Adam Space/BAMcafé (Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Ave)

Free with registration, first come, first served

DanceAfrica's Council of Elders has been an instrumental part of the festival since its inception. In this roundtable discussion, members of the Council discuss the importance of their work to create connections between the ancestors, the art and culture of Africa, its diaspora, and the community that gathers at BAM each year. In conjunction with the ongoing DanceAfrica Oral History Project, this conversation serves as a gathering point and an opportunity for the DanceAfrica community to listen, learn, and engage. Visit this [link](#) to register.

DANCE CLASSES

DanceAfrica Community Class

Co-presented by BAM and Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy

Sat. May 25 at 11am

Brooklyn Bridge Park (Pier 6 Liberty Lawn)

Free with registration

All ages

Caregivers and children alike deepen their engagement with DanceAfrica in this fun-filled, outdoor workshop led by BAM teaching artist and performance art education scholar Dánice Jones learning rhythms and movement from Cameroon. Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Visit this [link](#) to register.

DanceAfrica Family Class

Co-presented by BAM and Mark Morris Dance Group

Mon, May 27 at 10am

Duffy Studio (Mark Morris Dance Center, 3 Lafayette Ave)

Tickets are \$12 for adults; \$15 family of two; \$20 family of three; and \$25 family of four

All ages

DanceAfrica invites families to explore the fundamentals of Cameroonian dance movement and music in this fun-filled, hands-on workshop led by a member of the Cie La Calebasse dance company. Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Visit this [link](#) to register.

DanceAfrica Physically Integrated Movement Class

Co-presented by BAM and Mark Morris Dance Group

Led by Pat Hall

Mon, May 27 at 11am

Studio E Mark Morris Studio (Mark Morris Dance Center, 3 Lafayette Ave)
Tickets are \$12 for In-Person; \$10 for Virtual

Dancer, choreographer, and teacher Pat Hall leads this inclusive, interactive class designed for persons with or without disabilities. Choose to participate in person at the Mark Morris Dance Center or through a livestream, and discover how dance forms from Cameroon celebrate community and aspects of daily life, providing a unique window into the culture, history, and traditions of its people. Visit this [link](#) to register.

For adults, all levels of experience are welcome. When you register, we invite you to share how we can make this class as accessible to you as possible and any other information that will help us best support your experience.

DanceAfrica Masterclass

Co-presented by BAM and Mark Morris Dance Group
Mon, May 27 at 12:30pm
Duffy Studio (Mark Morris Dance Center, 3 Lafayette Ave)
Tickets are \$12 for In-Person

A member of this year's visiting company, Cie La Calebasse, leads this immersive workshop introducing participants to Cameroonian rhythmic traditions and movement styles. For intermediate to advanced dancers. Visit this [link](#) to register.

DANCE PARTY

Late Night Dance Party with DJ YB

Sat, May 25 at 10pm
The Adam Space/BAMcafe (Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Ave)
Free

Keep the celebration going after hours with DJ YB, DanceAfrica's resident DJ, who brings a mix of Afrobeat, funk, soul, rock, jazz, and hip-hop stylings to the dance floor. Called "The General of Afrobeats," he has played in Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, London, Paris, and elsewhere around the globe.

VISUAL ARTS

"Le course 2" (2024)

Salifou Lindou
Curated and commissioned for BAM DanceAfrica 2024 by The Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA)
May 7—31
Dorothy W. Levitt Lobby (Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Ave)

Located along the escalator wall
Free

Salifou Lindou's "La course 2," created for DanceAfrica 2024, explores the perceived conflict between notions of challenge and play. The mixed-media work, done in acrylic, pastel, and collage on canvas, depicts a scene of running and playing, with gestures that express intense determination. The two shapes dance across the canvas, evoking momentum and urgency, and seem to merge into one, symbolizing the unity of the individual working to surpass past efforts.

As a companion piece [MoCADA Digital Presents: The Independents | Cameroon](#), a dynamic podcast centering the voices of political leaders and historians, along with the potent music that soundtracked Cameroon's journey to independence.

FILM

FilmAfrica

BAM Rose Cinemas (30 Lafayette Ave)

May 24—30

Tickets are \$16 per screening for adults; \$11 (seniors & veterans); \$8 (members levels 1-3)

This cinematic companion to the annual DanceAfrica celebration showcases the best new narrative, documentary, and short films from across Africa and the diaspora, with a special focus on films from, and about, Cameroon. Curated by the African Film Festival.

Muna Moto + The Many Moods of Muna Moto

Fri, May 24 at 7pm

Muna Moto (1975) Dir. Jean-Pierre Dikongue-Pipa

Ngando and Ndomé share an extremely perfect love, but tradition demands a dowry be paid for Ndomé's hand in marriage that Ngando, an orphan, cannot afford. Forced to ask family for assistance, Ngando finds himself at the mercy of his uncle's lust and greed in this masterpiece of Cameroonian cinema about the power of tradition in the pursuit of love. *In French with English subtitles*

The Many Moods of Muna Moto (1975) Dir. Mohamed Challouf

This short companion film features commentary on Muna Moto by director Jean-Pierre Dikongué Pipa and cinema critic and filmmaker Férid Boughérid. *In French with English subtitles*

The Colonial Misunderstanding (2004) Dir. Jean-Marie Téo

Sat, May 25 at 2pm

Germany's genocidal war against the Herero people in Namibia, which lasted from 1904 until 1908, strikingly foreshadowed the policies of the Nazi regime. *Colonial Misunderstanding* offers a provocative picture of the relatively short but horrific colonial history of Germany in Africa—specifically, its attempts to colonize parts of the continent through religion and trade. *In English, French, and German with English subtitles*

Dent Pour Dent (2022) Dir. Ottis Ba Mamadou
Sat, May 25 at 4pm

In this comedic drama, Idrissa lives in the suburbs of Dakar, Senegal. As a result of budgetary restrictions imposed by the IMF, then headed by Dominique Strauss-Kahn, he lost his job as a civil servant. Since then, Idrissa has been looking for work, without success. His pride as an African man is all the more affected by the fact that he is now entirely dependent on his wife, Viviane, who somehow manages to support the family through her medical practice. Aminata (Idrissa and Viviane's daughter) and Moussa, two young students in love with each other, also see their lives disrupted by the economic situation imposed on the country. After yet another humiliation, Idrissa, who holds Strauss-Kahn responsible for his misfortune, decides to go and see a marabout to prepare his revenge. *In French with English subtitles*

Banel & Adama (2023) Dir. Ramata Toulaye-Sy
Sat, May 25 at 6pm

Banel and Adama, fiercely in love, long for a home of their own. The couple decide that they will live away from their families and that Adama will reject his blood duty to become chief of his village. But when Adama informs the village council of his intention, the whole community is disrupted—and the rain that is supposed to come doesn't. *In Pulaar and French with English subtitles*

Les Saignantes (The Bloodettes) (2005) Dir. Jean-Pierre Bekolo
Sat, May 25 at 8pm

After an eight-year hiatus, maverick Cameroonian director Jean-Pierre Bekolo returned with his magnum opus, *Les Saignantes*. This superbly photographed, stylishly edited, and tastefully scored film centers on two young femme fatales who set out to rid a futuristic country of its corrupt and sex-obsessed crop of powerful men. Young, fashionable, and lethal, the pair are on a mission to change the destiny of their country. Reveling in its display of excess and committed to the aesthetics of cool, *Les Saignantes* marked one of the very first science fiction films to come out of Africa. *In French with English subtitles*

La Grotte Sacree (2023) Dir. Daniel Minlo, Cyrille Masso
Sun, May 26 at 2pm

In the heart of the Cameroonian Kingdom of Mabunos, a crisis is brewing after the king is suddenly poisoned. The crown prince of the kingdom, alongside a prophetic soothsayer, sets out to remedy his kingdom's spiritual ills in this enchanting, animated tale about ancestral heritage, friendship, tradition, and loyalty. *In French with English subtitles*

Le Spectre de Boko Haram (2023) Dir. Cyrielle Raingou
Sun, May 26 at 4pm

In the Cameroonian village of Kolofata, on the Nigerian border, the military has been deployed to protect villagers from attacks by the notorious terrorist group Boko Haram. Filmmaker Cyrielle Raingou—herself a native of far-north Cameroon—documents the lives of three children as they are forced to navigate the realities of growing up under the constant threat of violence in this profoundly moving, deeply affecting debut feature. *In French, Hausa with English subtitles*

Sadrack (2022) Dir. Narcisse Wandji
Sun, May 26 at 6pm

In an attempt to navigate his father Bayo's increasingly poor memory due to Alzheimer's, Franck hires Rachel, a student, to act as a companion and caretaker to his father. Despite initial challenges, Rachel forms a special bond with the ailing man, helping Franck finally come to terms with his father's condition in this moving drama from director Narcisse Wandji. *In French with English subtitles*

Shorts Program: Cameroon

Sunday, May 26 at 8:30pm

A collection of disparate short films created by Cameroonian directors from 1992 to 2023 offers a kaleidoscopic view of artistic styles and themes, from social unrest to the power of legends and art.

Grandma's Grammar (1996) Dir. Jean-Pierre Bekolo

In an informal meeting, the filmmaker receives an unforgettable definition of cinema from the late African film pioneer, Djibril Diop Mambéty. *In French with English subtitles*

Mister Foot (1992) Dir. Jean-Marie Teno

The story of a young man who needs an uncooperative public servant's signature to enter college, *Mister Foot* is a light-hearted look at Cameroon's national obsession: soccer. *In French with English subtitles*

Mama dan so que sorriso / Mother Just a Smile (2023) Dir. Cyrielle Raingou
A deceased mother lives on in the blowing wind, and the rising tide of a full-moon night, in a story about a mother-daughter relationship that transcends space and time while highlighting Black womanhood and struggle in Portugal. *In Creole and Portuguese with English subtitles*

Mboa Matanda (2023) Dir. Jules Kalla Eyango
Jules Kalla Eyango adapts the visual language and kinetic energy of anime to illuminate African themes and traditions in the tale of a warrior's most momentous battle. *In French with English subtitles*

You Will Be My Ally (2012) Dir. Rosine Mfetgo Mbakam
A Gabonese woman intercepted at the airport in Brussels is subjected to a long interrogation concerning a problem with her papers. *In French with English subtitles*

Nayola (2022) Dir. José Miguel Ribeiro
Mon, May 27 at 2pm

In this gorgeously animated family saga from director José Miguel Ribeiro, the lives of three generations of Angolan women intertwine across past and present as a violent 25-year-long civil war simmers in the background. Nayola goes in search of her missing husband at the height of the war. Yara has become a rebellious teenager and a provocative rapper who uses her music to promote social change. And all the while, Lelena tries to keep Yara's activism off the police's radar. *In Portuguese and Kimbundu with English subtitles*

Shimoni (2022) Dir. Angela Wanjiku Wamai
Mon, May 27 at 4pm

After seven years in prison, 35-year-old Geoffrey is released into the care of a Catholic priests' compound in Shimoni, a small, sleepy village in rural Kenya—a place he knows all too well as “the pit.” A revered English teacher before his time inside, Geoffrey now does farmyard chores, attends required church services, and keeps his distance from other residents. Then a man with a distinctive patch of white hair appears: Weru has haunted Geoffrey's dreams for decades. Angela Wanjiku Wamai's gripping directorial debut explores how memory and emotion seize control of the body, which can speak when words fail. *In English, Swahili, and Kikuyu with English subtitles*

L'Accord (2022) Dir. Lea Malle Frank Thierry
Sun, May 27 at 6:30pm

Flora, a girl who lives in a dangerous neighborhood, is drugged and raped at a party organized by her boyfriend, Cédric, who lives in an affluent area. To avoid a scandal, Cédric's family offers Flora's parents a large sum of money for an agreement of confidentiality. Director Frank Thierry Léa Malle probes issues of class, poverty, and injustice in contemporary Cameroonian society. *In French with English subtitles*

Shorts Program: National Traveling Series

Monday, May 27 at 8:30pm

Questions of identity, sexuality, privacy, and family are illuminated in a collection of contemporary short films by four directors based in Ghana, France, Egypt, and the US.

Confirmation (2023) Dir. Nana Duffuor (Ghana/US)

Amid rising social and political pressure in Ghana, a God-fearing mother must confront her fear of accepting her son's sexual identity. *In English and Twi with English subtitles*

Grace (2022) Dir. Johanna Makabi (France)

Eight-year-old Grace hates her neighborhood, and she hates cheerleading. One day, she decides to join her father in space. *In French with English subtitles*

He's Dead Now (2022) Dir. Tarek El Sherbeny (Egypt)

Hazem is distraught when family secrets are made public after his mother decides to expose his late father's sexual affairs during his funeral. *In Arabic with English subtitles*

Mother's Tongue (2022) Dir. D. Wilmos Paul (US)

An African immigrant teenager ashamed of his accent enrolls in a creative writing club, thinking he can make it through the semester without speaking—but then is confronted with his worst fear. *In English and French with English subtitles*

Xalé (2022) Dir. Moussa Sène Absa

Mon, May 28 at 8:15pm

"A story of female rage that is both resonantly contemporary and as old as the hills."—*Variety*

Schoolgirl Awa is happily living her teenage years alongside her rebellious twin brother, Adama, who dreams of Europe. When their grandmother dies, their aunt Fatou and uncle Atoumane promise to marry to keep the family together. But Fatou does not love Atoumane, who responds to rejection with domestic brutality. Boldly punctuated with musical choruses, the film is the third installment in director Moussa Sène Absa's trilogy focused on women, following *Tableau Ferraille* (1995) and *L'Extraordinaire destin de Madame Brouette* (2002).

***Love During the War* (2005) Dir. Osvalde Lewat-Hallade**

Thu, May 30 at 6pm

Reunited after being separated by the Congo-Kinshasa war, Aziza and her husband are rebuilding family life with their four children. But Aziza, a journalist, is haunted by the horrors other women suffered during the war. Compelled to discover what has happened to a little girl she used to care for, she returns to Eastern Congo to find that the legacy of violence continues. Filmmaker Osvalde Lewat-Hallade illuminates the continuing cost of violent conflict in her docudrama. In English and French with English subtitles

***Africa Is Back* (2010) Dirs. Salem Brahimi, Chergui Kharroub**

Thu, May 30 at 8:15pm

In 1969, the first Pan-African Cultural Festival was held in Algiers, celebrating the cultures of Africa while also acknowledging hopes and struggles for independence across the continent. Four decades later, in July 2009, the second Pan-African Cultural Festival returned to the streets of Algiers, heralding what it called the African Renaissance. In French, Arabic, and English with English subtitles

DanceAfrica and the BAM Hamm Archives

Ongoing

LevyArchive.Bam.org

Discover the BAM Hamm Archives' ongoing mission to preserve the vast legacy of DanceAfrica through projects focused on oral histories and recordings. This is an ongoing initiative as part of the Shelby White & Leon Levy BAM Digital Archive.

About the artists

About Cie La Calebasse

Founded in 2001 by renowned Cameroonian choreographer Merlin Nyakam, Cie La Calebasse is a dynamic artistic ensemble specializing in afro-contemporary works. Their groundbreaking productions, including *Récréation Primitive* and *Liberté d'Expression*, explore themes of ethnicity, tradition, and freedom. With a diverse cast from Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and France, each performer brings a unique cultural perspective to the stage. Nyakam's visionary choreography, influenced by African spirituality and Japanese culture, has captivated audiences across Paris, France, and Europe. From prestigious venues like Theatre National de Chaillot to international festivals in Japan, London, and Italy, Cie La Calebasse continues to enchant audiences worldwide with its mesmerizing performances and commitment to artistic excellence.

About Women Of The Calabash

Founded in 1978 by the late Madeleine Yayodele Nelson, Women Of The Calabash is a revered performance ensemble blending traditional African, Caribbean, and Black American music with contemporary influences. Led by Yayodele's expertise in vocals, percussion, and shekere mastery, the

group gained acclaim through collaborations with Paul Simon and performances at venues like Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. Recognized for their cultural impact, they have received prestigious awards and have been featured by HBO. As teaching artists for Symphony Space since 1989, the current members, including Joan Ashley, Caren Calder-Adams, Susan Rapalee, and Carole Caru Thompson, uphold the ensemble's legacy of excellence.

About Salifou Lindou

Salifou Lindou, born in Cameroon in 1965, is a self-taught multidisciplinary artist whose work spans installations, sculptures, mixed collages, painting, video, and experimentation with various materials. Co-founder of the design collective Kapsiki Circle, Lindou focuses on public art and youth workshops in Douala. His dynamic signature portraits capture the duality of human existence, exploring themes ranging from daily urban life to political instability. Lindou's international recognition includes participation in prestigious events like the 1-54 London Art Fair and representation at the Venice Biennale. Based in Douala, Lindou's first solo European exhibition will be held at the Ettore Fico Museum in Turin, Italy, in spring 2024.

About Abdel R. Salaam

Abdel R. Salaam is the Artistic Director of DanceAfrica, the Executive Artistic Director, and Co-Founder of Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, established in 1981, and a critically acclaimed choreographer. Born in Harlem, he has served as a dancer, teacher, and performing artist on five continents throughout his 56-year career in the dance and theater worlds. He has received numerous awards and fellowships for excellence in dance and dance theater, including the 2017 Bessie Award for Outstanding Production of *The Healing Sevens* at DanceAfrica and the 2019 American Dance Guild Lifetime Achievement Award in Dance. Under his artistic direction and leadership, DanceAfrica was honored with the 2021 Bessie Award for Outstanding Service to the Field of Dance. Abdel continues to dedicate his life's work to the healing and empowerment of us all.

About The Billie's Youth Arts Academy Dance Ensemble

This DanceAfrica favorite returns to the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House for the 27th year. The ensemble serves as a symbol of youth involvement in preserving African heritage, celebrating both ancestral roots and the modern-day community.

About the DanceAfrica Spirit Walkers

The DanceAfrica Spirit Walkers was founded in 2016 by Baba Abdel R. Salaam to theatrically honor the ancestors of Africa and its diaspora through the annual DanceAfrica Memorial Tribute, originally developed by the late Baba Chuck Davis. The group comprises professional dance artists and musicians from the RestorationART alumni and Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, melding African vernacular forms with modern, hip-hop, and contemporary dance. The DanceAfrica Spiritwalkers is a division of Forces of Nature Dance Theatre.

About Pat Hall

Pat Hall is an internationally acclaimed dancer, choreographer, and teacher whose style is most influenced by African, Caribbean, and contemporary American dance. Her interest in the ceremonial and ritual practices of indigenous peoples most influences her choreographic work. She has performed at the Joyce Theater, Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, Dance Theater Workshop, BAM, and Jacob's Pillow, as well as in numerous theaters around the world. Pat is an adjunct professor at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.

About Dánice Jones

Dánice Jones is a pioneering dance therapist bringing unique cultural experiences to the community. With her vast skill set of artistic knowledge and mindful self-development, she is dedicated to guiding others to trust the creator within through perspective, way of thinking, and moving. Her extensive background with BAM spans over three decades, having performed and partnered in classrooms as a percussionist, movement researcher, and cultural arts educator. Jones has a Master's and Bachelor's in Psychology and a BFA in dance. She aims to expand the intellectual conversations and pedagogical approaches of arts education while making innovative interventions accessible.

About the African Film Festival

African Film Festival, Inc. (AFF) is dedicated to advancing an enhanced understanding of African culture through the moving image. It offers diverse platforms for the wide distribution of African media through its flagship annual film festival and complementary year-round programming. AFF is committed to increasing visibility and recognition for African media artists by introducing African film and culture to a broad range of audiences in the United States and abroad, bypassing economic, class, and racial barriers. In 1990, AFF's founders established goals that continue to enrich the organization's mission and organizational development: To use African cinema to promote and increase knowledge and understanding of African arts, literature, and culture; To develop an audience for African films; To expand the opportunities for the distribution of African films in the United States and abroad. africanfilmny.org

About The Billie Holiday Theatre

The Obie, AUDELCO, and National Medal for the Arts award-winning Billie Holiday Theatre (The Billie) is a state-of-the-art creative center located at Restoration Plaza in the historic Black cultural mecca of Bedford Stuyvesant, which is home to such artistic luminaries as Lena Horne, Max Roach, Eubie Blake, Stephanie Mills, Ben Vereen, Jay Z, Yasiin Bey, and more. The Billie is the only multi-platform performing arts center with a 22-year-old education program led by, for, and accountable to people of African descent in the heart of the largest African American community in the nation: Central Brooklyn. For 50 years, The Billie has elevated and promoted the critical voices of Black artists and the stories of the complex journey toward freedom for people of African descent that is far from over. thebillieholiday.org

About Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservatory

Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy plays a vital role in creating and energizing this community-focused, world-class urban oasis on the Brooklyn waterfront. A 501(c)3 non-profit, we bring this unique park space to life with more than 500 innovative and engaging educational, cultural, fitness, and recreational programs each year. Our free and low-cost events create new and exciting opportunities for tens of thousands of NYC residents and visitors to learn, grow, and experience all that Brooklyn Bridge Park has to offer. brooklynbridgepark.org

About the DanceAfrica Council of Elders

Since its inception in 1977, DanceAfrica at BAM has grown into America's largest celebration of African and African-American dance, music, and culture. At its core is the Council of Elders, a diverse group of artists and activists who preserve and expand African traditions. Under Chuck Davis's leadership, the Council provided vital support to the festival, guiding every aspect of production. Today, led by Abdel R. Salaam, they continue to uphold this legacy. Each year, DanceAfrica welcomes artists from across the diaspora to showcase traditional and contemporary performances, alongside community events and the famed DanceAfrica bazaar. Through their dedication, the Council of Elders ensures that the vibrant traditions of African culture thrive at DanceAfrica for generations to come.

About Mark Morris Dance Center

Founded in 2001, the Mark Morris Dance Center serves as the home of the Mark Morris Dance Group and a cultural hub for the Brooklyn community. It offers nine fully equipped, column-free dance studios, two locker rooms with lockers and restrooms (one with showers), and a Wellness Center with space and equipment for work with partnering health practitioners, Pilates instructors, and personal trainers. All studios and ancillary spaces are available to rent for a wide range of uses, including rehearsals and events.

The Dance Center offers a diverse range of dance and fitness classes for adults, novice to professional; as well as culturally responsive, inclusive, and non-gendered Youth & Family programs for students of all levels, with and without disabilities, ages 18 months to 18 years that include The School and work with community-based partners. The Dance Center is the flagship site for the internationally acclaimed, research-backed dance classes for people with Parkinson's, Dance for PD. markmorrisdancegroup.org

About the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA)

The Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA) uses art and education as vehicles for social change to celebrate the cultural breadth of Africa and its diaspora and connect the intersectional experiences of Black people around the world. MoCADA creates numerous multidisciplinary opportunities to amplify the work of creators who explore complex issues facing this community, to transform people and neighborhoods near and far.

MoCADA's mission was born in 1999 from the graduate thesis of our founder Laurie Angela Cumbo on the feasibility of an African art museum contributing to the revitalization of neighboring Black communities. Today, MoCADA is more than a museum. MoCADA is a community bridge, advocating for equity and access for underserved residents across multiple sectors (the arts, education, technology, climate change, etc.) while connecting individuals across socioeconomic divides to make the arts integral to neighborhood development and public safety. As an arts incubator, MoCADA has given a platform to over 100 artists from 20+ countries across Africa and its diaspora to inspire creative production and offer pathways that lead to economic mobility. Through interactive learning and cultural preservation, MoCADA also champions the diverse stories of Africa and its descendants to expand the narrative, dispel misconceptions, and foster safe spaces for cross-cultural exchange. mocada.org. mocada.org

Credits

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Leadership support for BAM Access Programs provided by the Jerome L. Greene Foundation

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Leadership support for dance at BAM and BAM Education programs provided by The SHS Foundation

Leadership support for dance at BAM provided by The Harkness Foundation for Dance

Leadership support for the BAM Hamm Archives and BAM Film, Community, and Education programs provided by The Thompson Family Foundation

Leadership support for the BAM Hamm Archives provided by Charles J. & Irene F. Hamm

Leadership support for the Shelby White & Leon Levy BAM Digital Archive provided by the Leon Levy Foundation

Leadership support for BAM Education programs provided by The Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation

Leadership support for virtual programming at BAM provided by the Robert and Mercedes Eichholz Foundation

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Leadership support for BAM Visual Art provided by Toby Devan Lewis (in memoriam)

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Major support for programs in the Lepercq Cinema is provided by The Lepercq Charitable Foundation

Major support for BAM Education programs provided by: Constans Culver Foundation; The FAR Fund; The Pinkerton Foundation; Tiger Baron Foundation; The Emily Davie and Joseph S. Kornfeld Foundation; and Joseph LeRoy and Ann C. Warner Fund

The BAM facilities are owned by the City of New York and benefit from public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs with support from Mayor Eric Adams; the New York City Council including Council Speaker Adrienne E. Adams, Councilmember Crystal Hudson, and the Brooklyn Delegation of the Council; and Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso. BAM would also like to thank the Brooklyn Delegations of the New York State Assembly and New York State Senate, Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest, and Senator Andrew Gounardes.

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