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Contact:

Dionne Williams/D. Williams Public Relations
Dionne@dwilliamspr.com
(708) 953-0339

CLICK: VIDEO LINK TO REST. RISE.MOVE.NOURISH. CONTENT:

RED CLAY DANCE COMPANY ANNOUNCES WORLD PREMIERE OF "REST. RISE. MOVE. NOURISH. HEAL."

*****The newest immersive work by Artistic Director Vershawn Sanders-Ward explores through dance the healing and transformational power of reclaiming ancestral traditions of land cultivation creating fertile grounds for healing our bodies and building self-determined communities***

The work is A Journey towards collective healing and reclamation of our spiritual and ancestral relationship to the land

(Chicago, IL) – Red Clay Dance Company will close out its 14th Season with the world premiere of its newest work, **"Rest.Rise.Move.Nourish.Heal.,"** which audiences will have the opportunity to experience on June 8-10, 2023. **Rest. Rise.Move.Nourish.Heal** is a site-responsive dance ritual created by Founder and Artistic Director Vershawn Sanders-Ward and Company in collaboration with composer avery r. young, filmmaker Jovan Landry, Kelley KFLEYE Moseley and Evelyn Danner.

This new work was developed in relation to the urban farm, **ART ON THE FARM in GRANT PARK**, a space stewarded and designed by Erika Allen and Urban Growers Collective. Sanders-Ward visioned this work as "a practice, a process, an uncovering of the beautiful labor of bringing us ALL home to land, reclaiming ancestral cultural traditions, technologies, and tools that can lead to individual and collective healing."

Rest. Rise.Move.Nourish.Heal explores through dance and music how people of color have been disproportionately affected by food apartheid and the racial disparities in black farming. It's an artistic approach of addressing and healing the known inequities and structural racism that exist in the food system and in communities of color by reclaiming and activating time-honored Black/African-Indigenous traditions and technologies that support spiritual fulfillment and physical well-being for people of color. This work reaches towards a DECOLONIZED practice that centers these traditions, technologies, and tools as foundational and righteously healing.



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The work explores the ways that urban agriculture impacts the mental health, spirituality, and collective agency of Black communities. People of Color have ancestral ties to their land—caring for it, nurturing it, loving it, and allowing it to heal their communities.

In development of the newest work, The Touring Company embarked on an extensive creative process, providing the dancers with time, space, support and the exploration of ideas. The creative process included several components, a 4-week creative residency traveling to Trillium Arts in Mars Hill, NC and then to the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor in John's Island, South Carolina in support of experiential research. A Harvesting process studying reaping, threshing, cleaning and gathering of ripe crops from the fields. The harvesting principles learned on the farm grounded dancers and reconnected them with the natural rhythm of the environment. The final step of the creative process was facilitating several "Creating Fertile Grounds for Healing" workshops around the city of Chicago as a part of community engagement, which was a way to ground the creative process for **Rest.Rise.Move. Nourish.Heal.**

"My vision for this work is a practice, a process, an uncovering of the beautiful labor of bringing us ALL home to land, reclaiming ancestral cultural traditions, technologies, and tools that can lead to individual and collective healing. I want the audience to come join us on this journey!" says Sanders-Ward.

Located in the Woodlawn community, Red Clay Dance Company is Chicago's premier professional Afro-contemporary dance company which tours nationally and internationally sharing their stories and "Artivism" (art + activism). In its 14 year history, Red Clay Dance has created and produced award-winning original works that have appeared around the World and has become the home for professional and pre-professional dancers, dance-lovers, and other artists to convene, create, and collaborate together.

The organization houses ***The Red Clay School of Dance*** and ***The Red Clay Dance Youth Ensemble*** which serves as a pipeline for youth in Chicago communities to become thriving professional artists by providing creative and safe spaces of liberation and inspiration. Red Clay Dance Company also provides resources by way of their ***Community Engagement, Education, and Partnerships (CEEP) program*** which offers culturally rich dance education, programming and training to schools and community spaces on Chicago's South Side.

Rest. Rise.Move.Nourish.Heal will take place on June 8-10, 2023 at Art on the Farm, Urban Growers Collective (Grant Park) located 119 E Congress Pkwy, Chicago, IL 60605. Tickets are currently on sale and can be purchased online at www.RedClayDance.com.



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ABOUT THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & FOUNDER

Vershawn Sanders-Ward, is the Founding Artistic Director and CEO of Red Clay Dance Company and is currently a candidate for Dunham Technique Certification. She holds an MFA in Dance from New York University and is the first recipient of BFA in Dance from Columbia College Chicago (Gates Millennium Scholar.). Sanders-Ward is a 2022 Dance/USA Artist Fellow, 2019 Chicago Dancemakers Forum Awardee, a 2019 Harvard Business School Club of Chicago Scholar, a 2017 Dance/USA Leadership Fellow, a 2013 3Arts awardee, and a 2009 Choreography Award from Harlem Stage NYC. In 2015, 2018 and 2020, NewCity Magazine selected Ward as one of the “Players 50, People Who Really Perform for Chicago” and in 2023 was inducted in the NewCity’s “Hall of Fame”.

Her choreography has been presented in Chicago, New York, San Francisco, The Yard at Martha’s Vineyard, and internationally in Toronto, Dakar and Kampala.

COLLABORATORS

Avery R. Young is an award-winning teaching artist who has been an Arts and Public Life Artist-In-Residence at the University of Chicago. In the foreword of his most recent book *neckbone: visual verses* (Northwestern University Press), Theaster Gates called him “one of our greatest living street poets...one of the most important thinkers on the Black experience,” Black Grooves referred to his most recent album *tubman*. (FPE Records) as “brilliant” and “supremely funky.” Young’s poems and essays have been published in Cecil McDonald’s *In The Company of Black*, *The BreakBeat Poets*, *The Golden Shovel Anthology: New Poems Honoring Gwendolyn Brooks*, *AIMPrint*, and other anthologies. His album booker *t. soltreyn*: a race rekkid engages matters of race, gender, and sexuality in America during the Obama Era. Avery’s work in performance, visual text, and sound design has been featured in several exhibitions and theatre festivals---notably *The Hip Hop Theatre Festival*, *The Museum of Contemporary Art*, and *American Jazz Museum*.

Jovan Landry began exploring her passion for the arts in 2008 through personal video blogs, followed by musical production, videography, and digital photography. This creative path transformed her into a well-spoken and confident woman, giving her multiple avenues to share her experiences. The *One-Third Filmmaker*, *One-Third Photographer*, and *One-Third Emcee* realize her impact through media and intentionally create work that reflects an accurate display of her community and the cultures to which she contributes. Each discipline is allowed to blend and inform her creative practice.

K~FLEYE by Kelley D. Moseley creates three dimensional abstract visual art with a heavy influence on futuristic designs. Breaking away from duplicating what is deemed the norm by forging new ground and consistently producing aesthetics with a keen vision towards impeccable quality one item at a time.

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