

2026 SAN FRANCISCO AERIAL ARTS FESTIVAL
IS CO-PRODUCED BY ZACCHO DANCE THEATRE
AND FORT MASON CENTER FOR ARTS & CULTURE

SAN FRANCISCO
**AERIAL ARTS
FESTIVAL**
SEVENTH BIENNIAL

AUG 7
> AUG 9
2026



FORT
MASON
CENTER
FOR ARTS
& CULTURE

ZACCHO
DANCE THEATRE

The 2026 San Francisco Aerial Arts Festival is generously supported by Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture, San Francisco Grants for the Arts, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Distracted Globe Foundation, Terry Sendgraff Scholarship Fund, JKW Foundation, Zellerbach Family Fund, California Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund and Zaccho's community of generous individual donors.

COWELL THEATER SHOWCASE

Friday, Saturday August 7th* & 8th

8:00 PM

Featuring: ARMA, Joey the Tiger, Ron Oppenheimer, Nina Sawant, Cirque Vida, Darielle Williams

**ASL Interpreters available for the Friday evening performance at the Cowell Theater Showcase*

COWELL THEATER YOUTH MATINEE

Saturday, August 8th

1:00 PM

Featuring: Circus Spire Youth Troupe from Kinetic Arts Center, CircusMecca, San Francisco Youth Circus, Ashland Aerial Arts, The People's Circus, Zaccho Youth Company

GATEWAY PAVILION NEW SITE WORKS

Saturday, August 8th

3:00 PM* & 5:00 PM

Sunday, August 9th

2:00 PM & 4:00 PM

Featuring: Megan Lowe & Roel Q Seeber, Veronica Blair's *EleKtric Body*

The Saturday, August 8th, 3:00 PM event includes ASL Interpreters and a post-show Talk Back.

SPECIAL SHOWING – ZACCHO STUDIO

Sunday, August 9th

11:00 AM

Featuring: Urban Jazz Dance Company

ASL Interpreters available
FREE ADMISSION

GATEWAY PAVILION – NEW EXPERIMENTS

Sunday, August 9th

7:00 PM

Featuring: clarissa dyas & B Dean, Kelsey na Gealaí, Katherine Hutchinson, Azraa Muhammad, Anna Yanushkevich, Megan Lowe Dances



SAN FRANCISCO AERIAL ARTS FILM FESTIVAL



FREE ADMISSION

Friday, August 7th

Screening One: Site Specific-The Great Outdoors

6:15PM - 7:30PM

Saturday, August 8th

Screening Two: Personal Journey

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Screening Three: Documentary

6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Sunday, August 9th

Screening Four: Site Specific-The Great Outdoors

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Screening Five: Avante Garde

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

HUB HOURS



Come hang at The Hub! The perfect landing ground between film screenings and performances for Festival goers and artists, The Hub is a space for relaxing, connecting, and recharging. Bring a picnic of your own to enjoy on the beautiful **2nd level landing of the Gateway Pavilion.**

Mat Pilates with Thalita Souza

Saturday, August 8th at 11:00 AM

In partnership with The Hive SF

Artist talk in the HUB

Sunday, August 9th at 1:00 PM

Spirit Chaser Book Talk with aerialist and author Susan Murphy and photographer Don Carson

Spirit Chasers is a spectacular book of photography by Don Carson with his wife, Susan Murphy, as the co-creating model over a 30+ year period in natural settings.

Free Admission



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT |||||

We acknowledge that we occupy the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples, who are the original inhabitants of the San Francisco Peninsula. As the indigenous protectors of this land and in accordance with their traditions, the Ramaytush Ohlone have never ceded, lost, nor forgotten their responsibilities as the caretakers of this place, as well as for all peoples who reside in their traditional territory. We recognize our duty to honor the Ramaytush Ohlone through thoughtful and informed stewardship of ancestral land, and as uninvited guests, we affirm their sovereign rights as First Peoples and pay our respects to the Ancestors, Elders, and Relatives of the Ramaytush Ohlone Community.

MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR |||||

Welcome to the 2026 San Francisco Aerial Arts Festival! We are thrilled to have you join us for this celebration of creativity, innovation, and breathtaking skill. Our Festival is dedicated to showcasing the incredible talent and artistry found in aerial performance, an art form that transcends traditional boundaries and brings together elements of dance, theater, and circus.

Our mission is to celebrate and nurture both established and emerging talent, creating a space where artistic risk-taking is encouraged and where new ideas can flourish. This Festival is more than just a series of performances– it is a community where practitioners of all kinds can come together, exchange ideas, build new audiences, and strengthen the bonds that make this art form so exciting and meaningful.

This year we are honored to showcase the work of aerial artists on stage and on film and to offer all of us a few days to imagine a world of peaceful adventure. From stunning solo acts to collaborative ensemble pieces, each performance is a testament to the dedication and creativity of the extraordinary artists. We hope that you will be inspired by their work and that you will take part in the conversations and connections that make this Festival so special.

Enjoy and thank you for being here and part of our community!
Joanna Haigood

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL |||||

The San Francisco Aerial Arts Festival was founded in 2014 by Zaccho Dance Theatre with a mission to create world-class events dedicated to aerial artistry in all shapes & forms. Against the backdrop of the San Francisco Bay, the Festival is now located at the Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture where aerial artists bring stunning and innovative performances to local audiences and tourists alike.

Our Festival is San Francisco's premiere aerial arts event, featuring internationally recognized aerial artists and exciting newcomers breaking into the field. This biennial Festival brings together spectacle, daring athleticism, aerial dance, and circus to create a dynamic three-day performance event. For more about the San Francisco Aerial Arts Festival, please visit www.sfaerialartsfest.org.

ABOUT ZACCHO DANCE THEATRE |||||

Founded in 1980, Zaccho Dance Theatre is an innovative force in both the world of dance and our home community of Bayview Hunters Point. Led by Artistic Director, Joanna Haigood, we create and present performance work that investigates dance as it relates to place.

Zaccho Dance Theatre is a pioneer in both site-specific and aerial dance. Our work draws inspiration from social histories and racial justice themes and returns it to the community through youth arts education, adult classes, artists in residency programs, and the biennial San Francisco Aerial Arts Festival. Our Youth Performing Arts Program is a collaborative youth arts education program developed to enhance classroom learning, educating both the mind and physical body of our young Bayview Hunters Point neighbors. As a longstanding nonprofit program, we pride ourselves on maintaining our artistic integrity, social consciousness, and community involvement. The Zaccho Studio, located in Bayview Hunters Point, is a 4,200 sq ft facility utilized for rehearsals, performances, community events, and educational activities for youth and adults. For more information, please visit www.zaccho.org.

ABOUT FORT MASON CENTER FOR ARTS & CULTURE |||||

Founded in 1977, Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture is the nonprofit steward of a historic waterfront campus, inspiring people to connect through art, public programs, and immersive experiences. As the primary public expression of this mission, the Fort Mason Art program presents a dynamic calendar of free gallery exhibitions, public art installations, performances, and campus-wide events. Each year, Fort Mason Center welcomes 1.5 million visitors and hosts more than 1,000 arts and cultural events. The campus is also home to a vibrant community of local businesses and nonprofits, including Arion Press, Greens Restaurant, Long Now Foundation, the Magic Theatre, and the Stern Grove Festival Association.

ABOUT AERIAL ARTS FILM FESTIVAL |||||

Curated by Bay Area aerial arts luminary Veronica Blair, this year's San Francisco Aerial Arts Film Festival showcases 27 original films by internationally renowned aerial artists alongside emerging filmmakers. Now in its second year, the Festival celebrates the intersection of aerial arts and cinematic storytelling, bringing together the artistry of movement with the magic of film.



The Granite Ocean
Film directed by Janet Roddan

COWELL THEATER SHOWCASE

Friday, August 7th & Saturday, August 8th, 8:00 PM

ASL Interpreters available on Friday, August 7th

Post-Show Artist Talk Back on Saturday, August 8th

Ron Oppenheimer **"Tappelo" 2026**

Choreography & performance by:
Ron Oppenheimer
Music by: Vienna - Billy Joel
Costume & rigging designed by:
Ron Oppenheimer

Cirque Vida **"Entre Dios Cielos" (2026)**

Choreography by: Edgar Zendejas
Performed by: Xochitl Sosa and
Agustin Rodriguez Beltran
Music by: Deadman
Costumes & rigging designed by:
Xochitl Sosa

Darielle Williams **"Rhythmic Rising" (2026)**

Choreography and performance by:
Darielle Williams
Music Mixed by: Coel Williams
Music sources: *Sango* by Ella Andall,
My Beliefs by Asata Shakur, *American
Dream* by Alabama Shakes, *Malcolm X
Speech on Palestine*, *This is America* by
Childish Gambino, *Zombie* by Fela Kuti,
Psy Op by Amanda Diva and Amanda
Seales, Doecheii speech, *My People* by
Erykah Badu, *Magic in You* by Amanda
Diva and Amanda Seales, *Power* by Nija,
Beyonce, Busiswa and Yemi Alade
Costume designed by: Brandon Grimm,
Elena Brocade (drum dressing)
Rigging designed by: Darielle Williams
Composed by: Freya Cellista
Costume designed by: Joey The Tiger

Joey the Tiger **"Disturbed Waters" (2025)**

Choreography by: Joey the Tiger and
Edgar Zendejas
Performed by: Joey the Tiger
Music: Disturbed Waters

INTERMISSION

Nina Sawant **"Periphery" (2026)**

Choreography and performance by:
Nina Sawant
Music: Periphery
Composed by: Daniel Berkman
Rigging designed by: Nina Sawant with
consultation from Dave Freitag

Amelia Rudolph's ARMA **"Source Water" (2026)**

Choreography by: Amelia Rudolph in
collaboration with the performers
Co-Conceived by Amelia Rudolph and
Juan Leiba
Performed by: B Dean and Kriss Rulifson
Music composed by: Luke Mombrea
Costumes designed by: David Calhoun
Rigging designed by: Derrick Lindsay
and David Freitag

COWELL THEATER SHOWCASE BIOS

RON OPPENHEIMER

Growing up in Berkeley, California as the youngest of four siblings, Ron followed their lead and trained in gymnastics and dance after school. At 8 years old, Ron moved to a new gym that did not have a Men's gymnastics program so he took a chance and tried a circus program. Within months, he fell in love with circus and decided to pursue it as a professional career. After starting off with aerial silks and rope with the youth troupe at Splash Circus, Ron joined San Francisco Circus Center's Youth Circus at age 10 where he was introduced to Chinese acrobatics such as Chinese pole and hoop diving by Master Lu Yi. Throughout middle school and high school, Ron continued his circus training, as well as studying various dance styles such as ballet, contemporary, tap dance, hip hop, and learning how to choreograph. Ron graduated in 2019 from the École nationale de cirque in Montréal, specializing in Chinese pole and aerial rope along with many other disciplines, and developed a

movement style that seamlessly blends dance and circus. Since then, he has performed internationally in major productions with Cirque du Soleil, where he performed numerous disciplines and character work in Amaluna, Amora, and 'Twas The Night Before, as well as appearing on live television such as Georgia's Got Talent. Most recently, Ron was an aerialist and dancer on Katy Perry's The Lifetimes Tour, where he is also credited for the aerial choreography. He specializes in flying pole, Chinese pole, aerial rope, straps, and acro-dance. www.ronoppenheimer.com

CIRQUE VIDA

Founded in 2021 by Mexican American artist Xochitl Sosa, Cirque Vida is a contemporary circus company that blends ensemble circus, dance, and acrobatics to tell meaningful human stories. Through the virtuosity and wonder of circus arts, Cirque Vida creates intimate, narrative-driven performances that celebrate the complexity, resilience, and beauty of



the human experience.

Rooted in a commitment to diversity and representation, Cirque Vida brings a distinct Latinx perspective to contemporary circus while fostering dialogue, connection, and empathy through performance. The company's work explores themes of identity, belonging, vulnerability, and community, using the physical language of circus to make stories accessible across cultures and generations.

By combining technical excellence with emotionally resonant storytelling, Cirque Vida invites audiences to imagine perspectives beyond their own and discover common ground through shared experience.

Since its founding, Cirque Vida has premiered three original productions and engaged thousands of audience members throughout Central Texas. In fall 2026, the company will premiere **Entre Dios Cielos**, its most ambitious multidisciplinary work to date. www.cirquevida.com

DARIELLE “DIVA DARI” WILLIAMS

Darielle “Diva Dari” Williams, a native of Trinidad and Tobago, is an aerialist, choreographer, actor, and stuntwoman based in Los Angeles, CA. She holds a BA in Dance from Florida International University and has an extensive background in circus arts, dance, swimming and gymnastics. Williams is recognized for her solo aerialist work in Beyonce’s Formation Tour, after a 2-year performance run with Las Vegas’ *Le Rêve - The Dream*. Her performance credits also include appearances with SZA, Travis Scott, Missy Elliott, Jennifer Lopez, Taylor Mac and The Little Mermaid Live TV Special. She has choreographed for *The Cleaning Lady*, Netflix’s *Tudum* and CrowdStrike’s *FalconFest*; and her stunt



credits include Mr. & Mrs. Smith, Snowfall, P-Valley, and NCIS: Hawai‘i. Williams has appeared in several commercial brands such as Amazon Alexa, Bare Chips, and Good American. She is also the creator of *The Aerial Drum*, an original aerial apparatus blending Afro-futurism with the traditions of the African djembe drum. Williams operates the Lookout Space where she offers coaching lessons in Pole, Aerial, and Stilts. www.dariellewilliams.com

JOEY “THE TIGER”

Joey is a visually stunning aerialist known for his strength and graceful movement.



On stage a good part of his life by way of performance groups, he has naturally taken to the skies. He performs on a variety of apparatus, specializing on dance trapeze and aerial straps with a ground act of juggling cube. He is currently a resident artist with Peoples Circus Theatre, a former resident artist at Berber SF as well as produces and directs the fundraiser "Spectrum". Other performance highlights include: The 7 Fingers, Montreal Completément Cirque, Circus Bella, SF Aerial Arts Festival and the Western Australia Circus Festival. He currently teaches and performs around the San Francisco Bay Area. www.joeythetiger.com

EDGAR ZENDEJAS

Mexican-born director, choreographer, and creator whose work bridges contemporary dance and circus. He has created and directed numerous productions for the National Circus School in Montreal, including Méandre, Colibri, CiRCuSiCaL, L'enfant muet, Cassé, Saisons, Aïmai-Je un rêve, and Flujo. His circus collaborations also include choreography for STARLIGHT Circus (Switzerland), acrobatic choreography for Franco Dragone's Dai Show in China, guest directing for Cirque du Soleil



C-Lab, artistic consulting on Totem, and choreography for Varelia and Syma with Cirque du Soleil at Sea. In 2020, he created OJAS for Sept Moments de Joie, a Cirque Éloize film project, and in 2021 premiered The LORCA Project, an original creation merging contemporary dance with aerial circus through his company, Ezdanza.



NINA SAWANT

Through the spectacle of apparatus-based dance, South Asian American choreographer Nina Sawant explores the concepts of personal identity and humanity's place in the natural world. Drawing on her background in circus, dance, and costume design, Nina's work bridges the gap between art and entertainment to weave stories that are heartfelt and visually captivating.

Nina began dancing as a child in Tennessee, where her family were the only mixed South Asian Americans in her community. She went on to receive a B.A. in Dance Choreography from the University of South Florida, where she was part of two inaugural dance abroad programs in Paris, France and Mazatlan, Mexico. Concurrently, Nina began her commercial performance career in Busch Gardens Ka-

Tonga, which led her to join the Krymskiy circus family, touring in traditional tent shows in Ukraine.

Drawn to collaborative, multidisciplinary work, Nina has performed with ensemble driven companies such as Zaccho Dance Theatre, Shoestring Circus, Sweet Can Productions, and Vespertine Circus. She has written and directed theatrical circus shows including Popo's Orchids, Cirque Menagerie, and Hypothetical Circus's Hotel California, and she has designed costumes for individual commissions and shows at Stanford Live and the SF Aerial Arts Festival. Nina has presented work locally and internationally at Festivals including the SF Aerial Arts Festival, Moisture Festival, and the Festival D'Avignon. Nina also produces specialty entertainment through her company, Dahlias Entertainment, which focuses on creating living wage work for diverse performers and mentoring artists in self advocacy and business. www.ninauiu.com

ARMA

ARMA (Amelia Rudolph Movement Arts) is the creative home for the dance works of choreographer Amelia Rudolph. Designed to remain artist-led, nimble, and fluid, ARMA serves as a vehicle for site-responsive performance, vertical dance, artistic experimentation, and collaboration. Adapting to the unique qualities of each site, project, and creative partnership, ARMA creates work that explores our relationship to nature, place, and one another, expanding what seems possible through beauty, rigor, and embodied experience.

A choreographer, dancer-athlete, and filmmaker, Amelia Rudolph focuses on art's transformational and restorative nature to initiate a shift of perspective and ignite a sense of wonder. As founder and artistic director of the dance company



(Project) Bandaloop, her award-winning work has been on the vanguard of innovation in dance, fusing postmodern movement, rock climbing technology, and a spirit of adventure since 1991.

She now leads the dance project ARMA (Amelia Rudolph Movement Arts.) Her collaborative process includes a regular practice of experimentation with the form, site-responsive activations in nature and urban settings, and community engagement, often focusing on environmental stewardship. Particular to her career are the dances she has directed in technical mountain environments, from a traverse of the Sierra mountains to a six-day ascent of the 3,000' cliff El Capitan in Yosemite, CA. She has received over forty grants, fellowships, and commissions including an Irvine Fellowship, and Creative Capital, MAPP, and National Dance Project awards. She is a recent CORO Fellow, and serves on several boards in the field of the performing arts. Amelia holds bachelor's and Master's degrees in Comparative Religion from Swarthmore College and the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, and in 2021 was awarded an honorary doctorate from 17, Instituto de Estudios Críticos, Mexico City. www.ameliarudolph.com

COWELL THEATER

THE NEXT GENERATION YOUTH SHOWCASE

Saturday, August 8th at 1:00 PM

Zaccho Youth Company

"Sailing Away, Landing Here" (2026)

Choreography by: Azraa Muhammad in collaboration with the Company

Performed by: Harlem Kelly, Hunter Kelly, Molly Seybert-Kuczak, Trinity Jones, Frankie Leigh, Jazzy Cuentos, Meera Chasnow

Music by: "Prairie Spring" by Jay Ungar, Molly Mason, John Kirk, Steve Rust, "Jumpin at the Woodside" by Count Basie, "On the Nature of Daylight" by Max Richter, "Spiegel im Spiegel" by Arvo Pärt performed by Jürgen Kruse (Piano) and Benjamin Hudson (viola), "Near Light" by Ólafur Arnalds, "Home" by Phillip Phillips performed/arranged by Daniel Jang

San Francisco Youth Circus, Circus Center

"Off the Clock, Into the Groove" (2026)

Choreography by: Amy Olson

Performed by: Edith Norwick

Music: Le temps est bon

Composed by: Bon Entendeur, Isabelle Pierre

Costume designed: Rachael Servello

Rigging designed: Amy Olson

People's Circus Theatre

Excerpt from Le Petit Cirque (2026)

Choreography by: Yasmina Bourdais and Doug Stewart

Performed by: Adrienne Fair, Marisol Moraglia, Lila Siegel, Alexa Bernal-Cumpian

Music: Gnossienne no.3

Composed by: Romi Kopelman

Costumes designed by: Shelli Frew

Rigging designed by: Kapi Lee

Circus Spire Youth Troupe

"in rainbows" (2026)

Choreography by: Amelia Fung

Performed by: Amelia Fung

Music by: nude

Composed by: Radiohead

Ashland Aerial Arts

"The Gilded Ganache: And Aerial Chocolate Heist" - excerpt (2026)

Choreography by: the performers with Sonya Smith

Performed by: Isabella Baldassar, Addi Brock, Rowan Chenoweth, Nora Eaton, Zoe Geness, Paisley Hurd, Zia Lunoak, Aubrie Muhonen, Finn Parr, Clara Purkerson, Kalila Sayre, Henna Schutz, Jade Williams

Music by: Duel of the Fates by Skar and The Final Countdown by Europe

Costumes designed by: the performers

Circus Spire Youth Troupe

"Dragon New Warm Mountain I Believe in You" (2026)

Choreography and performance by: Fatimah Hasan

Music by: Dragon New Warm Mountain I Believe in You

Composed by: Big Thief

San Francisco Youth Circus, Circus Center

"Ocean Heart" (2026)

Choreography by: Elena Panova

Performed by: Mara Lau-Siem

Music: Sail Away

Composed by: Enya

Costume designed: Rachael Servello

Rigging designed: Elena Panova

CircusMecca (Mendocino Center for Circus Arts)

"CircusMecca Youth Troupe" (2026)

Choreography by: CircusMecca Youth Troupe Performers, with support from Bones & Holly Newstead

Performed by: Sasha, Alice, Ililani, Frankie

Costumes designed by: CircusMecca Youth Troupe Performers

Rigging designed by: Bones Newstead

THE NEXT GENERATION YOUTH BIOS



ZACCHO YOUTH COMPANY

Zaccho Youth Company (ZYC) is Zaccho Dance Theatre's youth aerial dance company for ages 7 through 14. Founded by Artistic Director Joanna Haigood in 2002, ZYC has performed throughout the Bay Area and nationally, including with Circus for the Arts, The Luggage Store Gallery's In the Streets Festival, the Black Choreographers Festival, Global Youth Media and Arts Festival, Sky Dancers Festival, ODC Youth Festival, the Discovery Museum, Montalvo Arts Center, D'AIR Aerial Studios in Atlanta, GA, Project Artaud's SPACE 124, and the Bolinas Community Center. ZYC is part of Zaccho Dance Theatre's award-winning Youth Performing Arts Program hosted at the organization's studio in Bayview Hunters Point.

www.zaccho.org

SAN FRANCISCO YOUTH CIRCUS

Circus Center has been a home circus for performing arts in the Bay for over 43 years. Offering both professional and recreational circus training, Circus Center continues to support circus artists from all walks of life and is honored to parti-



cipate in this year's San Francisco Aerial Arts Festival! www.circuscenter.org

PEOPLE'S CIRCUS THEATRE

People's Circus Theatre is a San Francisco-based performing arts organization that blends circus and theatre in ensemble productions. Founded in 2023 by seasoned performer, producer and director Felicity Hesed, People's Circus Theatre delivers poignant, thought-provoking and memorable experiences that win



new audiences back to the wonder of live performance, through a unique blend of theatre, dance, and circus arts. People's Circus Theatre creates high-quality performances, employs local artists, develops the next generation of performers, and produces shows that are highly accessible for diverse audiences. People's Circus Theatre's original shows include Reindeer Games, The Nightingale, and The Unfinished Work of Camille Claudel. This summer, PCT launched a new program, the Youth All-Star Show, and created Le Petit Cirque with 12 exceptional youth artists from around the Bay Area.

www.peoplescircustheatre.org



CIRCUS SPIRE YOUTH TROUPE

Kinetic Arts Center's Circus Spire is a pre-professional youth circus program, ages 13 – 18yrs, that centers artistry by introducing performers to rigorous training, goal setting and skill acquisition as well as creation, character development and collaboration. Circus Spire provides as many formal and informal performance level training opportunities in as many circus arts skills available to us. These opportunities include (but are not limited to): multi-week, full-length productions, individual act development, local off-site Festivals and events, on-site special events, choreographic experience, workshops with industry experts, inspiring field trips, etc. www.kineticartscenter.com



ASHLAND AERIAL ARTS

Ashland Aerial Arts educates young people to become empowered, creative and skillful performers through a curriculum of aerial arts, partnering, improvisation and somatic awareness. The teens in our Performance Company create unique, evening length performances each year, highlighting their individual voices inside the collaborative process. Our emphasis on ensemble-building makes touring with 13 teenagers a sweetly hilarious bonding process for us all. Artistic Director Sonya Smith encourages independence and safety throughout the process, with as much “yes” as possible.

Ashland Aerial Arts is committed to challenging youth of all ages to build confidence in their physical capacity and creative impulses in a space where people of all races, gender expressions, abilities, religions and national origins can engage in learning aerial arts and self-expression safely. www.ashlandaerialarts.org

CIRCUS MECCA

CircusMecca is an all-volunteer non-profit in Northern California dedicated to high level aerial circus instruction. We're based in a small rural community, so the only way we can afford the insurance, rent, and equipment costs involved is to be entirely volunteer-run. We're honored to bring

three of our top youth circus acts to the SF Aerial Arts Festival again this year.

All of our acts are youth-performer driven and choreographed, with head coaches Bones and Holly Newstead mostly just overseeing safety and flow. We strongly believe that allowing youth to have full creative control creates a better variety of high quality acts and performers.

One of our performers in this Festival was selected from over a thousand competitors as one of only 11 acts included in this year's World Youth Circus Arts Championship at VIVA Fest in Las Vegas—the largest circus arts competition in the Americas. www.circusmecca.org



GATEWAY PAVILION NEW SITE WORKS

Saturday, August 8th at 3:00 PM & 5:00 PM
Sunday, August 9th at 2:00 PM & 4:00 PM



The Saturday, August 8th, 3:00 PM event includes ASL Interpreters and a post-show Talk Back.

Megan Lowe Dances (a project co-directed by Megan Lowe and Roel Seeber)
“Meandering Urbanite” (Premiere)
Choreography and performance by: Megan Lowe and Roel Seeber
Composed by: Ben Juodvalkis
Rigging Design: David Freitag
Foam Blocks Sourced from: Kristin Damrow & Company, Boundary Layer (2024)

Veronica Blair
“EleKtric Body” (Premiere)
Choreography and Direction by: Veronica Blair and Alyseia Mone Darby in collaboration with the cast
Performed by: Amber Goring, clarissa dyas, Cresin ‘BRAVO’ Williams-Quinn, Derek DiMartini, Eli Shi, Gabriel Lamorie, Govinda Ram Pingali, Rae. P. Jamawatr, Roux Stunna, Saharla Vetsch, Telice, Terrence Paschal, Thalita Souza, Veronica Blair, William Brewton Fowler Jr.

Music Composed by: MANGO MINE: Govinda Ram Pingali & Gabriel Lamorie with Nekia Wright, Tossie Long and Veronica Blair
Costumes designed by: Nina Sawant and Veronica Blair
Lead Mask Maker: Princess Modupe
Project Manager: Charis Lam
Stage Manager: Chi Chi Okonmah



GATEWAY PAVILION SITE WORKS BIOS

MEGAN LOWE DANCES



MEGAN LOWE DANCES (MLD) creates courageous multidisciplinary dance works rooted in care. They are centered in the San Francisco Bay Area, situated on unceded Ramaytush Ohlone land. MLD transforms spaces with dynamic site-specific choreography, playful partner-work, and daring aerial/vertical dance, paying particular attention to stories from AAPI, BIPOC, and mixed-race communities. Their recent work has been presented at YBCA, Legion of Honor, ODC, Fort Mason, de Young, and 500 Capp Street, as well as in United States of Asian America Festival, APAture, SF Aerial Arts Festival, SF Trolley Dances, CAAMFest, and on KQED Live. MLD offers invigorating workshops that empower movers to take skillful risks, embrace strengths, and support one another. Through collaboration, creative exploration, and collective learning, their public programming builds supportive communities and reimagines what dance can be and where it can happen.

www.MeganLoweDances.com

MEGAN LOWE (she/they) is a Chinese-Irish American dance-maker, performer,

teacher, singer-songwriter, and Artistic Director of Megan Lowe Dances. She is known for her affinity for bold physicality, site-specific choreography, contact improvisation/dynamic partnering, and aerial/vertical dance. Megan is a two-time Izzie Award winner for Outstanding Achievement in Performance. She has co-directed dances with Roel Seeber, Rose Huey, Sonsheree Giles, and Johnny Huy Nguyễn. Megan has performed with many esteemed organizations, including Flyaway Productions, Dance Brigade, Lenora Lee Dance, and Scott Wells & Dancers. Megan is a teaching artist for Joe Goode Performance Group, BANDALOOP, Flyaway, and her alma mater Theater, Dance, & Performance Studies at UC Berkeley, where she works as the Program Associate. She regularly teaches contact improvisation, vertical dance, site-specific dance, and contemporary dance for organizations, schools, universities, and dance Festivals around the Bay Area and California, and has taught in Greece, Singapore, Ireland, and Japan. ~ Instagram: [@MLoweDanceKitty](https://www.instagram.com/MLoweDanceKitty)

ROEL SEEBER (he/they/any) is an Oakland based artist who graduated cum Laude from Purchase College, State University of New York, and holds an MFA in Dance from the University of Washington. From 2008-2020, Roel was a company member of vertical dance organization BANDALOOP, dancing, performing, stage directing, and teaching with them. Roel currently works with BANDALOOP in performance projects and as a Lead Teacher. As a solo artist, Roel collaborates with other vertical dance artists, including a creative partnership with Magalie Lanriot in Lisbon Portugal. He has taught workshops for Il Posto, Vuela, Danza Area, Dimegaz, Sparrow Dance, and Gravity & Levity. From 2001 to 2008, Roel danced with The Limón Dance Company. Roel and Megan started exploring vertical dance partnering together in 2023, and they've created/performed 6 gravity defying duets since then, including in MLD's

Just a Shadow, which they won an Izzie Award for. **Instagram: @RoelSeeber**

VERONICA BLAIR'S ELEKTRIC BODY

VERONICA BLAIR is an aerialist, director, choreographer, circus researcher, and educator whose practice bridges contemporary circus, physical theatre, and emotional storytelling. Through a methodology she calls aerial storytelling, she blends physical theatre, aerial arts, and social and psychological inquiry to create original works that explore identity, resilience, ancestry, and the human experience. Her work reimagines aerial arts as a vessel for memory, cultural inquiry, and emotional transformation.

Veronica has performed with internationally renowned companies including UniverSoul Circus, Afrika! Afrika! (Germany), Universal Studios Japan, Zaccho Dance Theatre, and Circus Bella. Her work has been featured at the Montréal Complètement Cirque Festival (Montréal, Québec), the Seoul Street Arts Festival (Seoul, South Korea), the San Francisco Aerial Arts Festival, and the Frequent Flyers Aerial Dance Festival. As a director and choreographer, she has created work for Celebrity Cruises Entertainment, RWS Entertainment, UniverSoul Circus, and the San Francisco Youth Circus. She also served as

Circus Historian for the Broadway production of *Water for Elephants*.

A two-time recipient of Individual Artist Grants from the San Francisco Arts Commission and the 2021 Gerbode Foundation Choreographers Award, Veronica is the founder of the Uncle Junior Project, a multimedia archive preserving the histories of people of African descent in American circus. Her research and advocacy have earned national and international recognition, including invitations to speak at the Smithsonian Institution, the San Francisco International Arts Festival, and the St. John's International CircusFest in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada.

Instagram: @veronica_blair_aerialist



A Return to Movement
Film directed Jessica Swanson

SPECIAL SHOWING

Zaccho Studio

1777 Yosemite Avenue, Studio 330

San Francisco

Sunday, August 9th at 11:00 AM

Urban Jazz Dance Company “Deaf Ancestors: Fly Loud” (A Work in Progress by Urban Jazz Dance Company)

Created and directed by Antoine Hunter
Performed by Zahna Simon, Paunika Jones, Kelly Garrett

Deaf Ancestors: Fly Loud is an original aerial dance production that celebrates Deaf culture, ancestral wisdom, resilience, and the universal longing for freedom. Inspired by Virginia Hamilton's acclaimed book *The People Could Fly* and *The Little Prince*, this visually immersive work explores how imagination, hope, and community allow the human spirit to rise beyond the limits placed upon it. *Deaf Ancestors: Fly Loud* honors those who dreamed of freedom, those whose stories survived against all odds, and those who continue to soar today. It is a celebration of Black history, ancestral memory, Deaf culture, imagination, and the limitless possibilities that emerge when we dare to fly loud.

Training support by Joanna Haigood, Veronica Blair, Julia Taffe of Aeriosa

Special thanks to Joanna Haigood, Julia Taffe, Veronica Blair, Amelia Rudolph and Todd Laby who made this possible.

Special thanks to our ASL interpreters Joamia Germany, Debby Kajiayama and Pilar Marsh.

Urban Jazz Dance Company

Founded in 2007 by Deaf dancer and choreographer Antoine Hunter, Urban Jazz Dance Company uplifts Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Disabled artists through innovative performance that bridges cultures, abilities, and communities. This year, the company presents *When Light Listens*, a Deaf-led aerial dance experience where movement, vibration, light, and gravity become a language everyone can feel. Blending aerial arts, contemporary dance, and visual storytelling, the work explores rhythm beyond sound and celebrates the creativity, resilience, and lived experiences of Deaf and Disabled communities. The result is a visually stunning and deeply human performance that reimagines communication, accessibility, and connection.

www.realurbanjazzdance.com



GATEWAY PAVILION GALLERY NEW EXPERIMENTS

Sunday, August 9th at 7:00 PM



clarissa rivera dyas & B Dean

"RAWHIDE" (work in progress)

Choreographer and performance by:

clarissa rivera dyas & B Dean

Music by: jose e abad

Costume designed by: clarissa rivera dyas

& B Dean

Rigging Designed by: Dave Freitag and

Matt Leonard

Kelsey na Gealaí

"Vessel" (2026)

Choreography and performance by:

Kelsey na Gealaí

Music: Mariana Trench

Composed by: Dwara & Khotton

Rigging Designed: Kelsey na Gealaí

Azraa Muhammad

"Joy!?" (2026)

Choreography and Performance by:

Azraa Muhammad

Music Sources: Joy by time for three;

Equivalent 7 composed by Loscil; Angle

of Loll composed by Loscil; Angle of list

composed by Loscil; In the Fog II com-

posed by Tim Hecker

Composed by: Time for Three: Ranaan

Meyer, Charles Yang and Nicolas Kendall

Composed by: Amanati

Edited by: TJ Heintz

Costume Designer: Kim Haugan-Baker

Cirque de la Luna

"weightless" (2026)

Choreography and performance by:

Anna Yanushkevich

Music: Weightless

Composed by: Erika Janunger

Costume Designer: Anna Yanushkevich

Rigging Design: Anna Yanushkevich with

support by Dr. KC Hyland

Megan Lowe Dances (a project co-directed by Megan Lowe and Roel Seeber)

"Meandering Urbanite" (Premiere)

Choreography and performance by:

Megan Lowe and Roel Seeber

Composed by: Ben Juodvalkis

Rigging Design: David Freitag

Katherine Hutchinson

"Seeds of Rage" (2026)

Choreography and performance by:

Katherine Hutchinson

Music: Medusa



GATEWAY PAVILION – NEW EXPERIMENTS BIOS



B DEAN

B Dean (they/he) is an earthbound and airborne dancer, queer world-builder, and white transboy based in unceded Ohlone territory (the Bay Area) for 14 years. They perform with BANDALOOP, Flyaway Productions, Megan Lowe Dances, Sean Dorsey Dance, Joe Goode Performance Group, and Circo Zero. Under the name BODYSTORM, they create site-specific performances and workshops that highlight the intelligent technologies of nature and body.

www.bodystorm.org

CLARISSA RIVERA DYAS

clarissa rivera dyas is a Black, Filipinx, Bay Area, Ohlone land, based movement artist, choreographer and arts producer. Her artistic practice flows from the truthfulness of improvisation, is rooted in her communities, and centered around movement as a spiritual practice and a conduit of change.

They have had the honor to be a company member of Zaccho Dance Theatre, Robert Moses' Kin, and Flyaway Produc-

tions and have performed in works by Lenora Lee Dance, Megan Lowe Dances, OYSTERKNIFE, Sarah Crowell, GRAVITY, Keith Hennessy and many others.

www.bodystorm.org



KELSEY NA GEALÁÍ

Kelsey na Gealaí is an aerialist, director, and founder of Circus of the Moon, where she blends storytelling, mysticism, and technical artistry into circus productions. Specializing in aerial hoop with roots in classical ballet, she has performed across California in venues from Fort Mason to The 418 Project. Kelsey's original works—including Weaving the Liminal and Pluto's Labyrinth—explore transformation, mythology, and shadow through the lens of circus. www.circusofthemoon.org

AZRAA MUHAMMAD

Azraa Muhammad is a San Francisco based aerial artist, dancer, performer, birth worker and Mama. She started dancing in Zaccho's Youth Performing Arts Program (YPAP) at the age of 6. Shortly after she began training with artistic director of Zaccho Dance Theatre, Joanna



Haigood, and began flying with the Zaccho Youth Company. After 10 years of training with the youth company, she began apprenticing as a member of Zaccho Dance Theatre. Azraa believes in drawing inspiration from current social and political issues, such as identity, racial equity, environmentalism, history and ancestry as a way of expression in her choreography. She has collaborated with and performed for Flyaway Productions, Baycat, Dance Vision Series Festival, California Youth Circus Center Festival, Circus for Arts in the Schools, the American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) and the Golden State Warriors. As an artist and Zaccho Alumni, Azraa finds the greatest joy in teaching and mentoring members of the Zaccho Youth Company, guiding them to find their own voice as up-and-coming artists. [@kindredbirthdoula227](#)

the most interesting fires get started. When not mid rehearsal or in philosophical free fall, she can be found attempting ballet, throwing paint at canvases, or going very far down rabbit holes she has no intention of climbing out of. To hold space for others to let their stories pour out of their bodies is one of our biggest privileges as humans.

www.cirquedelaluna.org

KATHERINE HUTCHINSON

Katherine Hutchinson is an aerial dancer who creates expressive and empowering circus art. She choreographs and curates aerial, dance, photography, video, and performance projects with artists who share her vision for emotionally driven art. Collaboration, research and image-

ANNA YANUSHKEVICH

Hailing from Moscow Russia, Anna Yanushkevich has been filling theaters and performing at events large and small for the better part of a decade. She is trained in the circus arts, veterinary medicine, and occasionally dabbles in other movement disciplines like contemporary dance and butoh. Anna has always been drawn to the fault line between the traditionally beautiful and the illicitly grotesque. The place where elegance gets a little feral. It's in that liminal smear of light and shadow where she tends to make her home, and where she believes



ry are paramount in her projects about strength and magic. She has created acts about ballet and body dysmorphia, the Salem witch trials, Janis Joplin, Cleopatra, a purple octopus queen, and magnolia trees. Combining her 20 years of classical ballet training with a decade of extensive aerial study, she has become known for her grace in the air.

In 2021 Katherine ascended into the role of Artistic Director at Kinetic Arts Center in Oakland, CA. There she serves as the head coach of the Youth Circus Troupes (Circus Spire and Circus Gilly) and has pioneered the creation of the Summer Circus Celebration, the West Oakland Youth Circus Collaboration, and Tissue Meeting. www.airkatherine.com

MEGAN LOWE (she/they) is a Chinese-Irish American dance-maker, performer, teacher, singer-songwriter, and Artistic Director of Megan Lowe Dances. She is known for her affinity for bold physicality, site-specific choreography, contact improvisation/dynamic partnering, and aerial/vertical dance. Megan is a two-time Izzie Award winner for Outstanding Achievement in Performance. She has co-directed dances with Roel Seeber, Rose Huey, Sonsheree Giles, and Johnny Huy Nguyễn. Megan has performed with many esteemed organizations, including Flyaway Productions, Dance Brigade, Lenora Lee Dance, and Scott Wells & Dancers. Megan is a teaching artist for Joe Goode Performance Group, BANDALOOP, Flyaway, and her alma mater Theater, Dance, & Performance Studies at UC Berkeley, where she works as the Program Associate. She regularly teaches contact improvisation, vertical dance, site-specific dance, and contemporary dance for organizations, schools, universities, and dance Festivals around the



Bay Area and California, and has taught in Greece, Singapore, Ireland, and Japan. Instagram: [@MLoweDanceKitty](https://www.instagram.com/MLoweDanceKitty)

ROEL SEEBER (he/they/any) is an Oakland based artist who graduated cum Laude from Purchase College, State University of New York, and holds an MFA in Dance from the University of Washington. From 2008-2020, Roel was a company member of vertical dance organization BANDALOOP, dancing, performing, stage directing, and teaching with them. Roel currently works with BANDALOOP in performance projects and as a Lead Teacher. As a solo artist, Roel collaborates with other vertical dance artists, including a creative partnership with Magalie Lanriot in Lisbon Portugal. He has taught workshops for Il Posto, Vuela, Danza Area, Dimegaz, Sparrow Dance, and Gravity & Levity. From 2001 to 2008, Roel danced with The Limon Dance Company. Roel and Megan started exploring vertical dance partnering together in 2023, and they've created/performed 6 gravity defining duets since then, including in MLD's



The Routes of Vertical Dance: Moon and the Movement
Directed by Wanda Moretti

SAN FRANCISCO AERIAL ARTS FILM FESTIVAL

GATEWAY PAVILION SCREENING ROOM

Friday, August 7th - 6:15 PM - 7:30 PM

SCREENING 1: SITE SPECIFIC

The Granite Ocean

Run Time: 7:25

Canada

Directed by Janet Roddan

A woman emerges from a golden cocoon onto a large cliff face and climbs her way up the mountain and into the air.

Unending

Run Time: 3:54

United States

Directed by Rachel Maxwell, Suzanne Gallo and Nino Fernandez

“UNENDING” is an exploration of self-love and acceptance, and an interpretation of how those sentiments evolve over time.

Ode Maritima

Run Time: 6:00

Portugal

Directed by Fu Le

Set against Fernando Pessoa's poem of the same name, “Ode Maritima” explores the charged space between departure and arrival, self and other. Through a mysterious, suspended choreography, dancers drift like sails in the wind, embodying the swelling desire and nostalgia of a ship pulling away from shore. A lyrical screen-dance piece where flight, poetry, and emotional distance converge.

Down on the Corner

Run Time: 6:24

United States

Directed by Chani Bockwinkel

A short documentary exploring the creative process behind Flyaway Produc-

tions' Down On The Corner, created in partnership with the TxT Initiative. Honoring the site of the 1966 Compton's Cafeteria Riot, the film reflects on its legacy of resistance, liberation, and collective imagination while envisioning a more just future.

A Return to Movement

Run Time: 5:51

United States

Directed by Jessica Swanson, Kara Starkweather, Lauren Godla

A Return to Movement is a short vertical dance film celebrating the largest dam removal project in world history and the Klamath River Renewal. Dancers are suspended over the water as they use movement to bring attention to this unprecedented environmental event.

JINSHAN: Seams of Gold

Run Time: 11:38

United States

Directed by Megan Lowe & Rose Huey

Set against a majestic outdoor rock wall, “JINSHAN: Seams of Gold” is a site-specific vertical dance film that reimagines gravity as a partner in storytelling. Harnessing the power of rock climbing technology, dancers are lifted into the air—not just to defy gravity, but to awaken a sense of flight, freedom, and deep connection. Suspended in space, they soar, tumble, and reach across stone surfaces, turning sheer rock into a canvas for memory, imagination, and transformation.

OMEN

Run Time: 27:31

United States

Directed by Harlan Taney, Justin Clifton, Blake McCordn, Dark Sky Arial

Through dance and movement, OMEN tells the story of one woman’s exploration of bravery and perseverance, intimately following her as she takes risks and overcomes fears. The film tells the story of our shared interdependence - and the beauty

of surrendering to the unknown. OMEN was shot in the Grand Canyon National Park by award-winning filmmakers Harlan Taney, Justin Clifton, and Blake McCord of Sandcast Media. OMEN is a 10 minute dance film with a 17 min. companion documentary film.

SAN FRANCISCO AERIAL ARTS FILM FESTIVAL
GATEWAY PAVILION SCREENING ROOM

Saturday, August 8th



SCREENING 2 – PERSONAL JOURNEY

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

BECOMING

Run time: 2:00
Canada
Lydia Adunola

BECOMING is a poetic short film exploring aerial artist Lydia Adunola’s personal journey of transformation through aerial movement. The film reflects on identity, resilience, and the continual process of becoming.

Late Bloomer

Run Time: 6:20
United States
Directed by Don Smith

The 82-year-old tells how he got captivated by aerial silks 7 years ago and how it changed his life, while the screen shows many of the more challenging moves he did in a public performance, including Fallen Angel and Astronaut.

The Audition

Run time: 7:40
Canada
Directed by Samara Von Rad

The Audition is a short aerial circus film that shows the emotional roller coaster that is the process of auditioning. The rise and fall of anticipation and excitement that is often met with rejection and disappointment and the constant internal battle with the drive to do the thing we love. The Audition addresses the struggles performers have in maintaining confidence and a sense of self in the quest to be cast.

Embers

Run time: 24:16
Canada
Directed by Trixie Pacis

On July 24, 2024, a wildfire tore through Jasper, Alberta, reducing aerialist Sasha Galitzki’s home to ashes. Embers connects Sasha’s loss in the wildfire and the glacial recession she has witnessed in her creative work to highlight their common cause: climate change.

SCREENING 3 – DOCUMENTARY

6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Down on the Corner

Run time: 6:24
United States
Directed by Chani Bockwinkel

A short documentary exploring the creative process behind Flyaway Productions' *Down On The Corner*, created in partnership with the TxT Initiative. Honoring the site of the 1966 Compton's Cafeteria Riot, the film reflects on its legacy of resistance, liberation, and collective imagination while envisioning a more just future.

Road to Forgiveness

Run time: 6:30

United States

Directed by Orlando Torres and Veronica Blair

Road to Forgiveness is a short documentary chronicling the creation of *Forgiveness, Thank You*, a 15-minute aerial dance work exploring the complexities of trauma, healing, and transformation. Through rehearsal footage, performance, and artist reflections, the film follows Veronica Blair's creative process, revealing how deeply personal experiences are translated into movement. Audiences are invited into an intimate exploration of self-awareness, surrender, and forgiveness, illuminating the human capacity to transform pain into freedom.

A Memory of Delicacy

Run time: 14:49

Brazil

Directed by Ana Clara Gomes

In the ambivalence of life, we carry both delicacy and aridity. The backlands constitute us, and the creative process of circus artist Lucienne Machado reveals how the arid and the delicate walk together in our lives. Seeking affectionate memories of her seamstress grandmother, she shows us that she too sews life, but in a different way, in an arid and delicate relationship with the circus and aerial silks.

After the Circus Curtain Goes Down

Run time: 6:00

United States

Directed by John Nordström

A middle-aged man reflects on the death of his estranged father, a former circus performer who vanished decades earlier. Through quiet moments in a late-night bar, he revisits the blurred line between memory and regret. The film blends real vintage circus footage with generative AI imagery to create a haunting meditation on grief, family, and the fragile inheritance of broken legacies.

Dare to Climb

Run time: 23:26

United States

Periscope Film LLC Archive

This 1977 film "*Dare to Climb*" shows the story and stunts of aerobatic pilot Joe C. Hughes, a famous air show pilot in the 1970s who was inducted into the International Council of Air Shows (ICAS) Hall of Fame in 2010. Hughes, born in Texas, developed the Boeing-Hughes Super Stearman plane and was known for his wing walking acts. Joe C. Hughes passed away in 2017. His first Super Stearman now resides in the EAA Aviation Hall of Fame in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. This film is part of the Periscope Film LLC archive.

The Routes of Vertical Dance: Moon and the Movement

Run time: 18:08

Italy

Directed by Wanda Moretti

The broader context in which the first vertical dance experiments emerged was the dawn of space exploration in the 1960s, culminating in humanity's first orbit of the Earth and the first Moon landing in 1969. The image of the human body floating weightlessly in space, broadcast on television screens around the world, had a profound impact on people everywhere, but especially on

artists. It inspired new ways of imagining the body's relationship to gravity, space, and architecture, helping to prompt some of the earliest explorations of ver-

tical dance—performances that offered audiences an entirely new perspective on movement and the built environment.

SAN FRANCISCO AERIAL ARTS FILM FESTIVAL

GATEWAY PAVILION SCREENING ROOM

Sunday, August 9th



SCREENING 4: SITE SPECIFIC THE GREAT OUTDOORS

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

The Granite Ocean

Run time: 7:25

Canada

Directed by Janet Roddan

A woman emerges from a golden cocoon onto a large cliff face and climbs her way up the mountain and into the air.

A Return to Movement

Run time: 5:51

United States

Directed by Jessica Swanson, Kara Starkweather, Lauren Godla

A Return to Movement is a short vertical dance film celebrating the largest dam removal project in world history and the Klamath River Renewal. Dancers are suspended over the water as they use movement to bring attention to this unprecedented environmental event.

JINSHAN: Seams of Gold

Run time: 11:38

United States

Directed by Megan Lowe & Rose Huey

Set against a majestic outdoor rock wall, "JINSHAN: Seams of Gold" is a site-specific vertical dance film that reimagines gravity as a partner in storytelling.

Harnessing the power of rock climbing technology, dancers are lifted into the air—not just to defy gravity, but to awaken a sense of flight, freedom, and deep connection. Suspended in space, they soar, tumble, and reach across stone surfaces, turning sheer rock into a canvas for memory, imagination, and transformation.

OMEN

Run time: 27:31

United States

Directed by Harlan Taney, Justin Clifton, Blake McCord, Dark Sky Aerial

Through dance and movement, OMEN tells the story of one woman's exploration of bravery and perseverance, intimately following her as she takes risks and overcomes fears. The film tells the story of our shared interdependence - and the beauty of surrendering to the unknown. OMEN was shot in the Grand Canyon National Park by award-winning filmmakers Harlan Taney, Justin Clifton, and Blake McCord of Sandcast Media. OMEN is a 10 minute dance film with a 17 min. companion documentary film.

SCREENING 5: AVANT GARDE

5:30PM - 6:30PM

Spinewalker

Run time: 3:50

United States

Directed by Helen Wicks

Spinewalker uses archival collage of early horror films including George Méliès' 1909 "The Haunted Mansion," Paul Wegener and Henrik Galeen's 1915 "The Golem" (inspired by 16th century Jewish folktale), Isadora Duncan's historic 1897 "Serpentine Dances" and more as backdrop for character driven aerial work to create a surreal world that explores psychological and spiritual manipulation.

The film was originally commissioned by Dance Thrill Fest and had its international premier at Manifest Dance Film Festival in Auroville, India.

ARCO

Run time: 6:54

United States

Directed by Justin Clifton, Elisa Venezia, Dark Sky Ariel

Every decision we make weaves our lives into a story shaped by societal expectations. We become trapped in self-imposed cocoons, immobilized by narratives not our own. Yet, within us lies the power to break free—the power to choose our own path and become the narrators of our own story. ARCO is an invitation to dissolve into creativity, where movement transcends cognition, and art becomes a shared human experience. More than a performance, it is a meditation on dance as a catalyst for transformation, leaving audiences with a sense of interconnectedness and the boundless potential of authentic expression.

Inside Without

Run time: 3:30

United States

Directed by Sasha Harrington

A dynamic cinematic aerial straps film featuring Sasha Harrington and Cassandra Cornell.

Ode Maritima

Run time: 6:00

Portugal

Directed by Fu Le

Set against Fernando Pessoa's poem of the same name, "Ode Maritima" explores the charged space between departure and arrival, self and other. Through a mysterious, suspended choreography, dancers drift like sails in the wind, embodying the swelling desire and nostalgia of a ship pulling away from shore. A lyrical screendance piece where flight, poetry, and emotional distance converge.

Ascensionism by Sleep Token - An Offering

Run time: 7:08

United States

Directed by Krista Smithers

The journey of ascending above what has been imposed, transforming what once seemed a weakness into strength. Yet, the structures we build in response cannot erase the past; the scars remain. This is the bittersweet dance we call life.

A Return to Movement

Run time: 5:51

United States

Directed by Jessica Swanson, Kara Starkweather, Lauren Godla

A Return to Movement is a short vertical dance film celebrating the largest dam removal project in world history and the Klamath River Renewal. Dancers are suspended over the water as they use movement to bring attention to this unprecedented environmental event.

Flowering Vines

Run time: 4:29

United States

Directed by Nina Sawant

An aerial hoop film created for Vespertine Circus's virtual show "Egress & Oriel".

Water Spirit

Run time: 5:40

United States

Directed by Cherie Carson, David Creech
"Water Spirit" is a dance that expresses the mysteries inside a drop of water. As icebergs melt and water transforms from frozen to liquid its spirit dances. Performance by UpSwing aerialist Helium Valentine, this aerial dance is performed inside a suspended snowglobe. Created in June 2022.

Vertical Feeling

Run time: 8:40

Finland

Directed by Jenny Mansikkasalo

Vertical feeling is a dream-like short film about what it's like to grow up climbing aerial silks. How does vertical suspension feel like in the body? How does it affect one's body image and maybe even the identity that's still developing? In the film memories, experiences and imagination blend together. The outlines of the body blur, the silks flood and the inner child has something to say.

Unending

Run time: 3:54

United States

Directed by Rachel Maxwell, Suzanne Gallo and Nino Fernandez

"UNENDING" is an exploration of self-love and acceptance, and an interpretation of how those sentiments evolve over time.

Space Opera

Run time: 6:20

South Korea

Directed by Jungkyun Shin

SPACE OPERA is a short aerial film by Jungkyun Shin that blends movement and cinematic imagery to explore the intersection of the human body, gravity, and the boundless imagination of space.



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SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture, Frank Smigiel, Patrick Hajduk, Marijane Kubow, Kelli Westad, David Coffman, to our generous funders and individual donors, Zaccho's amazing Board of Directors, staff, community, and Preservation Properties for taking such good care of us, to of our kind volunteers, the Circus International Film Festival, and all the fantastic rigging and technical crew. Deep gratitude to Brad Coley and Wendy vanden Heuvel for believing in us and to David Dower at Club Fugazi for the magical gifts to our youth performers. Finally, our heartfelt thanks and applause to the myriad of aerial artists exploring new forms and creating outstanding work here on our stages and around the world.

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The 2026 San Francisco Aerial Arts Festival is generously supported by Fort Mason Center for Arts and Culture, San Francisco Grants for the Arts, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Distracted Globe Foundation, Terry Sendgraff Scholarship Fund, JKW Foundation, Zellerbach Family Fund, California Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund and Zaccho's community of generous individual donors.

ZACCHO STUDIO

Rent our space!

Zaccho Studio, one of San Francisco's largest and most versatile studios, offers 3,480 square feet of sprung dance floor bathed in natural light from Southwest-facing windows. We offer this multi-use space for private events, rehearsals, performances, corporate productions, photo and video shoots, classes, and workshops. We provide rental discounts for artists and non-profit organizations.

Email studio@zaccho.org to reserve today!

Zaccho's AiR Program :

The Zaccho Studio Artist In Residency Program extends subsidized studio space to outstanding established and emerging artists in the fields of contemporary dance, aerial dance, circus art, and theatre. Check out www.zaccho.org for more information and upcoming opportunities.



JINSHAN: Seams of Gold - Film directed by Megan Lowe & Rose Huey



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**Thank you for joining us
in this celebration of innovation and artistry!**

**We hope you've enjoyed the
2026 San Francisco Aerial Arts Festival.**

**Let's keep flying!
Please make a tax-deductible contribution today**

**As a 501c3 organization, your contribution to Zaccho ensures
the continuation of a broad range of programming that serves
artists, audiences and families (for 46 years and counting!). This
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AUDIENCE SURVEY

