SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND IMPORTANT NOTES

PANELIST MANIFESTO

Chicago Dancemakers Forum’s Lab Artists Program represents a significant opportunity for artistic development not only for individual Chicago-area dancemakers, but for the city’s creative community as a whole. Such an investment in a dancemaker’s work could have a lifechanging, positive impact on their artistic trajectory and their artistic communities if distributed thoughtfully. As such, great care must be taken to ensure a fair and fruitful selection process. Panelists must be committed to ethics, timeliness, thorough review, and clear communication.

HOW ARE PANELISTS SELECTED?

Panelists are individually selected by Chicago Dancemakers Forum staff, with an aim to represent a variety of identities, networks, and artistic backgrounds.

PANELIST RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be intimately acquainted with selection criteria (see “CRITERIA”).
- Review all necessary applications within the review window (see “PANEL CALENDAR”).
- Attend designated Panel Day prepared and on-time (see “PANEL CALENDAR”).
- Commit to confidentiality with regards to applications and selection process (see “ETHICS”).
- Be honest about potential conflicts of interest (see “ETHICS”)
- Bear in mind potential biases while reviewing applications, whether they center around identity or personal tastes (see “ETHICS”).

PANEL CALENDAR

Preliminary Panel
Receive Applications: August 9, 2021
Application Review Period: August 9 – 17, 2021
  - Materials to review for each preliminary round application:
- Basic Info including checkboxes providing context for dancemaking
- Artist Resume
- Short essay (400 words) OR 3-minute video + 40-word overview
  - How do you describe the dance you make and/or your dancemaking processes?
  - What are your current areas of artistic inquiry? What are you making now?
  - How has the work you’ve done thus far impacted your development or momentum as an artist?
- 3-minute work sample and context/descriptive information
  - Expected # of applications: ~60-80 (process will be adapted if pool is too large for current setup; each panelist will be reviewing no more than 60 applications)

Panel Review Day: Thursday, August 19, 2021, 9am – 4pm CST (via Zoom)

Final Panel
Receive Applications: October 11, 2021
Application Review Period (Final): October 11 – 24, 2021
  - Materials to review for each application:
    - 2 short essays (400 words)
    - Up to 3 five-minute work samples
    - Proposed budget/timeline
    - Optional supplemental materials
  - Expected # of applications: ~15

Panel Review (Final): Monday, October 25, 2021, 9am – 4 pm CST (via Zoom)

If the panel meets in-person and not over Zoom, CDF will supply a lunch and probably work through lunch during the panel days, so please let us know of any dietary restrictions. Please bring your laptops and/or printed notes on all applicants. Also, if you request it, Chicago Dancemakers Forum can provide a binder of applications in hard copy.

For more details about each panel selection process, see Section 2 of the guide.

ETHICS

Chicago Dancemakers Forum is committed to making the local dance community a more ethical, accessible, and transparent place. Please bear the following notes in mind as you review applications for the Lab Artists Program.

Conflicts of interest:
A conflict of interest occurs when a panelist or their affiliate organization is in position to financially benefit from an applicant’s involvement in the Lab Artists program. If any of the panelists know there to be any conflicts of interest, they must recuse themselves and step outside the (Zoom) room before the discussion of those candidate(s) in question. Any panelist can also self-identify a conflict of interest if they feel they cannot be objective due to a close personal or working relationship with any applicant.
Confidentiality:
As a panelist, you will be privy to applicants’ personal information and intellectual property. You will also be sharing thoughts and opinions about applications with other panel members. To ensure personal safety and artistic integrity, this is a closed process. Please do not share any of the following with those outside of the panel or on social media:

- Identifying information, non-public work samples, or other application materials
- Names of applicants
- Names of other panelists
- Details of the selection process (was X’s application found lackluster, will ____ be advancing to the next round, etc.)

If you print or download application material, please delete all files after the selection process. In addition, please do not contact any applicant directly. If an artist contacts you about an application, refer all questions to Chicago Dancemakers Forum.

Your notes and comments throughout the review process will be kept anonymous but may be used to provide feedback to the artists, if requested. Your notes in Submittable will be seen by Chicago Dancemakers Forum staff but not by the applicants or other panelists.

Your participation in the panel will be listed on ChicagoDancemakers.org and in the media release announcing the 2022 Lab Artists (expected November 2021).

Understanding Bias:
Bias is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as, “a tendency, inclination, or leaning towards a particular characteristic, behavior, etc.” Though it is unfortunately impossible to remove all bias from a selection process, panelists should be aware of these two types of bias while participating in the panel. Art is subjective, but the aim is to be as objective as possible when selecting grantees.

Identity-based bias:
Identity-based bias as defined here would be an opinion of someone/their work based on:

- Race
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Veteran status
- Age
- Education
- Political affiliation
- Sexuality
- Gender identity
- Marital/parental status
- Disability
- Appearance
- Residency status
These kinds of biases have historically put minority groups at a disadvantage not only within the artistic community, but in American society at large. By having a say in who will receive funding, panelists have the power to either perpetuate or break down harmful structures created by such identity-based bias. The following tools may help you understand where you currently stand on personal biases so that you may improve.

- **Project Implicit** offers free implicit bias tests including (but not limited to) biases of race, religion, appearance, gender, and sexuality.
- **Eight tactics to identify and reduce your implicit biases**
- **6 Ways to Overcome Your Biases for Good**
- **The different types of unconscious bias: examples, effects, and solutions**

Artistic bias:

As previously stated, art is subjective. Panelists will be coming to the table with different aesthetic sensibilities, interests, and preferences. These personal tastes are likely to influence your decisions at least somewhat but try to put them aside and be as objective as possible when reviewing. Assess each application based on its own strengths and weaknesses, and not in relation to other applicants. In the context of the Lab Artist application, try to recognize where you may have a bias for and against different disciplines of dance.

It is also extremely important to be aware of how artistic and identity-based bias may overlap. A standard of **Eurocentrism**, **heteronormativity**, and **ability** has been pervasive in the art world, especially in dance. Ask yourself why you hold certain preferences: do you genuinely prefer them, or did society condition you to think certain artistic elements are “better”? **Take time to self-reflect and be aware of your biases.**

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**SECTION 2: SELECTION PROCESS**

The Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artists program supports individual dancemakers with $20,000 cash grants complimented by a year of mentorship. More information is available [here](#). In 2022, we will be selecting up to six awardees and we encourage you to visit the listing of [former Lab Artists Awardees](#). Please become familiar with the following eligibility items and restrictions for applicants:

**Eligibility**

Chicago Dancemakers Forum invited dancemakers/choreographers living in Chicago and vicinity who identify with the following statements to apply:

- I am currently and actively engaged in dancemaking in the Chicago Metropolitan Area (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, or Will County). [Note: Lab Artists may be asked to travel into the city for the quarterly gatherings.]
- I have a developed and distinctive trajectory in my dancemaking.
• I am ready to take my practice to the next level and am well positioned to participate in a year of creative research and deep inquiry.
• I have the capacity and the time to benefit from, and contribute to, an environment of artistic interchange.
• I can effectively make use of my time for independent project research and development.

Restrictions

• Lab Artists must reside in the Chicago Metropolitan Area (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, or Will County) during the duration of the calendar year of 2022. Applicants with dual-residency will not be considered.
• Students enrolled in degree programs at the time of application are not eligible for the Lab Artists program.
• Artists previously funded through the Lab Artists program previously and staff/contractors who have received >$5,000 from Chicago Dancemakers Forum in the 12 months prior to application are not eligible to apply.

APPLICATION CRITERIA

Applicants to the Lab Artists program must have a developed a distinctive trajectory in their work and be well positioned to participate in a year of creative research and dialogue with their Chicago Dancemakers Forum peers. The Lab Artists program supports individual dancemakers no matter the context in which they create dance (solo practice, partnerships, companies, collectives, crews, and other collaborations). Panelists will review applications based on these weighted criteria:

• **BODY OF WORK (40%)**: Applicant provides evidence of an established body of work as a dancemaker, as demonstrated in their resume and work sample(s). The submitted video(s) and optional supplemental files (such as reviews, articles, process materials) showcase the dancemaker’s compelling movement, strong demonstration of the use of dancemaking elements: time, space, and energy in concert with clear and distinct conceptual content. Improvised, communal, and choreographed dance forms are equally evaluated.
• **DISTINCTION (30%)**: Application demonstrates a clear artistic vision, distinctive artistic voice, and compelling area of artistic inquiry.
• **TIMING (30%)**: Artist demonstrates both readiness and the capacity to create work of greater depth and scale during the Lab Year. The applicant clearly shows that they are at an important juncture in their career and/or artistic trajectory, and names how the program could impact that trajectory.

ONLINE REVIEW PROCESS

Before the panel day, panelists are expected to have reviewed each application. In your notes in Submittable, please include recommended resources for the applicants’ artistic research, advice for other opportunities or next steps, and artists that they may want to check out. Here are step-by-step logistical instructions on how to review the applications:
1. Applications are collected via Submittable, so you will need a Submittable account before reviewing. You can easily make one here.

2. Next, click on the tab that says “Submissions”.

3. Go to the tab that says “Show Filters” (it says “Hide Filters” once clicked on). Toggle down from “Form” and select which set of applications you are looking at, either final or preliminary.

4. Select an applicant’s name or application title from the list.
5. On the screen, you will see the application to the left and a menu to the right. Click on the “Review” tab, and then click “My Review”.

6. Carefully scroll through the application, being sure to view all materials. On the right side of your screen, complete evaluations and comments for the application. When finished, hit “Finalize Review”.

7. And that’s it! You will be directed to a screen with the score you gave the applicant. From there you can click through other applications or go back to the main list with the buttons in the upper left.
PANEL DAY PROCESS

1. Candidates will be discussed in random order. The Program Director will first announce the name of each candidate, giving panelists time to find their corresponding notes.
2. If any of the panelists know there to be any conflicts of interest, they must recuse themselves and step outside the room/main Zoom meeting before the discussion of those applicant(s) in question. Any panelist can self-identify a conflict of interest if they feel they cannot be objective due to a close personal or working relationship with any applicant.
3. For each candidate, the panel will first revisit the work sample; no discussion during this time.
4. The panel will have approximately 5 minutes (inclusive of revisiting the work sample) to discuss each candidate based on all criteria. The Program Director will be responsible for tracking the timing and keeping timing fair for all applicants.
5. After each application have been discussed, the panel will have an opportunity to edit their scores.
6. The Program Director will tally and announce the results.
7. Panelists will then discuss the top ~15 finalists to move forward, re-voting if needed. After consensus on the finalists is reached and confirmed by the Executive Director, the panel is dismissed.

POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ITEMS

Please note the difference between the two rounds of application.
   Round one: Who is the applicant as a dancemaker? What/How do they make?
   Round two: What does the applicant propose to do during the Lab Year and why?

Approach the conversation with a broad definition of dancemaker.

What this program is NOT:
   • Lifetime Achievement Award
   • Award for Best Dance in Chicago

What does it mean to present one’s work?

Artists with Disabilities and Dancemakers working in certain dance communities may not have had the same level of opportunities available to them leading up to this point.

What does it mean to make an investment in an individual’s (such as the Lab Artists Program) vs. a project grant?
THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF THE LAB ARTIST PROGRAM PANEL!
IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROCESS OR THIS GUIDE, PLEASE REACH OUT TO CHICAGO DANCEMAKERS FORUM STAFF.

Guide created and designed by Merritt Stults, August 2021.