Award-winning choreographer Camille A. Brown is bringing her 12 dancers, two musicians and a chef to PS21 in Chatham, N.Y. to develop new work during a COVID-Bubble residency, Feb. 15-March 22.

CHATHAM, N.Y. — Camille A. Brown & Dancers begin a five-week residency Feb. 15 at PS21 — Performance Spaces for the 21st Century, 2980 Route 66.

Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Brown, her 12 dancers, two musicians, and a production/company manager and chef will be on PS21's campus through March 22 where they will inhabit a COVID-Bubble, living in spacious guesthouses while developing "Queens," a new solo work; reimagining "Matchstick," inspired by the Great Migration; and engaging in creative play.
"Camille’s artistic vision and commitment to community engagement through programs ... adapted to virtual and socially distanced modes during the pandemic, and its virtual Social Dance for Social Change school dovetail perfectly with our own community service initiatives and our conceptions of the role of the arts in contemporary life," PS21 artistic and executive director Elena Siyanko said in a prepared statement.

"Hosting CABD is integral to shaping PS21’s future and connecting us with the broader national and international performing arts landscape," Siyanko said. "We are deeply grateful to the Mellon Foundation for extending a lifeline to the performing arts during this period of unimagined challenge."

Brown received the 2020 Antonyo Award for Best Choreography for "For Colored Girls Who Have Committed Suicide/when the rainbow is enuf" and the 2020 Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Choreography. Last fall she was also feted with the 2020 Dance Magazine Award. The International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) recently honored her with its 2021 Distinguished Artist Award.

Brown was named Variety's Broadway of 2020 to Watch and received a Drama Desk Award nomination and two Lucille Lortel Award nominations for her work on "For Colored Girls ... " and "Toni Stone."

The Camille A. Brown & Dancers residency comes on the heels of a COVID-Bubble residency by American Ballet Theatre. It heralds a 2021 season of music, opera, circus and processional arts events in PS21’s open-air Pavilion and 100-acre campus, with what is described in a news release as "unmatched physical and environmental assets that ensure safe spaces for audiences."
In addition to ABT and Camille A. Brown & Dancers, artist residencies are planned for the development of new works which will be shared with the community through streaming, live discussions, and performances.

"PS21 is committed to building on founder Judy Grunberg’s ambitious vision by partnering with artists to create work that realizes the potential of our state-of-the-art theaters and campus,” Siyanko said. (Grunberg died Aug. 30, 2019 at age 86.)

PS21 Chatham/Pathways — free performances, arts and environmental education programs, and events in partnership with the Town and Village of Chatham — will again take place along the new trail system launched in 2020 and linking PS21’s 100 acres with Crellin Community Park’s 40 acres and beyond.

Siyanko reported that despite the COVID pandemic, between July 17 and Oct. 10, PS21 produced 42 programs of music, movement, multimedia, film, visual art, and panel discussion in its 350-seat open air Pavilion Theater, fields and along the new network of trails. "Forty of these events were livestreamed more than 9,000 times," Siyanko said.

PS21 also has announced the appointments of three new members of its board of directors — Jamal Jackson, founder and artistic director of Jamal Jackson Dance Company; Susan Kramer, a medieval historian, specializing in the religious culture of High Medieval Europe; and Tony Muoser, recently retired from a 35-year career in financial services that focused mainly focused on renewable energy finance, most recently as Managing Director of Rabobank’s Project Finance team in New York City.

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