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Contact: Hallie Kogelschatz (shark&minnow)
Tel: 617.270.1101
Email: hallie@shark&minnow.com

Contact: Beth Rutkowski (GroundWorks DanceTheater)
Tel: 216.751.0088
Email: beth@groundworksdance.org

GroundWorks DanceTheater Artist Felise Bagley Wins Cleveland Arts Prize Mid-Career Award

CLEVELAND, OH (May 18, 2015) – GroundWorks DanceTheater artist Felise Bagley has been awarded the prestigious Cleveland Arts Prize Mid-Career Award, recognizing her contributions to advancing the artistry of dance & community that surrounds it in Northeast Ohio.

“This award, to me, is exemplary of the way that Northeast Ohio has embraced me since I arrived in 1997,” says Bagley. “I feel completely honored – this community is incredibly sophisticated in their understanding of the arts and I feel a high level of gratitude for the way they have recognized the work I do inside of & outside of the studio.”

Bagley was nominated by GroundWorks Executive Artistic Director – and past Cleveland Arts Prize recipient – David Shimotakahara. “Her choice to live and work in Northeast Ohio has been a gift to the entire community,” he states. “ Felise is at the top of her profession and has always had an extraordinary commitment to artistic integrity – key factors in my decision to invite her to join GroundWorks in 2001. Now, as a senior member of our company, she plays a key collaborative role in the creation of new work as well as our educational programming throughout the region.”

The New York native doesn’t recall a time in her life that did not include her vision of becoming a professional dancer. She has said that she was raised to appreciate the arts, her family always supportive of her chosen path. She goes on to say that having that vision was merely the first step. “I’m not certain if I had an innate sense of discipline or if I made the decision to become this way – to train to be amazing in order to do this job. I was willing to make sacrifices, to keep my focus. It helped that I had great teachers. These individuals also told me that the life of a dancer is very short - you have to make every moment count & be very present. I give 110% - whether I’m on stage or in the community spreading an appreciation for dance.”

Bagley is known in this community as someone for whom it's not just about the job - it's how she lives outside of the studio as well. She is known for being generous to people, giving of herself and being ambassadorial on behalf of the art she is a part of. “I’m proud that [GroundWorks] performs in many non-traditional places where people that wouldn't be exposed to dance normally have a chance to see what we do. I’m always striving to spread a love of dance through my work – and I love the company as well as all of the people that are a part of it. We are truly a family – especially David [Shimotakahara]. There is a history of friendship and respect there.”

For Bagley, her passion for her work hasn’t waned. She continues to love coming to the studio every day. Whether she is focused on rehearsing a new work or building a love of dance with new audiences, she says that the key is discipline. “You have to work at everything in life. When you’re diligent, disciplined – beautiful things can happen.”



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About GroundWorks DanceTheater

Now in its 16th season, GroundWorks DanceTheater is dedicated to the development & presentation of new choreography & collaborations. The five-member company performs new works by Artistic Director, David Shimotakahara, & Artistic Associate, Amy Miller, as well as commissioned work by nationally & internationally acclaimed choreographers including Kate Weare, Ronen Koresh, Dianne McIntyre, Lynne Taylor-Corbett, Jill Sigman, Gina Gibney, David Parker & others.

GroundWorks DanceTheater's annual programming is made possible with funding from The National Endowment for the Arts, The Ohio Arts Council, Cuyahoga County residents through Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, The Cleveland Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, The Char & Chuck Fowler Family Foundation, The Toby Devan Lewis Philanthropic Fund, The John P. Murphy Foundation, The Kulas Foundation, The Judith Gerson Fund, Individual Contributors & Members of the GroundWorks Board of Directors.

For more information, please visit www.groundworksdance.org.

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