NEW ORLEANS’ YOUNG ARTISTS PERSEVERE THROUGH COVID-19 CHALLENGES TO TAKE ON GENTRIFICATION WITH A VIRTUAL DANCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE FESTIVAL

May 25th-29th, 2020 via Zoom

(New Orleans, LA - May 18, 2020) – Dancing Grounds’ teen dance company, DG Uprising, will premiere their new original performance piece, entitled Solastalgia, about gentrification and displacement at the 6th annual Dance for Social Change (DSC) Festival, now taking place virtually from May 25-29, 2020. The festival will kick off May 25th with a panel discussion, featuring local leaders including Councilmember Kristin Gisleson Palmer and Dr. Kimberley Richards, and will culminate with the premiere of Solastalgia on May 29th. In the words of Councilmember Jason Williams: “Dancing Grounds’ young artists are the moral compass and the leaders on the most pressing topics facing our city.”

Solastalgia combines dance, poetry, music, and theater in a new, unique format that creatively engages with our collective new virtual reality, to examine gentrification’s impact on the city ad (re)imagine a more equitable future. With festival activities spanning over a week, a group of 25 young artists will educate audiences, spark critical conversations, and inspire collective action. This festival was originally set to take place March 28-29, 2020 at the Contemporary Arts Center. Due to Covid-19, the festival was postponed and redesigned for a virtual format. Dancing Grounds’ youth launched an organization-wide initiative around gentrification as part of the 2019 festival, which audience members described as “Inspirational. Eye-opening. Powerful.” The 2020 festival is the culmination of two years of research, artmaking, and community engagements.

Dancing Grounds is the recipient of the Gambit’s 2020 Big Easy Award for Arts Education for its unique and transformative programs like Dance for Social Change, which brings youth and adults together to catalyze positive social change through the arts. Dancing Grounds was also recognized by the New Orleans City Council in February for its leadership in arts education. Audiences of all ages can experience Dancing Grounds’ work firsthand at the virtual Dance for Social Change Festival. All festival events are free and hosted on Zoom. Pre-registration is required to receive the Zoom event links.

May 25-29: Virtual Dance for Social Change Festival Events

The “New” Normal: Panel Discussion on Gentrification, COVID-19 and New Orleans
Monday, May 25th, 5:15-6 pm CST on Zoom
Moderated by: Frederick “Hollywood” Delahoussaye (Ashé Cultural Arts Center)
Panelists: Councilmember Kristin Gisleson Palmer (District C), Dr. Kimberley Richards (People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond), Akilah Toney (DG Uprising), and Shana M. griffin.

REGISTRATION LINK
Dancing Grounds
Building Community Through Dance

NOLA Rooted Online Dance Workshops
Tuesday May 26th - Thursday 28th, 7-8 pm CST on Zoom
New Orleans native dance artists will teach special workshops that engage with the larger DSC theme through movement & discussion by sharing how growing up in New Orleans has impacted their artistic & movement practices, how New Orleans dance genres have impacted the dance field as a whole, and how we can all responsibly engage with the city’s unique culture. Participating dance artists are: Jasmin Simmons, Catherine Caldwell (Former NOCCA Faculty, Urban Bush Women), and Lalah Smith.

REGISTRATION LINK

“SOLASTALGIA” Performance Film Premiere and Q&A with Teen Artists
Friday, May 29th, 5:30-6:30 pm CST on Zoom
Showing and discussion of the video adaptation of DG Uprising’s newest original piece, Solastalgia, which combines dance, poetry, music, and theater in a unique virtual format that examines gentrification’s impact on the city and (re)imagines a more equitable future.

REGISTRATION LINK

Dance for Social Change Information/Links

Solastalgia trailer video

Video overview of the Dance for Social Change initiative against gentrification

Dance for Social Change website

Photos and Graphics for Press download (Photo credit: Fernando Lopez)

This program is supported by:

About Dancing Grounds
Developing young leaders. Promoting health & wellness. Advocating for social change. Dancing Grounds (DG) is a multigenerational arts organization that brings inclusive and accessible dance programs to New Orleans residents of all ages. For more info: http://www.dancinggrounds.org/