

For Immediate Release

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*FUSED - French U.S. Exchange in Dance grant award to Chez Bushwick and Collective Nafass, for the United States debut of choreographer Nidal Abdo, whose Syrian, Ukrainian, and Palestinian heritage inform *Habitus*, a dance performance that “explores movement and bodies in exile, across new territories along a sand stage.” Nidal Abdo, Cynthia Dariane, Katell Yvonne Lucienne Ollier, and Khaled Al-Warea, collaborators of the diaspora who have received refuge in France, and will travel to Chez Bushwick thanks to the support of FUSED, and the organization’s Board Of Directors, who successfully guided a complex Visa process for these artists to benefit from a residency in the United States, during the Villa Albertine Dance Season 2023.*

**FUSED, Chez Bushwick, Collective Nafass, Nidal Abdo
Villa Albertine Dance Season 2023
Artist-In-Residence Program**

Brooklyn, NY - July 18, 2023

In a rare feat and multi-year process of Board and Staff alignment, following pandemic planning during 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, the Board Of Directors of Chez Bushwick / Jonah Bokaer Arts Foundation successfully guided a complex Visa process for the members of Collective Nafass, Nidal Abdo, Cynthia Dariane, Katell Yvonne Lucienne Ollier, and Khaled Al-Warea to benefit from a residency in the United States, during the Villa Albertine Dance Season 2023. A public facing program will take place on Monday, August 14th at 7:30pm at Chez Bushwick, and the artists will receive a unique one month residency in the AIRs program area of Chez Bushwick, which has remained stable since 2002, providing robust residency support to choreographers in Bushwick, the 34th District of Brooklyn, NY at a diverse community arts facility for dance and free expression.

Founded in May 2018, Collective Nafass brings together performers with a shared interest for two languages: Arabic and dance. Even though they have different training backgrounds and artistic sensibilities, all members have gone through exile and loss. Together, they want to express the depth of the Syrian tragedy, the reminiscence of war in their everyday life. They performed at the Arab World Institute, Napoli Teatro, Carthage and Ramallah festivals. Collective Nafass is supported by the Agency Of Artists In Exile. “Nafass,” the Arabic word for breath, poetically encapsulates and transmits the collective’s transcendent approach to choreography and performance making, amongst dancers and artists whose status seeking refuge, safe harbor, and support in evident in the themes of the work, addressing trauma, displacement, humanitarian tragedy in Syria, and more.

FUSED - French U.S. Exchange in Dance and Chez Bushwick have partnered together on allied missions since 2008, for a total of five awarded grants furthering Franco-American exchanges in dance, choreography, and related forms. Founded by Jonah Bokaer in 2002, a Young Leader of the French American Foundation, Chez Bushwick has long been an oasis of local and international support for the field, which simultaneously maintains among the most affordable rehearsal space rates in New York State, while also sustaining a unique profile of international relations in the performing arts. This is also reflected in the organization’s program staff, and Board Of Directors: an informed and engaged group of international performance supporters who united during the pandemic recovery to nominate Nidal Abdo for the grant (Youness Anzane, Board Advisor); aid in the leadership of FUSED and grant administration (Nicole Birmann Bloom, Board Advisor); and heroically volunteer as pro-bono counsel for the visa process for the artists, whose complexity spanned 2021, 2022, and 2023 resulting in a July 18th visa approval of P3 and P3S visas for the artists (Brandon McNamee, Esq., Managing Attorney, Casado & McNamee Law, who heroically guided the process and appeal successfully).

”As the worldwide crisis of forced migration continues to grow, there could not be a more important moment for American audiences to experience the immediacy and passion of this culturally unique portrayal of the Middle Eastern refugee experience,” says Mr. McNamee, who exemplified the allied mission of both the presenting organization, and the remarkably effective firm Casado & McNamee law, while guiding the process with rare skill, tenacity, and patience. As a guiding source of legal expertise, generosity, and in this case nonprofit Board work as well, Mr. McNamee’s stewardship of the unique and multiple visas confirmed during the pandemic recovery years of this case, also prove to be an uncommon story for the dance world, and performing arts Boards coming together across sectors.

Shared throughout 2023 during the highly anticipated Villa Albertine Dance Season 2023, the nation-wide initiative is a year-long celebration of the art of dance from inception to performance. “With their exploration of movement through bodies in exile, Collective Nafass contributes an essential voice in the greater understanding of migration and the acceptance of others. Villa Albertine is proud to support their U.S. premiere in New York,” said Gaëtan Bruel, Director of Villa Albertine, and Cultural Counselor of the French Embassy in the U.S.

Villa Albertine and its leadership postulate, and Chez Bushwick agrees, that international dance exchange between France and the United States has been thriving for many years: Bokaer’s career as a teenager working with Merce Cunningham, Robert Wilson, and the performance companies of the 20th century instilled a strong, constant reinforcement of French American performing arts exchanges, which was also integral to the inspiration to establish Chez Bushwick, geared towards a new generation of that trans-Atlantic ongoing dialogue. Through Villa Albertine, the ability to cultivate new relationships and reinforce dynamic cooperation among individuals and institutions across the Atlantic has nurtured and given rise to a new generation of artists and choreographers. Mutual artistic influences have created a more inclusive and diverse dance scene. To continue the momentum, Villa Albertine, the new French institution for arts and ideas in the United States, organizes a national Dance Season in 2023, which takes place throughout the United States, to reflect on the evolution of dance in a post pandemic world and to encourage a new generation of dancers and choreographers. Villa Albertine Dance Season includes a program of residencies, dance companies on tour, a program of panels and talks, and a professional symposium. (Click [here](#) for more details.)

Chez Bushwick’s Artist-In-Residence (AIR) Program has provided steadily programmed residencies in Bushwick, Brooklyn since the studio's founding in 2002. Awarded artists receive 75 hours of safely designated rehearsal space at Chez Bushwick as well as a public performance opportunity. Our organization is honored to mindfully continue a mission of support for emerging and mid-career diverse artists, as incoming AIRs build their creative work in a facility that has successfully steered an ongoing mission to foster the development, research, and presentation of new multi-disciplinary performance works.

Run time 1 hour without intermission. Child friendly, but most appropriate for ages 12 and up. ADA Accessible.

Logistics:

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Where: Chez Bushwick
304 Boerum Street, #23
Brooklyn, NY 11206

Tickets: [Hyperlink](#)

Show Times: Monday, August 14th, 2023 7:30p.m.-8:30p.m. EST

Accessibility:

The facility is equipped with accessible entrances, ramps, and elevators to ensure that artists with mobility challenges can navigate the premises comfortably. Additionally, the foundation works closely with artists to accommodate specific accessibility needs during their residency, such as providing audio description, or other necessary accommodations.

For Individual inquiries, Please contact development@jonahbokaer.net or call +1-718-418-4405 for help acquiring an audio recording of this information or any other programming publications.

PRODUCTION CREDITING
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Institutional Support

Special Thanks to Villa Albertine Dance Season 2023, FUSED - French U.S. Exchange in Dance, New York State Council on the Arts, Harkness Foundation for Dance, Fox Samuels Foundation, Prospect Hill Foundation, and the Board Of Directors of Chez Bushwick / Jonah Bokaer Arts Foundation.

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Collective Nafass

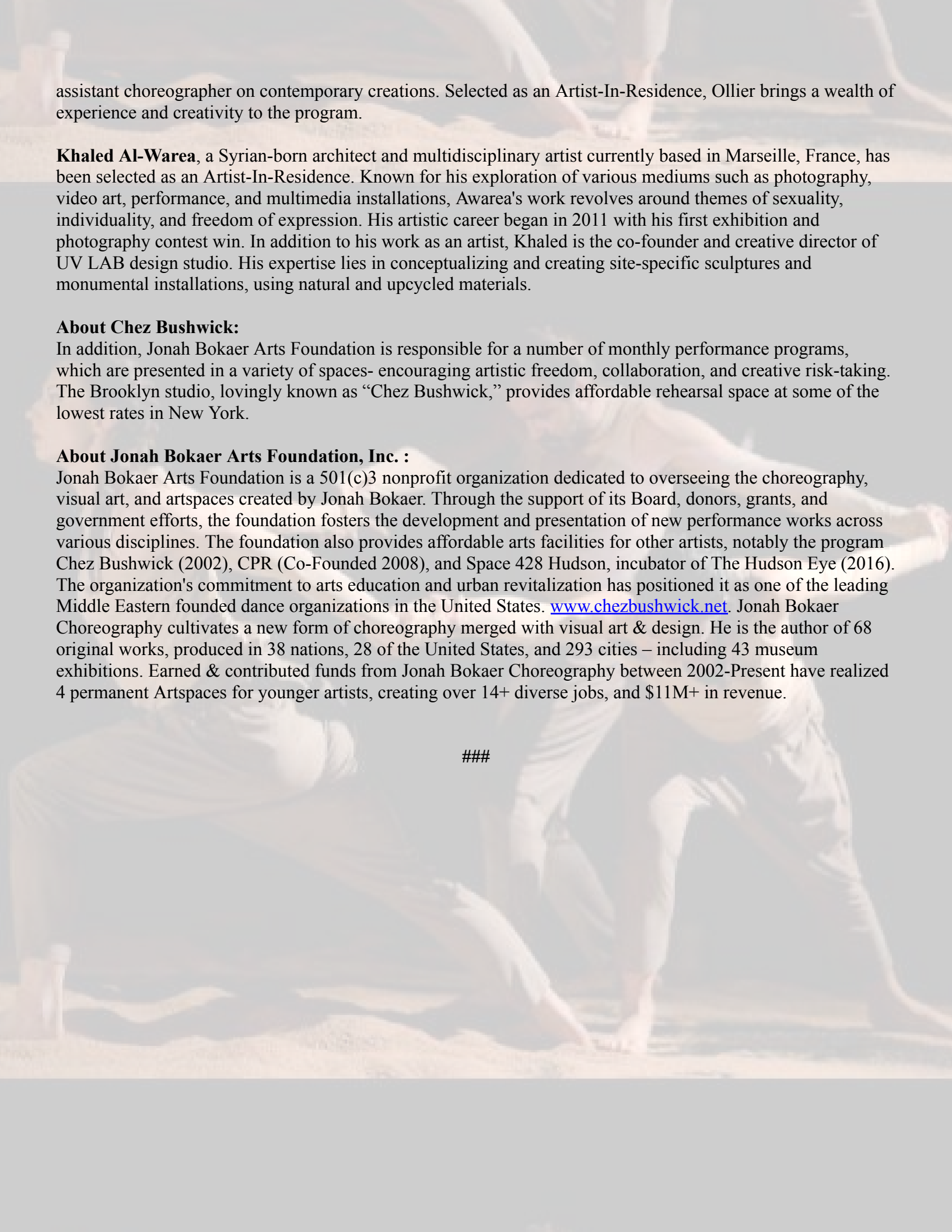
Founded in May 2018, Collective Nafass brings together performers with a shared interest for two languages: Arabic and dance. Even though they have different training backgrounds and artistic sensibilities, all members have gone through exile and loss. Together, they want to express the depth of the Syrian tragedy, the reminiscence of war in their everyday life. They performed at the Arab World Institute, Napoli Teatro, Carthage and Ramallah festivals. Collective Nafass is supported by the agency of artists in exile.

About The Artists

Nidal Abdo was born in Damascus, Syria. Nidal started dancing at the Ballet Dance School of the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus in 1999. In 2005, his journey to become a trained dancer began with the Syrian Enana Dance Company. He became a professional dancer, traveling with the band to participate in many festivals. Starting in 2010, Nidal danced with Caracalla Dance Company, gaining experience in many different types of dance, such as Marta Graham's style, modern jazz, contemporary, and folkloric dance. He went on to complete his diploma in Modern-jazz at the National Institute of Dance in Paris, "Center National de la Danse". Nidal then founded the Collective Nafass in early 2018 in France. He participated with Nafass in European and Arab festivals, with his first show "What If Tomorrow" 2018. He is a member of L'atelier des Artistes en Exil.

Cynthia Dariane, a dancer and jazz dance teacher with a Ph.D. in French Literature focused on the relationship between literature and dance, joins the cohort of Artists-In-Residence. Involved in choreography, theater, concerts, teaching, and conferences, Cynthia is an all-rounder whose talents span the worlds of writing, literature, and dance. She upholds that dance is a life discipline and an identity. With her diverse talents in choreography, theater, writing, and teaching, Dariane is a dynamic addition to the program.

Katell Yvonne Lucienne Ollier, Trained in ballet, and from there, went on to follow a multidisciplinary professional dance formation. Since coming to Paris when she was 18 years old, she has been working in several companies and famous Parisian stages, such as "Le Paradis Latin", "Bobino", "Le Lido de Paris". She herself also produced numerous TV shows and musical shows. Katell also participated as a dancer and an



assistant choreographer on contemporary creations. Selected as an Artist-In-Residence, Ollier brings a wealth of experience and creativity to the program.

Khaled Al-Warea, a Syrian-born architect and multidisciplinary artist currently based in Marseille, France, has been selected as an Artist-In-Residence. Known for his exploration of various mediums such as photography, video art, performance, and multimedia installations, AWAREA's work revolves around themes of sexuality, individuality, and freedom of expression. His artistic career began in 2011 with his first exhibition and photography contest win. In addition to his work as an artist, Khaled is the co-founder and creative director of UV LAB design studio. His expertise lies in conceptualizing and creating site-specific sculptures and monumental installations, using natural and upcycled materials.

About Chez Bushwick:

In addition, Jonah Bokaer Arts Foundation is responsible for a number of monthly performance programs, which are presented in a variety of spaces- encouraging artistic freedom, collaboration, and creative risk-taking. The Brooklyn studio, lovingly known as “Chez Bushwick,” provides affordable rehearsal space at some of the lowest rates in New York.

About Jonah Bokaer Arts Foundation, Inc. :

Jonah Bokaer Arts Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to overseeing the choreography, visual art, and artspaces created by Jonah Bokaer. Through the support of its Board, donors, grants, and government efforts, the foundation fosters the development and presentation of new performance works across various disciplines. The foundation also provides affordable arts facilities for other artists, notably the program Chez Bushwick (2002), CPR (Co-Founded 2008), and Space 428 Hudson, incubator of The Hudson Eye (2016). The organization's commitment to arts education and urban revitalization has positioned it as one of the leading Middle Eastern founded dance organizations in the United States. www.chezbushwick.net. Jonah Bokaer Choreography cultivates a new form of choreography merged with visual art & design. He is the author of 68 original works, produced in 38 nations, 28 of the United States, and 293 cities – including 43 museum exhibitions. Earned & contributed funds from Jonah Bokaer Choreography between 2002-Present have realized 4 permanent Artspaces for younger artists, creating over 14+ diverse jobs, and \$11M+ in revenue.

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