

# FEAST: a ballet

A production of The Creative Destruction Collective, 2020

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# COLLECTIVE MISSION

*FEAST: a ballet* was produced by Cleveland-area artists working under the name Creative Destruction Collective.

Creative Destruction is a shorthand economics term widely used to describe the driving force underlying free market capitalism, and is highlighted in the mission of the Collective: To explore the legacy of colonial exploitation and its effects on the world in which we live.



# Corrie Slawson, Executive Producer



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

Artist Corrie Slawson's work explores landscapes related to social and environmental equity, made through layers of printmaking, painting and other mixed media.

Visual references to the Colonial history of Cleveland's regional lifecycle are repeated throughout America's Gilded age of unchecked wealth and growth stuck in cycles of sprawl, divestment and racism.

Corrie's work can be seen in permanent public collections such as The Cleveland Clinic Collection, University Hospitals Cleveland, Metro Health and Progressive Insurance.

Nationally, her work has been exhibited at The Toledo Museum of Art, The Peoria Art Guild, Rockford Art Museum, and at her BFA Alma Mater, Parsons School of Design.

Internationally Corrie's work has been exhibited at Centro Cultural de Tijuana, Premio Marcchioni in Sardinia and through the Grafikwerkstatt, Dresden. She has won several Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Awards, and is represented by Shaheen Gallery in Downtown Cleveland.

In November, 2020, Corrie presented a solo exhibit of paintings at The Massillon Museum, adding to her exhibitions locally at Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, SPACES, and Zygote Press. She is part-time faculty in the Painting and Drawing Department of Kent State University School of Art.



# Christina Lindhout, Co-Producer & Choreographer

Christina Lindhout is a professional dancer and choreographer based in Cleveland, Ohio, with over 20 years of training in classical ballet, modern, jazz, and tap.

She has danced professionally since she was 18 years old, and has performed many principal roles both locally and internationally. Christina performed as a Company Member with Verb Ballets from 2014 to 2020, performing on several tours including ones to Taipei, Taiwan and Havana, Cuba.

In addition to performing and choreographing, Christina directs the school at Verb Ballets Center for Dance. Christina teaches at Baldwin Wallace University as an Adjunct Dance Faculty member. Most recently, Christina was the recipient of an Akron Soul Train Fellowship award for the choreography of FEAST, along with Kelly Korfhage.

IG: @christina\_lindhout



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

# Kelly Korfhage, Choreographer



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

Kelly Korfhage, a native of Cleveland, began her training at age 10 under Joanne H. Morscher and Ana Lobe. She attended summer intensives at ABT Detroit, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, BalletMet, Cincinnati Ballet, and North Carolina Dance Theatre.

Kelly furthered her dance education at the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music as a Corbett Award scholarship recipient and graduated cum laude with a BFA in ballet performance.

Following graduation, Kelly became a member of Kansas City Ballet's second company, KCB2, for two seasons where she performed with the company in repertoire such as Septime Webre's Alice (In Wonderland) and Adam Houghland's Rite of Spring. Kelly joined Verb Ballets in 2016 and has been featured in works such as Andante Sostenuto and Schubert Waltzes. In addition to co-choreographing FEAST, she dances the role of Marie, The Monarch. She appears in FEAST courtesy of Verb Ballets.



## Dyebo Shabalala, Research & Writing

Dr. Dalindyabo Shabalala is an Associate Professor at the University of Dayton School of Law, a fellow of the UD Human Rights Center and the Hanley Sustainability Institute. He is also a fellow at the Institute for Globalization and International Regulation (IGIR) and Faculty of Law at Maastricht University, The Netherlands. His research focuses on climate change and intellectual property issues on one hand and on Traditional Knowledge and Folklore issues on the other.

He has been an adviser to developing countries and civil society in negotiations at the UNFCCC, WIPO, the WTO, the Convention on Biological Diversity and in several regional and bilateral free trade agreement negotiations.

Dr. Shabalala was Managing Attorney of CIEL's Geneva office, and Director of CIEL's Intellectual Property and Sustainable Development Project. He focused on issues of intellectual property and climate change, human health, biodiversity and food security, as well as addressing systemic reform of the international intellectual property system. Dr. Shabalala was a research fellow in the Innovation, Access to Knowledge, and Intellectual Property Programme at the South Centre (2005-2006), an intergovernmental organization of developing countries in Geneva, Switzerland.



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

## Marc Lefkowitz, Research & Writing



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

Marc Lefkowitz is a sustainability consultant with over 15 years of experience as a researcher, project manager, and thought leader who has been driving community conversations in environmental policy, education, and community engagement.

Lefkowitz led the Green CityBlue Lake Institute (GCBL) at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, where he helped the public explore sustainability, natural history, and how to change human systems to address the existential climate crisis. Before that, Lefkowitz produced content for the GCBL web site ([gcbl.org](http://gcbl.org)) for a decade, providing a comprehensive view

of the sustainability sector in Northeast Ohio. Lefkowitz has served on numerous boards and advisory councils studying climate and sustainability solutions including the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County Climate Action Plans.

Lefkowitz has a creative partnership with his wife, visual artist Corrie Slawson, producing the arts and culture online 'zine *Hotel Bruce* from 2003 – 2004, as artists-in-residence at the TJ in China Project Space in Tijuana, Mexico, and produced the novella, *Borderlands*.

# PROJECT PURPOSE



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

*FEAST: a ballet* combines sculptural and painted objects created by visual artist Corrie Slawson with original choreography by dancers Christina Lindhout and Kelly Korfhage to explore the peaks and valleys of human consumption. With *FEAST*, the complex narratives of seven commodities—Beef, Bananas, Coffee, Sugar, Minerals, Rubber and Timber—are represented.

The story of *FEAST* is a window into a system of ruler and ruled, consumer and consumed, complicity and resistance, and the pleasure and pain it produces. Dissent and desire are tangled up within a system designed to exploit human and natural resources and leave only some on top.

The real-world inspiration for the setting of *FEAST* is America and Europe's Gilded Age of unchecked wealth and growth. The ballet depicts how this time period was blinded by the glitter and glory of an endless cycle of overconsumption. The dancers fall prey to a system with deeply troubling structures: as it farms and manufactures our desires it also feasts on human bodies and natural resources.

# CHOREOGRAPHIC STATEMENT



The goal of the *FEAST: a ballet's* choreography is to simplify the complex themes of Colonialism and its effects on the world we live in. We wanted to create an easy to follow narrative demonstrating how it was, how it is, and how it can be.

The choreography explores these complexities through the interaction between dancers and objects to communicate our story to a general audience. The choreography of the corps de ballet proceeds in a circular manner, like a carousel, and is meant to symbolize the systemic, out of control nature of the environmental and economic processes that we are exploring.

*FEAST* blends classical and contemporary ballet movement. Beginning in a purely classical style of ballet, the six dancers are introduced to the expectations of a "high class" lifestyle. The movement style of the corps de ballet becomes violent as their environment changes throughout the ballet.

The hand gestures of Marie, the Monarch, came from extensive research into the hand gestures found in portraits of upper class European women between 1600 and 1800. Tina, the Invisible Worker, takes inspiration for her movements from Charlie Chaplin, Fred Astaire, and the more grounded dance style of tap dancing. Her movement is meant to be comic, down-to-earth, and relatable in comparison to the other characters in the ballet. *FEAST's* choreography remains open-ended, in the hopes that our audience leaves questioning the status quo to which we have all become accustomed.



# SYNOPSIS: Overture



*FEAST*: a ballet opens on an ornate set, reminiscent of a Dutch still life painting. The set is composed of four tables on the outskirts of the stage each adorned with well-known commodities: Beef, Bananas, Coffee, Sugar, Minerals, Rubber, and Timber.

Marie, the Monarch, enters and marvels at the riches and beauty. Marie beckons for her enabler, Kat, who carries a gold sculpture (Lancelot, a symbol of aristocracy) to her table.

The first of the corps de ballet of dancers—the Leader—emerges. Enamored of Marie, he gives her a flower from his table. Marie hatches a plot to secure the resources she sees on the surrounding four tables.

The Leader demonstrates he will be her willing subject.



Photos: Liz Cooper, 2020

# First Movement



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

Corps de ballet dancers emerge, and The Leader, now believing he is above them in social status, tries to coerce them into giving gifts to gain favor with Marie. They begin to buy into the idea that giving is the ultimate goal. The Dissenter, who has been hiding up to this point, is discovered keeping watch on them. She is dragged out by the others and forced to hand over her prized possession. Her peers coerce the Dissenter into participating in this system.

Over the course of the movement, the dancers begin to discreetly try to one-up each other with gifts, which grow in size. Feeling that they have “won” by giving the biggest gift (the ficus), two of the dancers celebrate their accomplishment. Lancelot’s table is now overflowing, while the rest of the tables are bereft.



## Second Movement



The Dissenter is consumed by the cycle of giving to Lancelot and Marie. Seeing that someone has given the ficus tree—clearly the largest gift so far—the Dissenter frantically searches for a new gift, only to come up empty-handed. Another dancer enters to continue the cycle of giving Lancelot gifts.

The Dissenter stops her, and tries to show her that the four perimeter tables are running out of resources and that their current trajectory is unsustainable.

The remaining dancers enter and are equally alarmed that they are running out. Their movement style begins to degrade as they turn on each other. The rest of the second movement is spent frantically searching for more gifts, only to find they have nothing left to give.



Photos: Liz Cooper, 2020

## Third Movement

The scene is chaos and disarray. Marie enters and is initially pleased with the almost comically large accumulation of wealth on Lancelot's table. When she notices the mess that surrounds it, she beckons for Tina Putzfrau, the Invisible Worker, to clean up, then arrogantly leaves without a second glance. Tina enters and sees that all of the wealth has accumulated on Lancelot's table, but feels powerless to change it. In order to survive (as Marie has never paid Tina for her work), she takes a few scraps of what has been left behind by the others. Tina concludes her solo by cleaning up the mess with which she was initially tasked.



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

# Finale



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

The corps de ballet continues in-fighting as they scour for scraps of the remaining resources. The Dissenter is once again hiding in fear under a table, not wanting to participate. She sneaks out and attempts to retrieve the sustenance (banana) that is hers, finally succeeding.

The Dissenter attempts again to tell the others they are fighting over mere scraps, instead of addressing the root of the problem. She shares her discovery with the Leader and the rest of the dancers, and this time they unite.

The six hatch a plan to band together to reclaim their former wealth and topple Lancelot. They ultimately succeed, with the Dissenter removing Lancelot from his pedestal and the Leader smashing him, thus freeing the corps de ballet from the unforgiving and unsustainable cycle.

# THE SYSTEM Corps de Ballet



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

The corps de ballet as a whole represents the system.

This is the system of production that takes resources from the periphery to the center, where raw resources are turned into products for sale in the Global North.

This is the system of global trade of goods, created during the Colonial era in service of the Monarch Marie and Lancelot, relegating all others to the role of servants. This is the system of global capitalism, in which owners/investors rule over labor and consumers.

The corps de ballet shows how we are both subject to, and participants in the system, simultaneously, owners, investors, laborers, consumers: capitalists. It is the system we need to fight, not each other.



## Lancelot (statue)

Lancelot is modeled on Lancelot “Capability” Brown, the English Master gardener who introduced the idea of broad, green lawns as the height of upper-class English property owner fashion, displacing gardens and wild landscapes. The lawn was an infectious idea for the middle classes from America to Australia to South Africa.

Our Lancelot is a symbol, but also a false, golden idol. The way that Lancelot meets his end in our story tells us that the dancers representing the system realize that he needs to be toppled in order to seize control of their destiny.



## MARIE, The Monarch



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

Marie is the Monarch. She embodies both Marie Antoinette, the French Queen who was quoted as telling her people to eat cake when there was no bread (the veracity of which is debatable), and Mary, the Dutch Queen whose nation's appetite for resources led to the degradation of the “New World.” In partnership with Lancelot, she represents the heart of the system in which we are all both participants and subjects.

A system that demands more novelty, more goods. Cheaper. Faster.



## KAT, The Enabler

Kat van Rensselaer's name derives from the original Dutch colonists on the Island of Manhattan (originally called New Amsterdam) and the wealth and power that grew there.<sup>2</sup> In their conquest of the "New World," Kat is the foot soldier of empire and global capitalism.

Dutch traders extracted resources from America, Africa and Asia and brought them back to Europe as products for the growing middle classes. They are the system; the servants of the monarchy. Kat, dressed in gender ambiguous pantaloons (that match Marie's skirt) brings Marie the golden Lancelot statue. Kat is the Enabler to Marie's desires.

Kat also represents the "fat cat" cartoon stereotype created in 19th century editorial cartoons. Those cartoons famously ridiculed business magnates and politicians who were accused of serving one another's needs at the expense of the larger population.



## TINA PUTZFRAU The Invisible Worker



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

Tina Putzfrau is a complex character, at once invisible, called in to clean up the mess of the system and also proud of her work. Putzfrau means "cleaning lady" in German. Tina represents the invisible labor in our system; the labor of women, and the labor behind many of our products.

Tina deals with the trash and detritus of our used goods. It is a tragi-comic role because her invisibility lends secret access, a view of the ridiculousness of power.

Her role is tragic because invisibility allows Capitalist disregard. What is true about the first revolutions is true about the new: nothing is possible without labor.

Tina gets the job done, she clears the path for the corps de ballet to return to carry out the revolution. But she also makes her own work tolerable, even joyful, so that she can stand to sweep another day.

# CREATIVE DESTRUCTION



*...[the] process of industrial mutation that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one...*

-Joseph Schumpeter, Economist

# Daniel Cho



Daniel Cho is first generation Korean American and holds a Bachelor of Arts Special Major in Dance and Education from Swarthmore College.

He is a proud graduate of the Alonzo King LINES Ballet Training Program, where he performed works by Alonzo King, Sidra Bell, Shannon Gillen, Alex Ketley, Maurya Kerr, and Gregory Dawson.

Currently a dancer with Verb Ballets, some of his favorite performances have included Tarantella, Adam Hougland's K281, and Stephanie Martinez's Wandering On. A recent career highlight was having the opportunity to perform as Mercutio in Alonso's Romeo and Juliet at the National Theater in Havana, Cuba.

Daniel is also a freelance writer and his works have recently been published in Dance Magazine. Daniel appears in FEAST courtesy of Verb Ballets.

# Sabrina Lindhout

Sabrina is a native of Mansfield, Ohio and began her dance journey with ballet at age 4. She was accepted as a member of the pre-professional program of Ashland Regional Ballet during high school, performing pieces in jazz, tap, modern, and ballet.

Sabrina attended summer studies with Joffrey Midwest, Orlando Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, and, upon graduating high school, was awarded a scholarship to study as a trainee with BalletMet in Columbus, Ohio. She moved to Cleveland in the fall of 2015 to dance with Verb Ballets as a guest artist, and was asked to stay on as a trainee for their 2016-17 season. As a trainee, Sabrina performed in multiple pieces by notable choreographers such as Antonio Brown, Heinz Poll, and Tommie-Waheed Evans.

After graduating from Verb's two-year program in the summer of 2018, Sabrina began dancing with Inlet Dance Theatre for the 2018-19 season, where she is currently a Company Member.

Sabrina teaches ballet, tap, and jazz, and works in arts and non-profit administration. Sabrina appears in FEAST courtesy of Inlet Dance Theatre.



# Lieneke Matte

Lieneke Matte was raised in the Bronx, NY. She received her early training at Ballet Tech and the School of American Ballet. Matte attended Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts in New York City.

Lieneke studied for a semester at the Western Australian Academy of the Performing Arts. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with a BFA in dance from SUNY Purchase College where she performed in works by George Balanchine, Paul Taylor, Merce Cunningham, Nicolo Fonte, Lar Lubovitch and Nicholas Villeneuve. Lieneke received the President's Award for the dance conservatory.

Following graduation she joined Verb Ballets, where she is currently in her eighth season. During her time with the company she has performed in works by Adam Hougland, Anthony Krutzkamp, Heinz Poll, Charles Anderson, Lauren Edson, Antonio Brown, Tommy-Waheed Evans, and Stephanie Martinez. Lieneke danced in the documentary, No Dominion: The Ian Horvath Story, created by PNB soloist Margaret Mullin. She has danced across the United States and abroad, having performed with Body EDT in Taiwan as well as ProDanza in Cuba. Lieneke appears in FEAST courtesy of Verb Ballets.





## Antonio Morillo



Antonio is first-generation Cuban American born in Orlando, FL. He received his Associate of Arts in Dance Performance from Valencia College and BFA in Dance Performance from the University of South Florida. Antonio has performed with the Patel Conservatory's Next Generation Ballet as well as Tampa City Ballet.

He has performed works by Jon Lehrer, José Limón, Alonzo King LINES

Ballet, Robert Moses' Kin, and Maurice Causey. Antonio joined Verb Ballets in 2016 and has been featured in works such as Andante Sostenuto and Aposiopesis. Antonio appears in FEAST courtesy of Verb Ballets.

## Elizabeth “Betsie” Schaeffer



Elizabeth “Betsie” Schaeffer was born and lived in Karachi, Pakistan before returning to New Hampshire at age 11. Betsie began her dance career with Northeastern Ballet Theatre. She attended Belhaven University in Jackson, Mississippi where she received awards for outstanding artistic and scholastic achievements. Schaeffer attended the Bates Dance Festival, guested in local theaters as Sugar Plum and Princess Florine, and performed for adjudicators at the Alabama Dance Festival

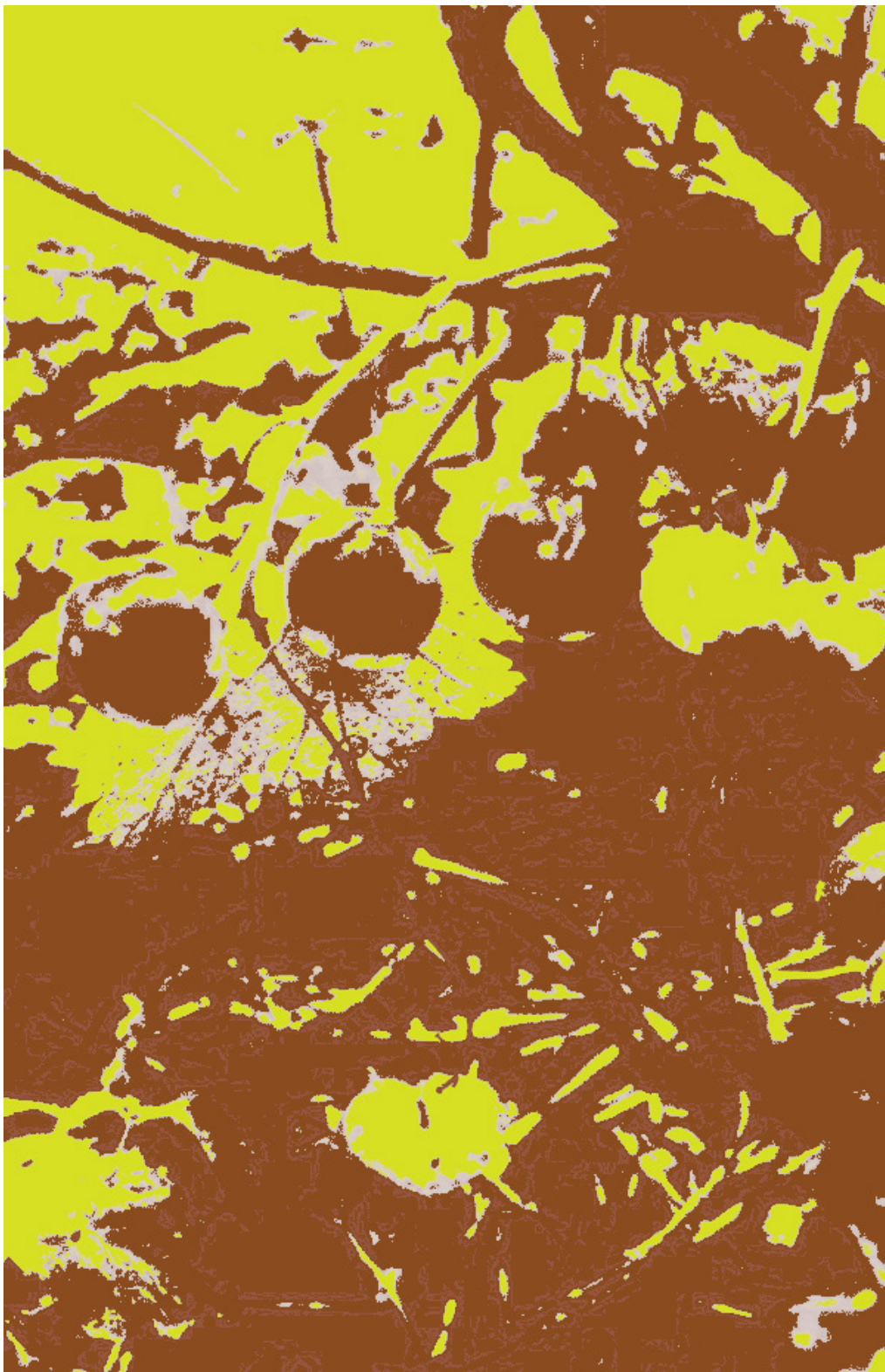
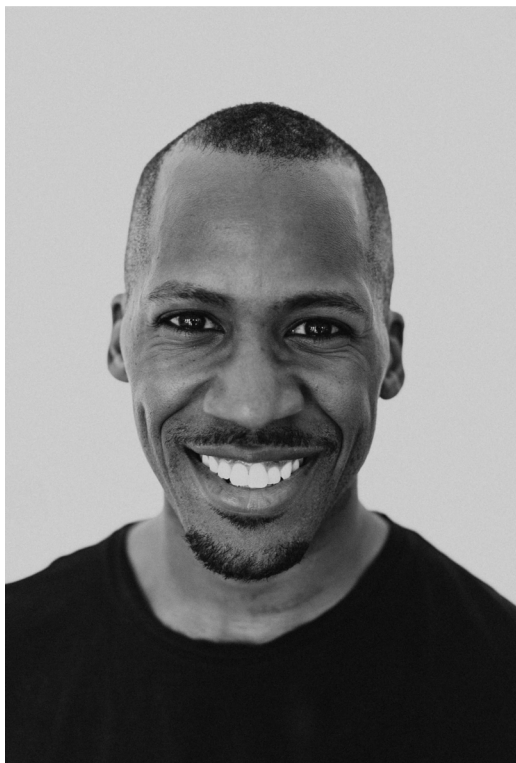
and the National American College Dance Association Festival at the Kennedy Center.

After graduating from Belhaven in 2018 with a BFA in Dance, she danced professionally with Ballet Hartford in Connecticut. Schaeffer joined Verb Ballets in 2019 and has been featured in works such as Paganini Rhapsody and Wandering On. She is excited to present FEAST with this creative team of passionate artists. Betsie appears in FEAST courtesy of Verb Ballets.

# DeMarcus Akeem Suggs

Originally from Twin Cities, MN, DeMarcus Akeem Suggs is a dance artist, educator and arts administrator. A graduate of Belhaven University's dance program (BFA), his professional experience includes performing with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC), Dayton Ballet, Neos Dance Theatre, Verb Ballets.

DeMarcus collaborates with various project-based choreographers and has a passion for building and sustaining a vibrant, equitable, and artist-centric culture sector. He has served in various leadership roles such as Program Director at The Victory Project (Dayton, OH); Coordinator of Education & Engagement at Victoria Theatre Association (Dayton, OH); as well as Director of Education & Outreach for Neos Dance Theatre. He has also served as a panelist for Ohio Arts Council and Dance/USA, and was selected for Dance/USA's 2018 Institute for Leadership Training. DeMarcus currently serves as Resource Synergist for Alternate ROOTS, Graduate Assistant for The National Center for Choreography at the University of Akron (NCCAkron), and is pursuing a Master of Arts in Arts Administration at the University of Akron. [www.demarcusakeem.com](http://www.demarcusakeem.com) | IG: @demarcusakeem





# MUSIC

## Dmitri Shostakovich



*From left to right: Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitri Shostakovich and Aram Khachaturian  
Image: Wikimedia Commons*

Dmitri Shostakovich has been called “a shackled genius.” His work showed incredible range though he faced near-constant threat in his homeland, Soviet Russia. Shostakovich was both hailed as the new hero of Russian music (Prokofiev and Rachmaninov had fled to the U.S. years before), and he was called into question by Stalin’s “thought police.”

Under Stalin, all Soviet composers were required to compose music of an essentially positive nature, designed to inspire feelings of patriotism for Mother Russia. This became the emotional blueprint for countless Russian scores during this period. Unfortunately for Shostakovich, his propensity for seeing the “dark side” in almost everything was soon to land him in hot water.<sup>3</sup> Stalin ignored Chamber music as it was not “grand” enough, so Shostakovich felt his most free to express himself in String Quartets and Sonatas.

FEAST is performed to selections from Shostakovich’s String Quartets 3, 6 and 7, Piano Trio No. 2 and Cello Sonata in D Minor. The composer’s intentionally vapid and grinding repetitions went over the heads of his political masters.

## James Thompson & Jeanelle Brierley



Violinist James Thompson is forging a promising career as a versatile chamber musician, soloist, and music educator. A native of Cleveland, OH, James is currently on faculty at Music@Menlo and will join the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s Bowers Program in 2021.

In 2014, Mr. Thompson made his solo debut with the Cleveland Orchestra at Severance Hall. He has appeared as a soloist with local orchestras including the CIM orchestra, Blue Water Chamber Orchestra, Cleveland Pops and Cleveland Philharmonic. Mr. Thompson is currently an Artist Diploma candidate at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Jeanelle Brierley is a violinist with a passion for orchestral performance, chamber music, and pedagogy. She made her solo debut with the Phoenix Symphony in 2011. In 2016, she completed her undergraduate degree at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she studied with

William Preucil and was awarded the Dr. Jerome Gross prize in violin.

Jeanelle has been a member of the Canton Symphony, the Verbier Festival Orchestra, and Steamboat Springs’ Strings Festival and has served as the concertmaster of the CIM Orchestra. She is in her fourth season as a substitute violinist with The Cleveland Orchestra and has performed regularly with the ensemble in Cleveland as well as on tours throughout the United States, Europe, Japan, and China.





# Bethany Hargreaves & James Hettinga

Violist Bethany Hargreaves has performed across North America and internationally. Hargreaves has collaborated in concert with distinguished musicians such as Itzhak Perlman, Peter Salaff, and Donald Weilerstein. She is currently a member of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, New Haven Symphony Orchestra, the Versoi Ensemble, and regularly collaborates with NYC based ensembles Frisson, New York Classical Players, and Noree Chamber Soloists. She holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and The Juilliard School, where she was a recipient of the Kovner Fellowship. Hargreaves recently graduated from the Yale School of Music with a Master's of Musical Arts degree and winner of the Grosvenor Memorial Prize in Viola Accomplishment.



Cellist James Hettinga, 21, currently studies with Dr. Melissa Kraut at the Cleveland Institute of Music. An avid chamber musician, James's quartet, the Razumovsky Quartet, won the Silver Medal in the Junior Division at the 2018 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. James performed on the national radio show, From the Top, performing the Mendelssohn Octet.

James was a winner of the 2019 prestigious Klein International String Competition, 2019 Mondavi Center National Young Artist Competition, and has taken the first prize in the Cleveland Cello Society Competition both Junior and Senior divisions. In 2016, James made his debut in Severance Hall.



# Leah Frank, Piano



Leah Frank is a pianist, violinist, violist, organist, and graduate of the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music (BWCM) with a BA in Music in both piano and violin. Currently a graduate student at the Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM) she studies under Anita Pontremoli and Joella Jones.

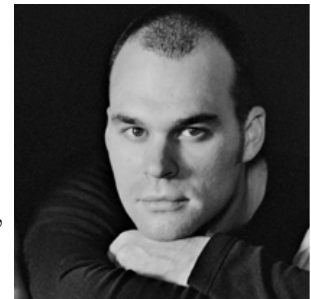
Ms. Frank was the recipient of multiple scholarships and was inducted into the Baldwin Wallace Dayton C. Miller Honor Society and Case Western University Honor Society. She has served as pianist (and soloist) in the BW Symphony Orchestra and CIM Orchestra. Ms. Frank premiered and recorded multiple new works from composers through the Cleveland Composers Guild. Her most recent commission was in collaboration with local artists, featuring the new music of

Ryan Charles Ramer entitled "Sonata5Project." Ms. Frank is a member of Mu Phi Epsilon and is a U.S. Army Veteran.

# Greg Slawson, Sound Engineer

Greg is a multimedia specialist in audio recording, electronic music production, video editing and videography and photography. He has been an adjunct professor of music at the College of Wooster for 11 years where he developed the electronic music production course, oversees the audio recording crew, teaches jazz and classical piano, coaches the Wooster Combo and develops the music technology used by the Department.

He and his wife Candice Lee, manage a private studio of over 50 students of classical and jazz piano (currently, the studio is 100% virtual). Along with music theory, composition and music production.





# Film & Lighting: Wasted Talent Media Clear Gold Audio & Lighting



Todd Volkmer is one of the partners at Wasted Talent Media, a multi-award-winning film, broadcast and digital media production company created in 2009. Winners of several ADDY and AVA awards, WTM creates inspiring content across a broad creative spectrum from documentary film to television and advertising. WTM is also the creator and producer of Arts Quest hosted by Erin and Todd Volkmer and distributed throughout the Midwest. [www.wastedtalentmedia.com](http://www.wastedtalentmedia.com)  
Instagram @WTMvideo



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

Based in Akron, OH, Clear Gold Audio & Lighting is a resource for Event Planners, Musicians, DJs, Technical Directors, and Recording Engineers.





# COMMODITIES

Colonial-era Dutch still life portrays nobility in a new merchant class. The joy of sculpture and painting lives in the gorgeous sheen of costume and goods like beef, red and marbled with fat. But, beneath that surface lurk “many untold narratives regarding procurement and production.”<sup>3</sup>

Capitalism is a system of trade that measures success in how much is consumed. In FEAST, dancers represent the system as they take the natural wealth of one continent to another, and, in the process, enslave a third continent.

This is the story we tell in FEAST: the push-pull between pleasure and pain, user and used, feast and harvest.

Bountiful and alluring, gold, bananas, beef and natural resources are taken, reshaped, accumulated, spread and consumed. There’s capture and control of bodies; bodies and ecosystems destroyed while the material comfort of the middle class is built.



At the tables on the periphery, the redistribution of wealth displays the inequities. There is revelation and then resistance.

This legacy of colonial exploitation and its origins in Europe and America, also coming together to make something new, form the story of FEAST.

The time for feasting on the bodies is done, the time of the feast for all is coming.

*Illustration by Amirah Cunningham, 2020*





Nothing transformed the land, water and created the economic powerhouse of America like cattle ranching and the crops raised for beef. Exploding appetites for marbled steak built Chicago and Buenos Aires, re-fueled London, birthed Texas, and led to the U.S. waging war with Mexico over its ranchlands.

In her post-war prosperity, the U.S. had one-twentieth of the world's population and consumed nearly half of the global supply of beef, half-a-pound of beef for every American every day by 1976.<sup>5</sup>

Today, there are 95 million cattle in the U.S. each belching methane, a potent greenhouse gas contributing to climate change. While beef only accounts for 2 percent of the U.S. carbon footprint, scientists recommend a 50% reduction by 2050 in global consumption of red meat to avoid catastrophic climate change.<sup>6</sup>



*Illustration: Corrie Slawson, 2018*



“The forest isn’t just for us indigenous. It’s for everyone.”

-Ewerton Marubo, an indigenous leader from Brazil

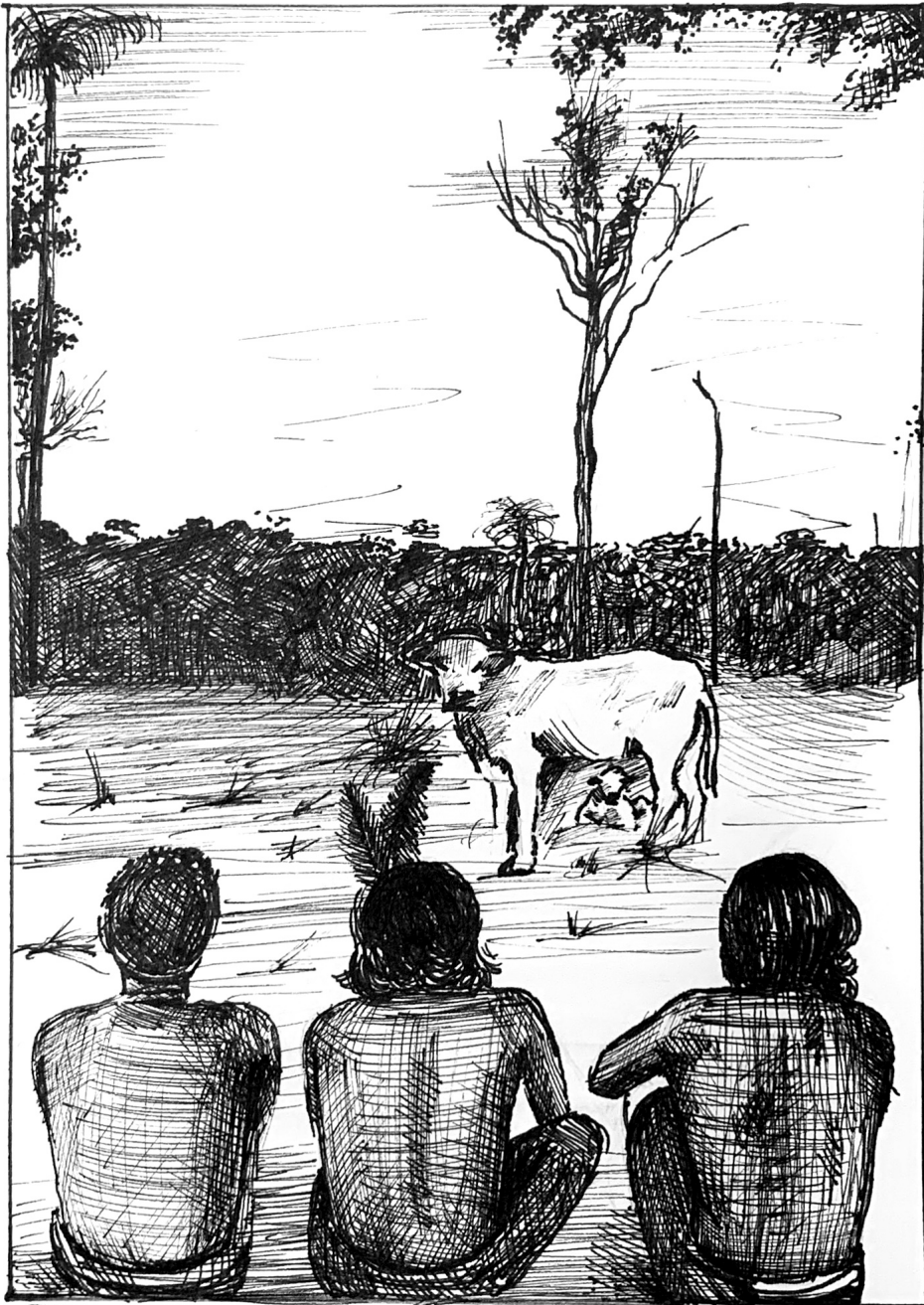


Illustration by Amirah Cunningham, 2020

# BANANAS



The yellow banana available in the grocery store is known as the Cavendish banana. Named after English Duke, William Cavendish, who received a shipment of the tropical fruit and had his personal gardener cultivate this variety in his greenhouse. The rest is history.

Over 150 countries produce bananas. During the last 40 years, banana consumption has surpassed that of the apple. In fact, Americans eat an average of 28 pounds of fresh bananas per year, compared to an average of 19 pounds of apples.



Decades of aggressive ad campaigns - distributing manuals to school children that extolled the nutritional benefits of bananas - gradually enshrined bananas as a wholesome, fundamental part of the American diet.<sup>7</sup>



Bananas are very cheap because they were one of the first foods to be turned into a commodity: Grown in rainforest zones clear cut of timber, picked by people paid “hunger wages,” packed in coolers and shipped in bulk.



*Illustration by Amirah Cunningham, 2020*



*Illustration: Orlando Caraballo, 2020*

*The history of every nation in the Caribbean, much of South America and parts of the Southern United States was forever shaped by sugar cane plantations started as cash crops by European superpowers.*

- Live Science.com, June 2008



# SUGAR



A sugar cane plant (*Saccharum officinarum*), its flower and sections of stem, bordered by six scenes illustrating its use and production.

c. 1840, Lithograph



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

Sugar was so precious to Europeans that it figured in the dowries of queens. It was sold in pharmacies, weighed out by the gram.

“Sugar had destroyed Cuba and the Northeast (rainforest) of Brazil. Where once there was biodiversity—orange and mango, wild boar, tapir, pacas and armadillo—all were sacrificed on the altar of King Sugar.”<sup>8</sup>

In Puerto Rico, *macheteros* (sugar cane cutters) cut 1,000 pounds of cane per hour. The cane choked off any breeze, and the soil radiated heat like an oven. Workers were paid \$4 a week.<sup>9</sup>

A study of the health of sugar cane workers found it is one of the most stressful jobs anywhere.<sup>10</sup>



# COFFEE



Illustration: Orlando Caraballo, 2020

*Coffee was traditionally grown in the shade. In order to increase yields, outside organizations pushed growers towards planting their crops in the sun. New techniques include using chemicals and chopping down forests, which allow for greater output but diminish the coffee's taste and ruin the habitats of the surround fauna.*

- Business Insider, 2011

“It is much more profitable to consume coffee than to produce it. In the United States and Europe, coffee creates income and jobs and mobilizes substantial capital; in Latin America it pays hunger wages and sharpens economic deformation. It provides work for more than 600,000 people in the United States: those who distribute and sell Latin American coffee (here) earn infinitely more than the Brazilians, Columbians, Guatemalans, Salvadorans and Haitians who plant and harvest it on the plantations.”<sup>11</sup>

In Colombia, where suitable slopes abound, coffee is king. According to a *Time* magazine report in 1962, only 5 percent\* of the price yielded by coffee in its journey from tree to U.S. consumer goes into the wages of the workers who produce it.<sup>12</sup>

\* The price breakdown is as follows:

- 40 percent for middlemen, exporters, and importers;
- 10 percent for taxes imposed by both governments;
- 10 percent for transport;
- 5 percent for publicity by the Pan-American Coffee Bureau;
- 30 percent for plantation owners; and
- 5 percent for workers' wages.



Illustration: Amirah Cunningham, 2020



# RUBBER



*Illustration: Orlando Caraballo, 2020*

The story of Liberia and its precarious relationship with rubber is that of horrific labor conditions and environmental degradation. In the 1930s, Firestone was cited by the League of Nations for labor practices, as the government guaranteed cheap labor.<sup>13</sup>

Rubber continues to be Liberia's primary export, and Firestone its largest employer. This remained true during peacetime, through the worst atrocities of a civil war, and working with the war criminal Charles Taylor. Despite corporate sustainability exercises from (parent company) Bridgestone, major problems remain at Firestone Liberia.<sup>14</sup>

# TIMBER



*Illustration by Amirah Cunningham, 2020*

Amazon timber is all over the U.S. You can find it in hardwood flooring at national retailers like Lumber Liquidators and walkways at landmarks like Atlantic City, Miami Beach, and the Brooklyn Bridge.

Much of this wood comes from Pará, Brazil's largest timber producer and exporter. More than half of the lumber is illegally cut from lands of indigenous people.<sup>15</sup>

# MINERALS

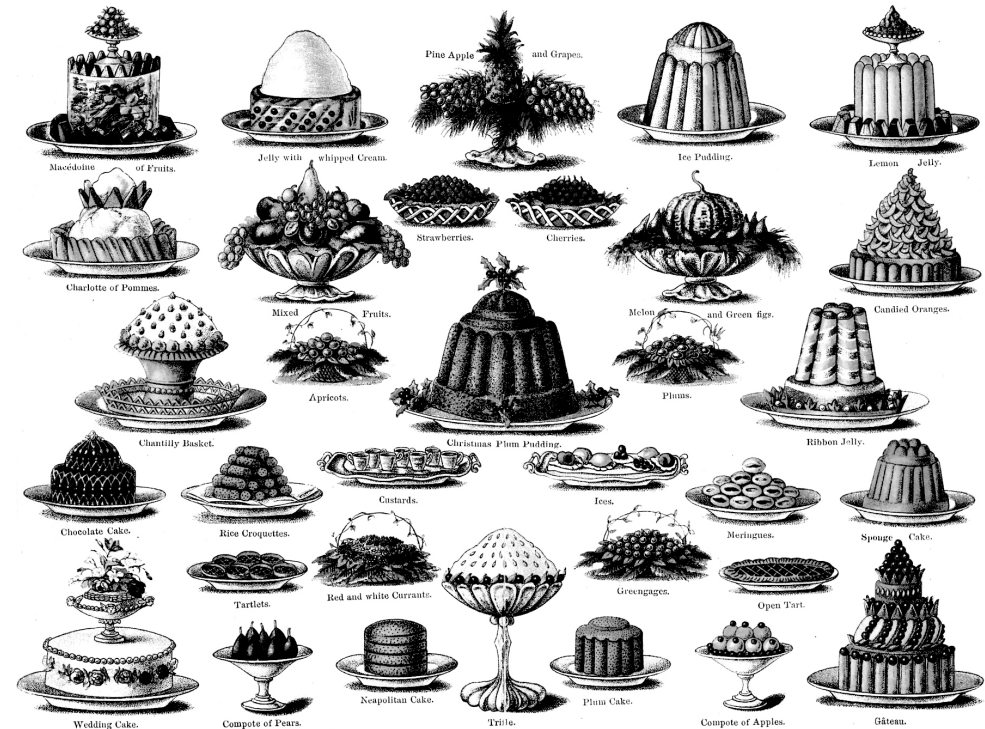


Photo: esmfoundation.org

We put our hope for addressing climate change on new technologies—the batteries that will power our cars, iPhones and tablets. The batteries that store our electricity are made from rare earth minerals, mined at a terrible cost. We can build a new climate friendly world, but surely it will be a failure if we build it on the blood and bones of our fellows.

Cobalt is a key element in building electric vehicle batteries for companies like Tesla, but mines in places like the Democratic Republic of the Congo are rife with corruption and human rights abuses.<sup>16</sup>

In Chile and Argentina, lithium mines use up so much water that they displace indigenous communities. We are replicating the same patterns of exploitation and displacement in building our new climate technologies, and digital playthings.



*Christmas Sweets from Mrs. Beeton's  
Book of Household Management*



# Amirah Cunningham



Amirah Cunningham is a conceptual visual artist. Working primarily with themes related to mass incarceration, identity, race and freedom. She was born in Cleveland, OH and attended The Cleveland Institute of Art. Cunningham received a BFA in both Drawing and Printmaking in 2018 and has since shown work at the IPCNY in Manhattan, NYC.

The aesthetic of her work is driven by pattern and symbols. The artist often uses a tally mark pattern as a symbol of time and bondage. At times pairing the tally with images of the human figure to convey an idea of the modern American condition related to African Americans.

Cunningham's pen-and-ink illustrations appear in this book and in the ballet.

## Orlando Caraballo



Orlando is a visual artist born and raised in Cleveland's West Boulevard neighborhood. He has earned a BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art with a Major in Drawing and emphasis in Printmaking. His work is rooted in imaginative world-building that investigates the relationship between personal and cultural identity and the pursuit of meaning in a world plagued by grief, loss, and disinformation.

After working in community engagement at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Orlando is currently the Education Director at the Cleveland Print Room, where he hopes to build on the strong, community centered vision they pride themselves on.

Outside of the visual arts, Orlando loves walks through nature, making and listening to music, and finding a nice cozy corner to read in. Follow him at @landojune on IG for updates on art, poetry, and life.

## Liz Cooper



Liz Cooper is a Youngstown-based dance and fine art photographer. Her work has appeared in numerous publications including Dance Magazine. Liz is the creative mind behind LC Images-Distinct Fine Art Dance Photography.

Known for her subjective, raw, and distinct dance portraiture contrasted with architecture and angles, all LC Images sessions are carefully designed to be unique to the individual. Check out Liz's work on Instagram @theballetexperiment.

Cooper photographs of the performance and publicity for FEAST appear in this book and on [feastballet.com](http://feastballet.com).



## Frederick Astacio, Amber J. Anderson and Graham Anderson-Reitz



Frederick Astacio is an Interior Visualization designer currently working at Nelson Worldwide. He holds a BFA in Interior Architecture from the Cleveland Institute of Art. As a driven professional, he enjoys pushing the boundaries with unorthodox ideas and above all, coloring outside of the lines.

When designing, Astacio experiments with different styles of architecture, often mixing traditional styles with modern simplicity.

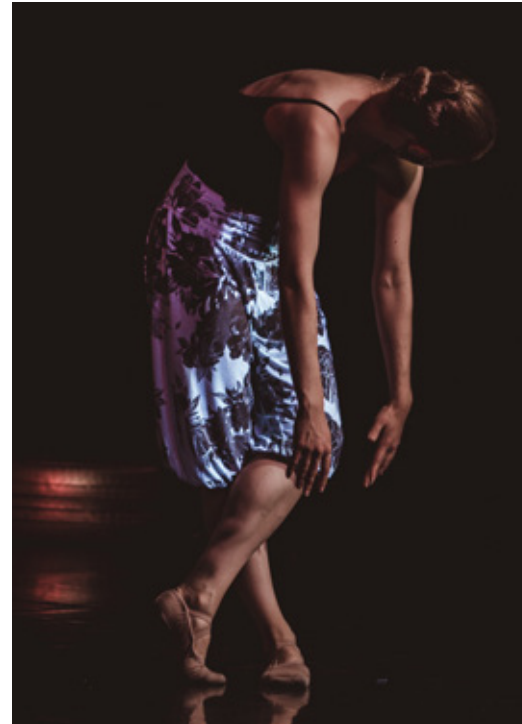
Amber J. Anderson creates artwork based on themes of memory, mystery, intimacy, and history. She is inspired by historical sites, obscure technology, rural landscapes, arcane methodologies, and classic literature. Her work has been featured in galleries in Ohio, California, Oregon, New York, and Vermont.

She received her BFA in Photography and MA in Arts Administration from The University of Akron.

Graham Anderson-Reitz is a student at Cleveland Heights High School. He is passionate about recreating props and costumes from cult movies. His favorite mediums include foam, cardboard, and acrylic paints.



## Skye Kellerman



*Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020*



Skye Kellerman is a visual artist from Madison, Ohio. She earned her BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 2010 in Sculpture and Printmaking. She has been Tattooing at Arcola Creek Tattoo since 2012.

Skye's work is influenced by American Traditional Tattooing and Botanical illustration. She also works on paper in watercolor and printmaking. You can follow her on Instagram @ssskyek.

The tattoo flash pattern on this page was designed by Skye. Her designs appear on set pieces and costumes in FEAST.

# 1650 TRADE ROUTES Map



Map courtesy Inge Newport, Pinterest

What else do you want the world to bestow upon you

If you have tainted the oceans with blood!

Aren't the Boricuas who ignorantly died in your name enough?

...so that in your banquets the criminals could live large?

—Armando Pacheco Matos<sup>17</sup>

Colonialism is about the exercise of power by the colonizer to displace the colonized. The colonizer displaces the existing power structure in the colonized land, almost always by force.

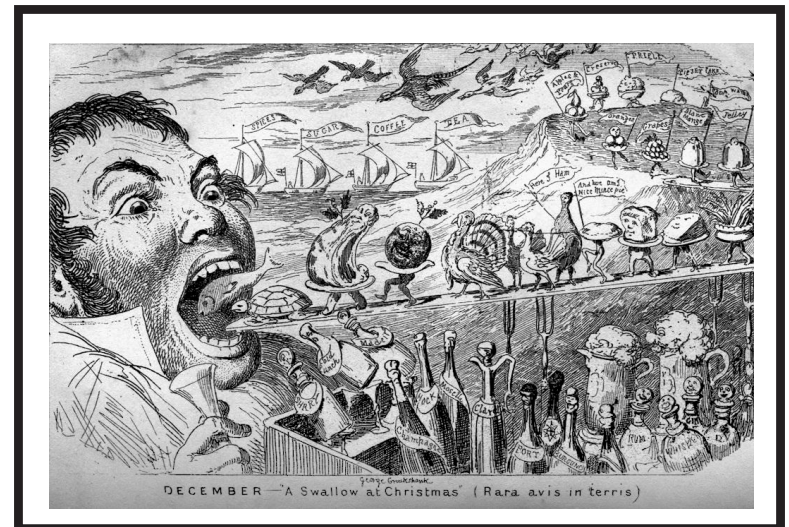
It is the displacement of economics: the colonizer claims the right to all resources, directing them away from productive use in the colonized lands, to the home country.

Colonialism is displacement of culture: the colonizer imposes its idea of what is good and beautiful on the colonized peoples.

There is a 500-year history riven with sacrifice, loss and exploitation of labor, but also a future in which change is possible. into a world where more exists than this system of which we are both the beneficiaries and the subjects.

The Northern ships of the mid-18th century carried barrels of rum from Boston to Africa. Rum was traded for slaves who were sold in the Caribbean where sugar cane and slavery overshadowed all. From there, the ships brought molasses to Massachusetts where it was distilled into rum, completing the cycle.

With capital obtained from this trade in slaves, the Brown brothers of Providence installed the foundry that provided George Washington with guns for the American Revolution.





# Ballet



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

Ballet originated from Italian royals like Catherine de Medici, who was betrothed to French King Henry II and introduced the dance style into French court life. King Louis XIV himself performed many of the popular dances of the day, until he was too old and dancers were hired to perform for the court.

Dancing en pointe was reserved for women only, and this exclusive taste for female dancers inspired a sylph-like fairy whose pristine goodness and purity triumphs over evil or injustice. This established the patriarchy of ballet early on, with women pedestaled and held to an unrealistic standard, while men are relegated to support roles.



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

Ballet dancers today still tend to come from affluent backgrounds and are expected to have a fully developed training resume by their teen years. The dance form is slow to change, and the patriarchy is ever-present.

The consumption of bodies in ballet mirrors that of Colonial-era labor practices.

The movement of the dancers and props in FEAST underscores both the desirability and commodification of those who bring such pleasure and beauty through the art they create.

For hundreds of years now, ballet dancers have sacrificed their bodies, independence, and humanity for their art form. Like the supply chains demonstrated in FEAST, ballet rarely shows its darker side to the world.



# Dutch Still Life



*Still Life with Meat, Fish, Vegetables, and Fruit* c. 1615–20  
Jacob van Hulsdonck (Flemish, 1582-1647)  
Oil on panel

Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Janice Hammond and Edward Hemmelgarn 2018.258

The set and props of *FEAST: a ballet* are modeled after Dutch still life, a genre of painting that reached the height of popularity between ca. 1600-1800s in The Netherlands. Its rise can be attributed to increased urbanization and the creation of a middle class that resulted from the trading of many of the very commodities *FEAST* depicts.

These still lifes depict tables set with food, some exotic, from locales other than Europe, and some hyper local. The paintings are carefully and painstakingly executed to show off items that households would have been proud to own.

They possess incredible, almost photographic detail, however, if the viewer looks closely, there may be flowers blooming that would never bloom at the same time or a small detail of decaying meat or bread.



*Still-Life with Crayfish, Oysters, and Fruit*, late 1600s or early 1700s  
follower of Cornelis de Heem (Flemish, 1631-1695)  
Oil on canvas

Cleveland Museum of Art, Bequest of Muriel Butkin 2008.290

This appearance of “reality” is actually one of fantastical illusion. Our set and props are influenced not only by the commodities that Dutch traders (and other Europeans) would have brought to Europe but also this occurrence of artifice.



# COSTUMES



The costumes for this production were made by Corrie Slawson in her print shop and studio. The tattoo flash, designed by Skye Kellerman, was screen printed onto the Corps de Ballet'

pants, Tina's coveralls and raw satin.



Marie's skirt was sewn by Rosemary. Graham's pantaloons were sewn by Amber J. Anderson. Graham Anderson-Reitz altered a store-bought cat mask so that it could be danced in. The remaining costume elements were sourced online.

All Photos: Liz Cooper, 2020

# SET & PROPS



Everything, from costuming to set, was made in Corrie's studio to create an overall unity between visual objects and dancers. There were over 300 plaster steaks created for a 2018 installation titled "Let Them Eat Steak". Those handmade steaks have been repurposed for FEAST. The remaining items were made in response to choreographic needs and for stagecraft.





# WANT TO HELP?

To reach a goal of an equitable and sustainable future, we need to move from individual to community-scale action; from recycling at home to joining with other consumers who refuse to buy products from manufacturers who lack a plan to recycle what they produce.

Environmentalists, big agriculture and industry need the same clean air and water as well as stable and fair sources of trade.

These are some examples of community action:

1. Greta Thunberg is a Swedish teen who began a strike that called attention to how America and Europe consume more than the earth can supply. After addressing the United Nations, Thunberg continues to build a movement of millions with the conviction of her ideas. *Join Sunrise Movement.*

2. Ewerton Marubo, an indigenous leader from Brazil reminds us that “The forest isn’t just for us indigenous. It’s for everyone.” *Support Rainforest Action Network.*

3. Nemonte Nenquimo, a Waorani leader from Ecuador’s Amazon is fighting to preserve the rainforest and bring power to the powerless. *Support Greenpeace.*

4. Albizu Campos, a Harvard educated attorney and president of Puerto Rico’s Nationalist Party, made the case for a united, economically independent Latin America, a position from which he never wavered during a 25-year imprisonment by his political foes.<sup>18</sup> *Purchase products with Fair Trade, Rainforest Safe (cocoa and coffee), and Sustainable Palm Oil.*

5. Túpac Amaru II was the leader of the late 18th century Andean uprisings against the Spanish. When captured he said: “There are no accomplices here other than you and I. You as oppressor, I as liberator, deserve to die.”<sup>19</sup> *Support labor unions.*

6. In 1789, Haiti was a French colony whose brutal application of slave labor had become responsible for producing 60% of the world’s coffee and 40% of the sugar. François Toussaint L’Ouverture (pictured here), a Haitian slave turned army general, led the only successful slave revolt in modern history. *Support Haitian-run organizations.*



“Yet how sweet is the smell of liberty when human beings share a common garment.”

- John Agard<sup>20</sup>

7. Sojourner Truth, in her immortal “Ain’t I a Woman” speech delivered at the 1851 Women’s Rights Convention held in Akron, Ohio, said: “If my cup won’t hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn’t you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?”<sup>21</sup> Truth reminds us that freedom and comfort held at the cost of oppression of each other is no freedom at all. *Donate to micro lending groups like Women for Women International.*

Neoclassical (mainstream) economists generally consider consumption to be the final purpose of economic activity, and thus the level of consumption per person is viewed as a central measure of an economy’s productive success. But does GDP measure all the right things? What if we wanted to measure genuine progress toward more social equity, a clean environment, and profits?<sup>22</sup>

These local individuals and groups are working on making Cleveland a more sustainable and equitable city:

- Environmental Health Watch - Kim Foreman
- Birthing Beautiful Communities - Christin Farmer
- Key Bank - Shannelle Smith
- Cleveland Tree Coalition - Sandra Albrow
- Rid All Green Partnership / Carbon Drawdown Initiative - Keymah Durden and Marc White
- See You At The Top (SYATT) - Ebony Hood
- Cleveland Neighborhood Progress - Divya Sridhar

The following are important local initiatives to support:

- Cleveland Office of Sustainability / Climate Action Plan
- Cuyahoga Department of Sustainability / Climate Action Plan
- Sustainable Cuyahoga
- Cleveland Tree Plan
- Resilient Cleveland
- Cuyahoga Greenways Plan



# LABOR & TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT



Photo: Liz Cooper 2020

This ballet/performance piece is a theme in progress.

The Creative Destruction Collective that produced FEAST is driven by the belief that it is necessary to engage and fight for fairness and justice while trying to do as little harm as we can to our friends, our allies, partners, collaborators, community, and those excluded by our place inside the system.

So, why us?

Because we found each other and believed we had something to say that could contribute to the fight against the system of capitalist exploitation of which we are the beneficiaries and yet to which we remain subject.

And yet. Who are we to speak?

1. We commit not to speak for anyone else but ourselves.
2. We commit to translate and put forward the voices of those who have resisted the system in ways great and small, perfect and flawed.
3. We commit to transparency about how we built this project, who we paid, and how we paid them.
4. We commit to transparency about the decisions we made in the selection of partners, collaborators, how we came together and the hard discussions and the hard choices that we had to make and did not always succeed at making.
5. We commit to giving full faith and credit to every contribution that was made to the project, as partners and collaborators.

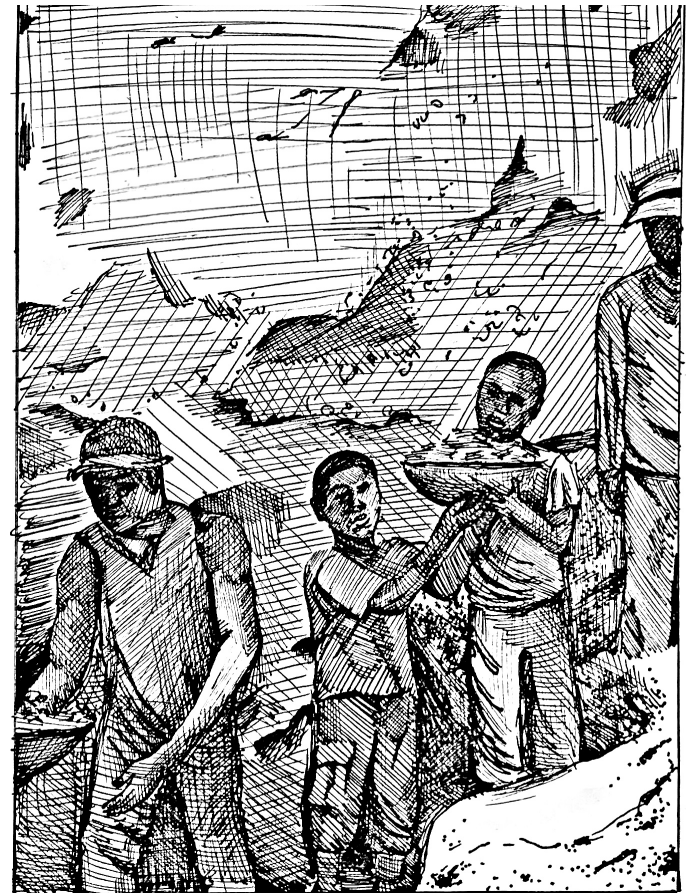


Illustration: Amirah Cunningham, 2020

# SUPPORT

*FEAST: a ballet* is supported by the Satellite Fund, which is administered by SPACES and funded by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts Regional Regranting Program.



The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

*FEAST: a ballet* choreography was supported by



Artist Residencies | Downtown Akron.OH

With additional promotional support provided by



# In-KIND Support

In addition to the generous support of our grantors, *FEAST: a ballet* could not have been produced without generous, in-kind support from:

Verb Ballets Executive Director, Dr. Margaret Carlson, for allowing us to use the studios at Verb Ballets and to hire Verb dancers.

Jen Garlando for building the FEAST website, managing tickets and marketing support.

Liz Cooper for photography at two separate shooting locations.

Greg Slawson for recording and producing the music.

Skye Kellerman for allowing us to use her tattoo flash designs and for designing our logo.

Anita Pontremoli for sourcing the musicians and allowing us to use her studio for recording.

Rosemarie Lindhout for sewing Marie's costume.

Amber J. Anderson and Graham for making Kat's costume.

Ty Phillips for allowing the team access to the House of Wills.

Each and every person who is listed in this Libretto, whether paid or in-kind, made this project possible.

*THANK YOU ALL!!*

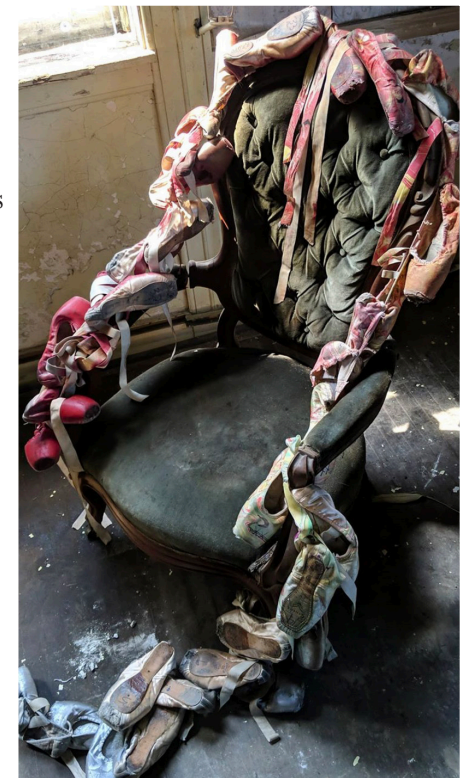


Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020



# FEAST: a ballet

## Endnotes

1. “Every time a statue comes down, we learn a little more,” Historian Charlotte Lydia Riley from, “Don’t worry about ‘re-writing history’: It’s literally what we historians do” The Guardian, June 2020.
2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van\\_Rensselaer\\_\(family\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van_Rensselaer_(family))
3. Dmitri Shostakovitch: A Life, Classic FM Digital Radio
4. “Many untold narratives regarding procurement and production” on page 41 comes from *Caterpillars*, Harry Berger Jr. Also see Hochstrasser.
5. *Insatiable Appetite*, Richard P. Tucker, 2007
6. *The New York Times*, October, 2020
7. *Banana: The Fruit That Changed the World*, Dan Koeppel, 2018
8. *Open Veins of Latin America*, Eduardo Galeano, 1979.
9. *War Against All Puerto Ricans*, Nelson A. Denis, 2015
10. “New Clues To Mysterious Kidney Disease Afflicting Sugar Cane Workers,” National Public Radio, 2015.
11. *Open Veins*, Ibid
12. *Open Veins*, Ibid
13. See [http://www.mightyearth.org/wp-content/uploads/Firestone-Liberia-full-report\\_2-10-20\\_web-ready.pdf](http://www.mightyearth.org/wp-content/uploads/Firestone-Liberia-full-report_2-10-20_web-ready.pdf). Also, Bridgestone’s Global Sustainable Procurement Policy (February 2018).
14. Mightyearth.org, Ibid.
15. Greenpeace report, 2014
16. According to the UN, up to 40,000 children work in Cobalt mines, in horrible conditions.
17. Puerto Rico native, New York lawyer/activist Armando Pacheco Matos from his volume of poems *Amor, Patria y Libertad*.
18. *War*, Ibid
19. *Open Veins*, Ibid.
20. From the poem “Toussaint L’Ouverture acknowledges Wordsworth’s sonnet ‘To Toussaint L’Ouverture’”. John Agard, 2006
21. National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/sojourner-truth.htm>
22. “What is a Genuine Progress Indicator?” GreenCityBlueLake, 2013

# FEAST: a ballet



Photo: Liz Cooper, 2020

*The Creative Destruction Collective*  
*THANKS YOU for watching!*

