

## Sara Shelton Mann

### 7 Excavations / at the edge of the shore and the edge of the world

June 21, 2022

8:00 p.m.

Gallery 308

Throughout June, the San Francisco-based choreographer, poet, and teacher Sara Shelton Mann has led an open process of experimental performance-making with an incredible team of dancers, filmmakers, and musicians. Their residency culminates in this one-night-only summer solstice performance featuring a score of solos, duets, and large ensemble performances created onsite at Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture. The artists perform with the setting sun, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the landscape of our northern waterfront as their stage.

#### Sara Shelton Mann

##### Artist

Sara Shelton Mann has created a substantial body of work over a 55-year career as a dancer and choreographer. From 1979 to 1996, she directed the San Francisco-based company Contraband in a series of unique, immersive performances that came to represent a Bay Area performance aesthetic.



Performers Jose e Abad and Abby Crain at Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture. Photo: Robbie Sweeney

As a process choreographer, her work is deeply collaborative and interdisciplinary with a focus on weaving stories, experiences, and provocations into improvisational movement scores with a deep commitment to experimenting with new methods and mediums for presenting dance. Like many artists who have spent a lifetime in the heart of their craft, Mann has come to believe that the exploration of dance forms a vital collective heritage that transcends the artifact of performance. Through this colorful heritage of training and dance, Mann seeks to facilitate the emergence of the next generation of Bay Area dance voices. [sarasheltonmann.org](http://sarasheltonmann.org)

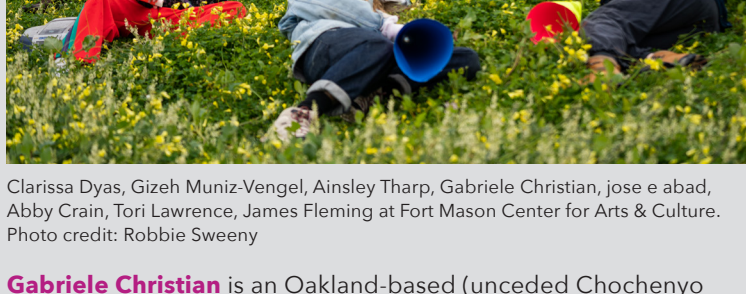
*My art is of a piece with my healing work and political engagement: it is meant to reveal and transmit the story of our collective humanity—our potential for excellence, our danger—in a time of global change, chaos, and paradigm shift. It is an antidote to fear, doubt, and greed as the face of who we are.* —Sara Shelton Mann

#### PERFORMERS

**Jesse Zaritt**'s work engages drawing as dancing—a visual and physical practice linked to dreaming, drafting, and materializing futures. His choreographic, performance, and teaching practices research the ways in which excessive, contemplative and resistive dance practices change how movement arises in the world and how dancing participates in processes of social transformation. A series of solo works made between 2008 and 2022 interrogate attachments to Jewish ritual and community, seeking to queer dominant paradigms of familial/national belonging, religion, gender and sexuality. **Also assistant to the artist.** [jessezaritt.com](http://jessezaritt.com)

**Jose e Abad** is a multidisciplinary choreographer, DJ, and curator. Born in Olongapo City, Philippines to a Filipina Mother and an Afro-Caribbean U.S. Naval Officer, their work explores the complexities of cultural identity at the crossroads of gender, sexuality, class, and race in the United States. Through dance theater, surrealist video, and sonic experimentation, their work unearths lost histories that reside in the body, that the mind has forgotten, and dominant culture has erased.

Their choreography is rooted in collaboration and improvisation as tools of resistance and liberation. Their work centers QTBIPOC experimental collective process-based practices of becoming and re-membering, ushering a metamorphosis through emergent performances that listen to the most intelligent technologies that exist in this world—our bodies, ancestral wisdom, and nature. [bampfa.org/event/black-life-podcast-jose-e-abad](http://bampfa.org/event/black-life-podcast-jose-e-abad)



Clarissa Dyas, Gizeh Muñoz Vengel, Ainsley Tharp, Gabriele Christian, Jose e Abad, Abby Crain, Tori Lawrence, James Fleming at Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture. Photo credit: Robbie Sweeney

**Gabriele Christian** is an Oakland-based (unceded Chochenyo Ohlone land) conceptual artist and descendent of stolen folk experimenting within somatic practices, language, performance composition, video production and community arts facilitation to locate and center BlaQ (Black and Queer) experience, vernaculars and aesthetics as wellsprings for radical futurity. They are a founding member of BlaQ-led projects: &theruptureisnow; OYSTER-KNIFE; and blaQyard. At the heart of all of their work, they strive to excavate oral tradition and movement as conduits for equitable conversations around belonging, spirit, desirability, abundance, and care. [gabriele.work](http://gabriele.work)

**Abby Crain** is part of the directorial team of the KHRESH festival, and teaches regularly at Mills College, Language and Thinking at Bard College and Ponderosa Tanzland in Stolzenhagen Germany. Her work is influenced by and indebted to her tenure with Miguel Gutierrez (2000-2008), twenty years dancing for Sara Shelton Mann, six years of collaboration with Layton Lachman and Mara Poliak, her ongoing collaboration around moving and language with David Buuck, her studies with Thomas F. DeFrantz and Donna Faye Burchfield while getting her MFA at University of the Arts (2019-2021), and her long term friendship through dancing with the late, great Kathleen Hermesdorf. **Also producer.** [abby-crain.com](http://abby-crain.com)

**Clarissa Dyas** is a movement artist with roots in the San Francisco Bay Area, Ohlone Land. She centers her artistic practice through the truthfulness of improvisation and the intersection of identities—investigating black and asian lineage, queerness and the belief that movement is a spiritual practice as a conduit of change. Clarissa graduated from SFSU in 2017 with a B.A. in Dance and a B.S. in Health Education. They have had the honor to be a company member of Robert Moses' Kin, ka-nei-see | collective, and Zaccho Dance Theatre and have performed in works by Lenora Lee Dance, OYSTERKNIFE and many others.

Clarissa is most recently in collaboration with Flyaway Productions as a company member since 2019 and is a collective member with four other Bay Area artists in creating a multimedia, queer, Black, performance called &theruptureisnow. In partnership with Jakob Pek, they've received the 2022 Drescher Ensemble Artist Residency and opened an art performance space in San Francisco called The 3rd Floor.

Originally from the Midwest, **Ellie Goudie-Averil** is a dance artist and educator who works with dancers of all ages on technique and performance. Since graduating with her MFA in Dance Performance from the University of Iowa, she has served as a professor at Temple University, Bucknell University, Franklin & Marshall College, Smith College, Connecticut College, etc. In the past, she has danced for Susan Rethorst, Lucinda Childs, and Group Motion, and currently performs with Sara Shelton Mann. Ellie is a dance collaborator and dancer with Tori Lawrence + Co. in dance films and site-specific works and teaches at Keene State College and at School for Contemporary Dance and Thought/Hawley Street Ballet in Northampton, MA. [stonedepot.org](http://stonedepot.org)

#### Gizeh Muñoz Vengel

Gizeh Muñoz Vengel (she/they) is a Mexicana currently residing in unceded Chochenyo Ohlone lands, also known as Berkeley, California. The artist notes, "I am curious about the unseen and invisible dimensions of life and enjoy exploring the dialogues created from and with the body; I'm particularly interested in the language and beauty of touch." [gizeth.com](http://gizeth.com)

**Ainsley Tharp** is a Bay Area based alchemist+artist+activist. Tharp has worked with Sara Shelton Mann for the last three years. She's a multimedia witch working to build new systems as an artist and collaborator. She creates visual landscapes as performance using various modes and media, such as movement, magic, ritual, video, projection, lighting, and the sculpting of readymade objects. [aineliztharp.com](http://aineliztharp.com)

#### FILM

**Tori Lawrence** Tori Lawrence is a choreographer and dance filmmaker who creates site-specific performances/installations. Her environmentally-based work inspires an imaginative and sustainable way of looking at, thinking about, and using space. She's recently been teaching dance at Smith College and Benning College, and was the 2029-20 artist-in-residence at Middlebury College. She'll be choreographing a new site-based performance installation in Norway in 2022-23 while at artist residencies Lademoen Kunstnerverksteder (Trondheim) and USF Verftet (Bergen). Other awarded fellowships/residencies include: Yaddo, Djerassi, Playa, Brunakra, Ucross Foundation, and Chez Bushwick. Her site-specific choreography has been presented nationally and internationally, including three commissions by the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia. Her choreography has also been presented by Philadelphia Dance Projects, Dance Films Association's Dance on Camera Festival, Movement Research at the Judson Church, Stockholm Screendance Festival, Cape Town Film Festival, Portland Maine Film Festival, Agite y Sirva, San Francisco Tiny Dance Film Festival, among others. She's the co-founder of ATLAND, an upcoming artist residency in western Massachusetts.

Tori's currently collaborating as a filmmaker with choreographer Sara Shelton Mann on the project premiering at Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture. "7 Excavations" is a looping analog film installation that was filmed in Joshua Tree and in San Francisco during the height of the pandemic. The work was shot with a 16mm Bolex camera and features hand-developed Tri-X reversal film. The text is excerpted from Sara Shelton Mann's journal entries from the pandemic, and was animated by Tori and Kristen Lawrence at Mono No Aware in NYC. Special thanks to Ainsley Tharp and Ellie Goudie-Averil for assisting with the hand-developing, and to Kristen Lawrence for contributing the NYC-based footage. Dancers featured in the film: Sara Shelton Mann, Kathleen Hermesdorf, Yannis Adoniou, Ellie Goudie-Averil, Ainsley Tharp, Tori Lawrence, Abby Crain, Gabriel Christian, and Clarissa Dyas. [torilawrence.org](http://torilawrence.org)

#### MUSIC

**Miles Lassi** is an interdisciplinary artist based out of Oakland. He has performed in over 150 cities throughout North America, Europe and Asia with many different ensembles ranging from the Vietnam National Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall to the Broadway tour of Dirty Dancing. Miles is dedicated to creating new sounds, visual music and performance and has done so at the NY Musical Festival, Lincoln Center, Apollo Theater, BAM, the de Young Museum, the Esalen Institute, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and the NY Film Festival. [mileslassi.com](http://mileslassi.com)

#### SOUND DESIGN

Based in New Orleans and the San Francisco Bay Area, **Ira Echo** is a musician and performance artist primarily known for their free improvisation performances with dancers, jazz musicians, and circus. As a musician, Ira composes with the movement of improvisational dancers in mind. As a dancer, Ira's practice lies at the intersection of somatics, gender exploration, and improvising public rituals of interbeing. Ira's practice currently asks: how can musicians use space and structure to facilitate breathy even tempered daring tranquil dance exploration? How can dancers read the room to stoke voluptuous sensation in the hearts and bellies of the observer? [iraecho.com](http://iraecho.com)

#### PRODUCTION

**James Fleming** is a writer and producer interested in queer ecologies and performance writing. He has produced works in and has supported Sara Shelton Mann's creative projects for the past two years. His writing can be seen in SFMOMA Open Space and Art Practical. [openspace.sfmoma.org/author/jamesfleming/](http://openspace.sfmoma.org/author/jamesfleming/)

For more information about Fort Mason Art, visit: [www.fortmason.org](http://www.fortmason.org)

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FOR ARTS & CULTURE

Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture is pleased to partner with Mixed Bag Productions in dancers' residency activities with Sara Shelton Mann and her collaborators are supported in part by California Arts Council Impact Projects and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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