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Media Contact: John Hill
john@johnhillpr.com
510.435.7128

ODC/DANCE ANNOUNCES ITS ANNUAL HOME SEASON

Dance Downtown

Featuring a world premiere by guest choreographer Sidra Bell, an excerpt from a new dance by Brenda Way slated for premiere in 2026, as well as several works from the company's repertory

ODC's Gala to take place on Friday, April 11

Joanne Kim promoted to company dancer

April 10 – 13, 2025

Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA



Photo by RJ Muna.

odc.dance/downtown

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, November 21, 2024 – ODC/Dance is pleased to announce the program for **DANCE DOWNTOWN**, the company's annual home season at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Dance Downtown runs Thursday, April 10 through Sunday, April 13, 2025. In conjunction with Dance

Downtown, the company's annual **Gala** will take place on Friday, April 11. Tickets, starting at \$30, are now on sale at odc.dance/downtown.

Headlining next year's event is a world premiere by guest choreographer **Sidra Bell**, which will have showings on April 10, 12 and 13, plus an excerpt from a new work by ODC Founder and Artistic Director **Brenda Way** slated for premiere in 2026, which will have only a single showing at the Gala on April 11.

Bell's work for full company, currently untitled, will be set to music by avant-garde jazz composer and MacArthur genius **Mary Halvorson** and performed live by local musicians. Additional collaborators include set designer **Cass Calder Smith** and projection designer **Yuki Izumihara**. Former ODC/Dance company member **Mia J. Chong** returns next season as staging director.

"I was drawn to the work of Mary Halvorson because it's this rare combination of formal, free, peculiar and very beautiful," said Bell. "For me, jazz has a lot of love in it because of its responsiveness. You really have to listen and be in the moment. It's a practice of attention. And as the daughter of a jazz musician, I was brought up to appreciate how this music fosters a kind of mutuality with the people we're working with."

Bell's career has spanned 20 years, and she is the artistic director of her own self-named company based in New York. The recipient of numerous awards, notably a 1st Prize for Choreography at the Solo-Tanz Theater Festival in Stuttgart, Germany in 2011, Bell has also created over 100 commissioned works for companies and institutions including New York City Ballet, St. Louis Dance Theatre, Whim'Whim, BODYTRAFFIC, Ailey II, The Juilliard School, Harvard University, Boston Conservatory, River North Dance Chicago, New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, Sacramento Ballet, Ballet Austin, Alonzo King's LINES Ballet School, Springboard Danse Montréal, Uppercut Dansteater (Denmark) and Motto Dans Kolectif (Turkey), to name a few.

Next year's Dance Downtown marks Bell's first commission with ODC/Dance, though her relationship with Way goes back to 2012 - 13 when the two were paired as part of a mentorship opportunity sponsored by LEVYdance, with funding from New England Foundation for the Arts.

"Since our time working together 12 years ago, I have always appreciated her brainy and exuberant approach to movement-making, as well as her craft and feminist sensibility," said Way. "Her process and her work demand a high degree of physicality and input from the dancers, and I look forward to seeing what she pulls from them."

For her part, Way is making a new dance for full company titled *After the Deluge*, a response to melting glaciers, mudslides, flooding and other aspects of entropy and radical changes in nature.

Rounding out the program will be *Unintended Consequences (A Meditation)* by Way and *Inkwell* by ODC founding member and associate choreographer **Kimi Okada**.

Unintended Consequences (A Meditation) premiered in 2008 set to music by renowned performance artist and musician Laurie Anderson. Commissioned by the Equal Justice Society, an Oakland, California-based organization working to transform the nation's consciousness on issues of race and social justice, *Unintended Consequences* "offers a cutting critique of human relationships, and of how easily we become isolated" (*The New York Times*). The work considers the effects of America's fetish of individualism and its perversion into "every man for himself."

Inkwell, which premiered at Dance Downtown earlier this year, draws inspiration from the cartoons of Max Fleischer and his black-and-white universe of oddballs, misfits and maniacs. “A terrific vaudevillian romp,” hailed *Fjord Review*. “Okada spins the great unifying element of humor as she effectively takes on a dark theme from current culture.”

JOANNE KIM PROMOTED TO COMPANY DANCER

ODC/Dance is delighted to announce the promotion of Joanne Kim to company dancer. Kim was born and raised in Southern California, where she trained with the late Lois Ellyn, former ballerina of New York City Ballet under George Balanchine. After graduating with a degree in Visual Communications from the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising in Los Angeles, she worked in marketing and social media for fashion and beauty companies like Volcom, Forever 21, Beach House PR and Dermstore.

Since moving to San Francisco in 2021, she has been a frequent collaborator with ODC/Dance. Kim first guested for the company in 2022 then went on to design costumes for The Dance Jam, ODC’s resident teen dance company, as well as the ODC School Youth and Teen Program for its 2023 performances. She returned to guest for ODC/Dance during the 2023 season of *The Velveteen Rabbit* and in the 2024 Dance Downtown season.

Kim joins company dancers **Jeremy Bannon-Neches, Jaime Garcia Castilla, Brandon "Private" Freeman, Rachel Furst, Katie Lake, Jenna Marie, Addison Norman, Ryan Rouland Smith, Christian Squires** and **Colton Wall**.

GALA

ODC will hold its annual Gala on Friday, April 11. This one-night-only event will include a special program for Dance Downtown featuring an excerpt from a new work by Brenda Way slated for premiere in 2026. Titled *After the Deluge*, the full-company piece is a response to melting glaciers, mudslides, flooding and other aspects of entropy and radical changes in nature.

Additional repertory works include excerpts from *Unintended Consequences (A Meditation)*, *Something About a Nightingale* (2005) and *Part of a Longer Story* (2006), all by Way.

The Gala will take place in both the Forum and Blue Shield of California Theater at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Cocktails and passed hors d’oeuvres will be served as guests arrive at 5 p.m. followed by a lavishly catered dinner at 6 p.m. At 8 p.m., guests convene in the Theater for a performance by ODC/Dance, and the evening continues with an after-party with small bites, desserts and dancing in the Forum. This year’s Gala chair is **Navid Armstrong**. Gala tickets start at \$190, and tables may be reserved for \$12,000 on up.

Patrons who purchase a ticket to Dance Downtown on April 11 are also invited to add a pass to the Gala after-party for \$100. All proceeds from ticket sales support ODC and its mission to inspire audiences, cultivate artists, and foster diversity and inclusion through dance. For more information and to make a reservation, visit odc.dance/gala.

ABOUT SIDRA BELL

Bell has been a frequent guest in the Bay Area since 2011. She has been a guest artist and adjunct professor at Alonzo King LINES Ballet Program (Training Program, Dance Center, and B.F.A.) where she created many works for stage and conducted embodied master classes and community workshops. She was the inaugural choreographer for the NEA-funded AMP Project with LEVYdance where she created twin works for the San Francisco-based company and her own company. The two ensembles performed at LEVYdance's home season at ODC. The bi-coastal ensembles also toured to Dance Place D.C. and Chutzpah! Festival Vancouver, B.C.

Bell was the choreographer for the feature film *TEST* directed by Bay Area film director Chris Mason Johnson. The film premiered at Frameline Festival in the Castro in 2013 and went on to receive nominations and awards at LGBTQ festivals worldwide. The film was workshopped and filmed at Joe Goode Studios and The Cowell Theater. She has created new work for Robert Moses' KIN which premiered at ODC Theater. She was a movement consultant for the music theater work *BABA* for Slovenian director Karmina Šilec and the Bay Area's Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble. *BABA* premiered at Z Space in 2022.

Bell has toured with her company in self- and co-produced seasons at ODC and Dance Mission Theater with Gregory Dawson's dawsondancesf. She has taught master classes at ODC, AXIS Dance Company, and at many youth schools in the Bay Area. And she has given solo guest talks at SAFEhouse Arts with Kinetech Arts and at Shack 15 with Djerassi Resident Artist Program. She was a Djerassi Artist in Residence in 2022.

ABOUT ODC

Founded in 1971 by Artistic Director Brenda Way, ODC is a groundbreaking contemporary arts institution: a world-class dance company (ODC/Dance), a theater with year-round presenting and mentorship programs (ODC Theater), a training school for dancers and movers of all levels (ODC School), and a fee-free, educational Healthy Dancers' Clinic. Known nationally for its entrepreneurial savvy and artistic innovation, ODC is unique for its holistic vision, now including a robust digital platform. With its home in San Francisco's Mission District, ODC makes a dynamic contribution to the Bay Area's vibrant dance and arts ecosystem, cultivating artists, inspiring audiences, engaging the community, and fostering diversity and inclusion through dance performance, training and mentorship.

FACT SHEET

WHAT:

ODC/Dance presents **DANCE DOWNTOWN** featuring a world premiere by guest choreographer Sidra Bell, an excerpt from a new work by Brenda Way slated for premiere in 2026, as well as works from the company's repertory.

Program on April 10, 12 & 13:

untitled (world premiere) by **Sidra Bell**

Unintended Consequences (A Meditation) (2008) by **Brenda Way**

Inkwell (2024) by **Kimi Okada**

Program on April 11:

After the Deluge (excerpt from work in development) by **Brenda Way**

Unintended Consequences (A Meditation) (2008) by **Brenda Way**

Something About a Nightingale (2005) by **Brenda Way**

Part of a Longer Story (2006) by **Brenda Way**

WHEN:

April 10 – 13, 2025

Thursday, April 10 at **7:30 p.m.**

Friday, April 11 at **8 p.m.** (Gala)

Saturday, April 12 at **7:30 p.m.** (LGBTQIA+ Night)

Sunday, April 13 at **5 p.m.**

WHERE:

Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA

700 Howard Street

San Francisco, CA 94103

TICKETS:

\$30 - \$100

April 11 only: There is an optional \$100 ticket add-on to attend the Gala after-party.

To purchase tickets online visit odc.dance/downtown or call the box office at **415-863-9834**.

Tickets for the **Gala** start at **\$190**, and tables start at **\$12,000**. For reservations, visit odc.dance/gala or call the development office at **415-549-8508**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.odc.dance

For all press inquiries please contact John Hill at john@johnhillpr.com.