



**TheWallis**  
Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts



## Media Press Kit

## Meet Clarice Lispector, author of *The Chandelier*



Clarice Lispector was a Ukrainian-born Brazilian novelist and short story writer acclaimed internationally for her innovative novels and short stories. While in law school in Rio, she began publishing her first journalistic work and short stories, catapulting to fame at the age of 23.



In 1946 she wrote *The Chandelier* which tells a tragic coming-of-age story from a young girl's perspective. The book was hailed by *The New York Times* for its “undeniable quantity of genius (and) heart-stopping payoff” and was recently translated into English from Portuguese by Heidi Duckler Dance Board Member Magdalena Edwards.



**Magdalena Edwards, translator for *The Chandelier***

*"Lispector pushes Portuguese (and language itself, I would argue), to its limits,"* Magdalena Edwards, the Chilean-born scholar and translator. *"She writes about people who are questioning themselves, their world, existence as such, and her use of language reflects this process."*

Duckler's choreography animates the book's interior monologues and devises characters from odd fragments of Lispector's dialogue to create a moving portrait of a family living amid the ruins of a colonial society.



*"The Chandelier has no chapters and we can feel unmoored and disordered, similar to how we feel as we navigate through the pandemic. With the loss of time markers our days bleed into one another and not only our landmarks, but also our language and sense of security is changed. What's real and what isn't?"* ~ Heidi Duckler



### **MISSION:**

Heidi Duckler Dance (HDD) strives to democratize dance, provide innovative arts education, and promote spatial justice.

### **OVERVIEW:**

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HDD creates site-specific performances that transform non-traditional spaces, providing learning opportunities and engaging diverse communities, in the belief that the arts can change our vision of the world and of ourselves. HDD makes access, diversity and inclusion core components of its mission and its work often explores spatial justice. By utilizing its surrounding environment as a creative source, it promotes civic engagement across generations, inviting residents to examine their communities through a new lens.

In 2020, HDD celebrated 35 years of creating place-based dance productions, activating spaces all around Los Angeles while connecting with communities whose voices we listen to and seek to amplify. Led by internationally renowned choreographer Heidi Duckler, HDD is a company of 17 resident artists and Teaching Artists, 7 staff and 15 Board members committed to upholding inclusiveness, consciousness, vulnerability, and connectivity through their craft.

### **PURPOSE:**

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The company has produced over 400 original works locally, nationally and internationally, in many iconic locations, including: the Ambassador Hotel, LA City Hall, San Gabriel Mission, Van Nuys Flyaway Bus Terminal, Dunbar Hotel and on the Tall Ships at the Port of LA and in many LA County areas including: numerous Downtown LA sites, Boyle Heights, Koreatown, N. Hollywood, Hollywood, San Pedro and South LA, the Antelope Valley, Culver City, and Santa Monica, amongst others.

HDD's youth arts education programs have served thousands of youth and families at over 25 schools and community centers throughout the City, with an emphasis on low-income communities. In 2018, HDD began its LAUSD Arts Community Partnership, developing programs each semester at underserved schools that score lowest on their Arts Equity Index. Other HDD art education programs also engage adult learners through its: Women Veteran workshops; Ebb & Flow program that is open to the general public; intergenerational workshops that promote fun ways for seniors and youth to connect through movement; and its artistic salon series.

HDD's target population is multicultural, multilingual and multigenerational. Through its education programs, HDD has developed and implemented residencies in many underserved LA neighborhoods. The geographic area that HDD serves across all programs reflects the youth, seniors and families throughout the Greater LA Area; over 70% are people of color, 53% are women, the median age is 36, one in six live at or below the poverty level and 5% are members of the LGBT community. In addition to LA County, HDD serves regions throughout Southern California, as well as national and international audiences.

## **PROCESS:**

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HDD's Founder/Artistic Director Heidi Duckler is a pioneer of site-specific place based contemporary practice. Through the use of expanded techniques and a methodology that encourages us to understand how dance, born from our experience, can be a tool for expanded awareness. HDD invites our fellow humans to reconsider the spaces in which we live, the spaces we take up, and this helps us to communicate our personal experience to others, to speak up, to inspire, to incorporate hard truths into the vulnerable body and pursue the search for empathetic connectivity.

As Artistic Director, Heidi Duckler is responsible for the overall vision of the company. As a choreographer who has consistently infused nontraditional sites with performance, the strength and distinctiveness of Duckler's work depends on a solid foundation of place. Sites are not simply supporting elements in the development of a piece; rather, they are catalysts and collaborators within her choreographic process, their physical forms directly shaping the movement of the dancers who interact with them.

Duckler builds upon the never-ending urban motion of the City to animate bodies, enliven total environments, and engage citizens on the ground. Location, history and community have been Duckler's solid and collaborative partners throughout the years, yet the way Duckler's work is articulated has evolved with each place.

Decision-making around the development of pieces and performances centers on Place, which can be geographical, cultural, social, historical, architectural, environmental, political or personal. Duckler's work deeply relies on the conceptual complexity of location; therefore, with each project, the corresponding language progresses to encompass the experience created within the site at hand. Reevaluating her artistic process within the layers of meaning

that overlay each performance site propels Duckler to venture into and grapple with unexpected terrain.

Duckler's artistic practice also explores the nature of temporary public art. Her choreography makes the ordinary extraordinary and inspires audiences to look at what they think they know, and see it differently. Working with a diverse range of dancers across disciplines, she reimagines the possibilities for the connection between performers and participants.

Duckler leads an award-winning company by pushing away from cultural voyeurism, seeking civic engagement and recognizing emotional sincerity. Her choreography and movement are revealed in the landscape and community response in which it is created and both triggers memory and embodies a current condition.

Duckler collaborates with artists that reflect the diversity of Los Angeles; indeed, the company has a roster of Teaching Artists and performers that are multilingual, multicultural and represent a diversity of performance styles and cultural heritages, including performance genres from Eastern, Latin and African Diasporas. Duckler uses site-specific work not only as a creative and conceptual platform, but also as a tool of social justice, learning and meaningful civic engagement.

HDD is unique in centering its work on place-based performances; those that arise out of the non-traditional, often urban spaces in which they are presented, with no separation between performers and public. This process facilitates a fuller immersion in the story being illuminated, transitioning the audience from spectator to engaged witness. Works are designed to examine current and historical social justice issues in the context of the place from which they emanated, bringing stories and issues to life.

HDD's core work reduces barriers, increases opportunity and meets the essential needs of its community/core audience by focusing on engagement and building partnerships across sectors to strengthen neighborhoods. This may take the form of mentorship opportunities with HDD's choreographers and teaching artists, volunteer opportunities for local residents, free workshops or festivals for low-income seniors and families, or community conversations with a panel of local experts on priority issues affecting the region.

**HDD holds a strong commitment to the three pillars:**



*Choreographer Heidi Duckler long ago cemented her bona fides as L.A.'s mistress of site-specific dance theater, using movement to guide audiences to a deeper understanding of this city's geographic infrastructure, from Laundromats and the underground Red Car lines to historic jails and the cement walls of the L.A. River.*

– Ann Haskins, LA Weekly, **Best Site-Specific Dance Company**

### **Democratic Dance**

To us, democratic dance means dancing at age 6 or 65. Democratic dance means dancing in your bathroom, in a laundromat, in a bridge underpass. Democratic dance means using movement as a tool for survival, resistance, healing, and growth. We use movement to address intersectional topics affecting our society, especially its vulnerable populations.

### **Arts Education**

Our educational vision is rooted in exploration. We have served thousands of underserved youth and families across Los Angeles. With several unique education programs for schools, after school programs, seniors, veterans, and correctional facilities, we seek to be a vehicle for self-expression, confidence, inclusion, and collaboration.

### **Spatial Justice**

Our practice of spatial justice involves activating space through dance and increasing accessibility to these spaces. Using the body as a vehicle, we believe dance drives discovery. In an effort to make Los Angeles a more animated and equitable city, HDD's artistic offerings reveal truths about historic landmarks, reawaken abandoned places, and turn the spaces we seemingly know well on their heads.

## About Heidi Duckler Dance LEADERSHIP TEAM

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### HEIDI DUCKLER, FOUNDER/ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Heidi Duckler is the Founder and Artistic Director of Heidi Duckler Dance in Los Angeles, California and Heidi Duckler Dance/Northwest in Portland, Oregon. Titled the “reigning queen of site-specific performance” by the LA Times, Duckler is a pioneer of site-specific place based contemporary practice. Through the use of expanded techniques and a methodology that encourages us to understand how dance, born from our experience, can be a tool for awareness, Duckler has contributed to redefining the field and has created more than 400 dance pieces all over the world.

Duckler earned a BS in Dance from the University of Oregon and an MA in Choreography from UCLA, and is currently a Board Member of the University of Oregon's School of Music and Dance Advancement Council. Awards include the Distinguished Dance Alumna award from the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance, the Dance/USA and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's Engaging Dance Audiences award, and the National Endowment of the Arts American Masterpiece award. Duckler was a recipient of the 2019 Oregon Dance Film Commission and her work received the award for Best Choreography for the Lens at Verve Dance Film Festival.

Currently, she is the recipient of the 2021 Oregon Arts Commission Fellowship. Her dances invite us to reconsider the space we live in, the space we take up, and this helps us to communicate our personal experience to others, to speak up, to inspire, to incorporate hard truths into the vulnerable body and pursue the search for empathetic connectivity.

### RAPHAELLE ZIEMBA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Ziemba grew up in Oak Park, Illinois and started dancing at the Academy of Movement and Music at age four. She attended Interlochen Arts Academy and after graduating, continued her dance training at the State University of New York at Purchase where she earned a BFA in Dance Performance.

After graduation she worked with Instruments of Movement, starting as performer and choreographer before a promotion to Assistant Artistic Director and, later, Co-Artistic Director. Ziemba co-produced five shows with IOM while also dancing with Concert





Dance, Inc., The Civic Ballet, Hedwig Dances, Chicago Opera Theater, Sarasota Opera Theater, The Lira Ensemble and as an apprentice with River North Dance Chicago.

In 2013, Ziemba completed her Masters of Arts in Art Education from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She also performed and choreographed for MOMENTA, was a soloist, resident choreographer, and Associate Artistic Director of Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre, and then took on the role of Community Engagement Manager for Audience Architects, a dance service organization in Chicago. In 2019, she was a part of the Annenberg Foundation's third cohort of Annenberg Alchemy Tech. Ziemba is in her fourth year with HDD and has produced over 50 productions with the organization.

### **DEBRA J.T. PADILLA, SENIOR ADVISOR**



Infused with a deep understanding and commitment to socially relevant, activist minded, diversity driven organizations, believing art can be a tool for social change and self-transformation. Served as Executive Director of SPARC for 25 years (1993-2018) and as Managing Director of Borderlands Theater in Tucson, Arizona for 7 years.

In Los Angeles, she was the Chair Emeritus of the Board of Directors of Arts For LA, served 8 years on the board and 9 months as Interim Executive Director. Appointed by LA County Board of Supervisor Shelia Kuehl to serve on the Los Angeles County Cultural Equity and Inclusion Committee. Served for 14 years on the Board of Directors of Cornerstone Theater Company and for 5 years on the Diversity Advisory Committee for the Center Theatre Group of Los Angeles. She serves on the Los Angeles Consortium for Arts in A Changing America. Presently working as Senior Advisor / Strategic Thought Partner to the non-profit arts sector as Principal of #padilla consulting/pARTner

Served on numerous panels and committees, including but not limited to: the Rockefeller Foundation, the J. Paul Getty Trust for the Visual Arts, the Ford Foundation-Working Capital Fund Panel, the Hispanic Heritage Awards Foundation-Youth Awards Committee Chair, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Latino Theatre Council for the Latino Theatre Initiative at the Mark Taper Forum, the Los Angeles Cultural Tourism Department, the City of Santa Monica Cultural Grants Panel, and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission Civic Art Panel. Selected by the California Community Foundation to be part of their leadership fellowship program entitled "Ambassadors Within." The aim of Ambassadors Within was to deepen and broaden the network, capacity and reach of civic entrepreneurs for the benefit of the community we serve. In addition, the program aimed to perpetuate the work of civic entrepreneurs, to engage the experience of community builders, and to benefit organizations focused upon nurturing community leadership.

Recipient of the Durfee Foundation Sabbatical Award, Cornerstone Theater Trailblazer Award and Flor y Canto Champion of Change Award in Art and Culture.

## **HIMERRIA WORTHAM, ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Hailing from Berlin, Germany, by way of Detroit, Himerria resides in Los Angeles as an actor, dancer, and choreographer. She attended Wayne State University and California State University to study Dance, Kinesiology, and Journalism. Since graduating, Himerria's professional dance career has led her across stages around the world and Los Angeles and to TV performances from The Academy Awards, Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, Today Show to HBO's Euphoria.



Himerria has been a part of music videos such as Beyoncé's Spirit and performed live with artists like Shakira, Aretha Franklin, and Toni Braxton. Some of her film work includes choreographing for the Spotify AR music video Pineapple Skies by Miguel, and Thistles and Thorns, a short female-lead fairytale based on West African mythology. Himerria is passionate about her mixed heritage, being both of African-American and Algerian descent and growing up in Germany and the USA. These influences shaped her most recent award-winning film production Moving Portraits, snapshots of two American women of color. Born out of a yearning for elevated images of women of color, Himerria and her dance partner Raquel borrowed from their respective Algerian and Mexican cultures to create contemporary dance portrait images that encapsulate dignity, beauty, and poise as well as the power of the supportive nature of friendship.

Currently, Himerria is working toward her Master's degree in Visual Anthropology from the Westfälische Wilhelms-University Münster in Germany while serving as the Associate Artistic Director of LA's quintessential site-specific dance company, Heidi Duckler Dance (HDD). Himerria is excited to continue engaging and collaborating with the many diverse communities native to Los Angeles through place-based performances, filmmaking, and teaching experiences with the HDD family.

## **KAITWAN JACKSON, EDUCATION MANAGER**



Kaitwan is a native of Washington, DC, where he began dancing at the Dance Institute of Washington under the direction of Fabian Barnes. He furthered his training at the Dance Theatre of Harlem, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and University of Arizona. He holds a B.S. in Public Policy with a concentration in Philanthropy, Nonprofits, and Social Innovation from the University of Southern California. He has both performed and worked within the school systems of Washington, DC, Tucson, and Los Angeles. Through his work, Kaitwan has developed an unwavering devotion to both dance and K-12 education, which helped develop his commitment toward increasing access to arts education for disenfranchised populations. He sternly believes that within K-12 education art must be held to the same stature as math, English, and science, and that there should be no governance or financial barriers in making this a reality. He first joined the HDD team through the Los Angeles Department of Arts and Culture's 2020 Arts Internship Program, and is overjoyed to continue in his new role.