Collage Dance to Receive $15,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (May 12, 2021) – Collage Dance Collective has been approved for a $15,000 Grants for Arts Projects award to create a new work to add to the company’s repertoire. This project will support the creation of a new ballet inspired by the American novel Their Eyes Were Watching God. Collage Dance Collective’s project is among the more than 1,100 projects across America totaling nearly $27 million that were selected during this second round of Grants for Arts Projects fiscal year 2021 funding.

“As the country and the arts sector begin to imagine returning to a post-pandemic world, the National Endowment for the Arts is proud to announce funding that will help arts organizations such as Collage Dance Collective reengage fully with partners and audiences,” said NEA Acting Chairman Ann Eilers. “Although the arts have sustained many during the pandemic, the chance to gather with one another and share arts experiences is its own necessity and pleasure.”

“We are grateful and honored to have the support and recognition of the National Endowment for the Arts,” said Marcellus Harper, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Collage Dance. “This grant helps us dream beyond this pandemic and will allow us to build a new work that helps us diversify the ballet cannon and move ballet forward.”

Their Eyes Were Watching God authored by Zora Neale Hurston, one of the pre-eminent writers of twentieth-century African-American literature, is considered a classic. Being choreographed by Kevin Thomas, Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Collage Dance, the new ballet inspired by this literature will tell the epic tale of evolving selfhood through love, loss and acceptance.

For more information on the projects included in the Arts Endowment grant announcement, visit arts.gov/news.

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About Collage Dance Collective
Positioning itself as the largest Black-owned ballet company in the South, Collage Dance Collective has worked to inspire the growth and diversity of ballet by showcasing a repertoire of relevant choreography and world-class dancers representative of our community. The professional company has presented eleven full-length seasons in Memphis, plus national and international touring presenting a diverse range of classical and contemporary choreography. Its institutional arm, the Collage Dance Conservatory, trains more kids of color in a classical art form than any other non-profit in Memphis or the Mid-South. In December 2020, Collage opened a 22,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art facility to expand its programming, training and impact. The work of Collage Dance Collective has been featured in media outlets including Huffington Post, Allure, Yahoo!, The Commercial Appeal, Vibe, Afropunk and Pointe Magazine.
www.collagedance.org

For more info please contact:
Shalishah Franklin | 213.949.3204 | press@collagedance.org