

World Arts West

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WORLD ARTS WEST DANCE FESTIVAL RETURNS TO THE PRESIDIO WITH A FREE OUTDOOR FESTIVAL SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH!

World Arts West will return to the Presidio National Park this September to present a free, afternoon-length dance festival featuring local artists of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

This year's festival is part of the Presidio's Sunday Afternoons series and includes **free** live performances, Presidio Pop Up food trucks, and interactive dance demos with festival artists. This partnership is an intentional effort by both World Arts West and the Presidio to bring diverse, underrepresented groups to the Presidio and give a voice to communities that were historically unwelcome in the National Park's spaces.

Presenting artists include **Calpulli Tonalehqueh, Diamano Coura West African Dance Company, Melissa Cruz Flamenco, Mona Khan Company, Nicaragua Dance Ensemble, Ruth Asawa SF School of the Arts, Te Pura O Te Rahura'a, and Winnie Wong**. These live performances will represent cultural traditions from China, Mexico, West Africa, Spain, India, Nicaragua, Brazil and Tahiti.

"In programming this festival, I am especially interested in presenting underrepresented dance forms and artists rarely seen on our stages," World Arts West Executive Director Anne Huang said. "By showcasing art forms like the Garifuna from Nicaragua, Aztec dance, and youth performers, we are highlighting artists that have traditionally been underrepresented in our festivals, as a part of our journey to becoming a more equitable and social justice-oriented organization."

"In this festival, we will feature **Kasonde/Kashonde**, which is a dance that reflects the role and dignity of black men in society, especially in these times when they are struggling for survival and respect." Diamano Coura Artistic Director Naomi Diouf said. "It is a dance that marks the transition of boys to men among the Balanta people of Guinea Bissau, Casamance, and Senegal. As a leading African dance company in the country, we aim to inspire our community by showcasing dance styles from various parts of West Africa."

“We are presenting, and making visible, Garifuna dance forms that are rarely, if ever, seen on stages like this,” Grace Torres from Nicaragua Dance Ensemble said. “Our pieces come from Afro-Latin communities descended from enslaved people, and are rooted in the communal healing and endurance of these communities back home. When we present these pieces on stage, we are able to heal ourselves together, and we hope our audiences feel the same when they see our presentation.”

World Arts West is celebrating 45 years of supporting cultural artists who are preserving, living, and innovating cultures from around the world. In 2023, World Arts West is rolling out our new strategic plan built on centering artists and social justice. Our vision is to be the national thought leader, presenter, advocate, and service provider for the largest world dance network in the United States.

"As a cultural artist myself, I am committed to creating an equity-forward, artist-centered organization that not only supports artists through our work but centers artists in our staff, board and production team," World Arts West Executive Director Anne Huang says. "Our presentations are informed by a renewed focus on equity, and we strive to present underrepresented art forms from marginalized cultures on our stages. We are building an organization that is by us, for us."

The World Arts West Dance Festival will be from 1 - 4 p.m. on Sunday, September 10 at the Presidio Tunnel Tops East Meadow, 210 Lincoln Blvd, San Francisco. Admission to the festival is **free**. World Arts West T-shirts, mats for lawn seating and other merchandise will be available for purchase.

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