



MeenMoves

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY OF DANCE

PROGRAM

MEENMOVES &
GUESTS

MARCH 8, 2026 | 2:00 PM

RIVERVIEW-FISK PARK





MeenMoves

PROGRAM IWDoD '26

DIRECTED and CONCEPTUALIZED by Sameena Mitta
IWDoD '26 SELECTED CHOREOGRAPHERS and PERFORMERS: Cat Mills, Melis Yeşiller, Tessa & Gracie, Kelly Guerrero, Sophia Nielson, Gayathri Pratha, and MeenMoves.

FULL CAST & CREW

Artistic Leadership

Sameena Mitta – Director/Choreographer

Choreographers

Cat Mills – Choreographer/Performer
Kelly Guerrero – Choreographer/Performer
Melis Yeşiller – Choreographer/Performer
Sophia Nielson – Choreographer

Performers

Chelen Middlebrook – Performer
Chelsea Enjer Hecht – Performer
Emma Ying Fang – Performer
Gabi Scheele – Performer
Gayathri Pratha – Performer
Isabel Torok – Performer
Madeleine Lee – Performer

Mizuho Kappa – Performer

Nova Persio – Performer

Paige Barnett Kulbeth – Performer

Sasha Gologorskaya – Performer

Sophia Greene – Performer

Sophie Tosh – Performer

MeenMoves Mentees

Gracie Duggan – MeenMoves Mentee/Performer

Tessa Slyz – MeenMoves Mentee/Performer

Production Team

Sarah Timberlake – Stage Manager

Mark Trumbo – Videographer & Technical Director

Sonam Dekar-Ahhi – Photographer

Lillie Martin – Sound Technician

Karma Chuki – Livestreamer/Backstage Assistant

Keara Gonzalez – Host



1. OPEN...IMMERSED

**Pre-Show Movement Installation Facilitated by Cat Mills
Danced and Collaborated by Nova Persio, Gabi Scheele, and Isabel
Torok**

Open....Immersed is a movement exploration, practice, and meditation on the profound complexities within us and how it relates to the world around us. A deep sense of listening between the body and what lies beyond. How do we witness others, all while attempting to witness a movement inside of us? This movement invites space for women to breathe, listen, and exist in a world that attempts to violently complicate that.

2. ÜNZİLE (EXCERPT)

**Choreography by Melis Yeşiller
Performance by Melis Yeşiller and Madeleine Lee
Music by Lucas King, Sociopath Detuned**

Ünzile is a powerful depiction of the reality of child marriages, where human life is disregarded. The piece sheds light on the emotional and psychological consequences of these forced marriages. It follows the journey of a woman who has lost all hope, disconnected from herself. As she reaches her breaking point, her subconscious attempts to bring her back to life, reconnecting her with the person she was before these tragic events.



3. CHANGE

Choreography and Performance by Tessa Slyz

Music Written and Performed by Gracie Duggan

This song and dance is about growing up, the change from child to woman, and looking back on how innocent you once felt. Also - change is good because it's a way to move forward in life and make more space to grow.

4. SHED

Choreography and Performance by Kelly Guerrero

Music by Michael Wall

This piece explores internal conflict between moving forward in life while feeling held back by the past.

5. LOOK

Choreography by Sophia Nielson

Performance by Emma Ying Fang and Sophie Tosh

Music by The Bangles, Walk Like an Egyptian, digitally edited by Sophie Tosh.

Look explores individuality and connection, and the promise that lives in daring to give in to both.



6. PRANAVAKARAM SIDDHI VINAYAKAM

Choreography by Sri. Hari Rama Murthy

Performance by Gayathri Pratha

Music Composed by Sri Ootukadu Venkata Subba Iyer

Pranavakaram is a profound devotional composition that glorifies Lord Ganesha as the very embodiment of the cosmic sound “Om” (Pranava) – the primordial vibration from which the universe emerges. The piece explores the divine truth that Ganesha is not merely the remover of obstacles, but the source of creation itself, permeating all existence.

7. NIXE

Choreography by Sameena Mitta

Music by Tchaikovsky, Swan Lake

Costumes by Sarah Timberlake

Performance by Sasha Gologorskaya, Sophia Greene, Chelsea Enjer Hecht, Paige Barnett Kulbeth, Mizuho Kappa, Chelen Middlebrook
Workshop lead by Paulina Meneses with MeenMoves dancers

Props by Mark Trumbo

Set to Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake, this modern dance piece for six dancers reimagines the graceful birds as a group of enchanting yet treacherous Nixe, emerging from the water to lure mortals to their doom. The choreography mimics both the fluidity of water and the deceptive, delicate nature of these aquatic spirits. As the music intensifies, the Nixe fight to protect their body...of water.



BIOS



SAMEENA MITTA (ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER)

Sameena is artistic director of dance-theater company MeenMoves and its outreach program MadHops. Mitta was a 2022/23 Artist in Residence at 92NY Harkness Dance Center, a NJPAC Choreography Fellow 2019-2022, and received a 2023 Choreographic Fellowship award from the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation. She has presented works at Little Island, 92NY, NJPAC, BAM Fisher, Americas Society, Ailey Studio Theatre, Martha Graham Theatre, Judson Church and many other venues around NYC and around the world. Mitta has produced live events including International Women's Day of Dance and co-produced international digital events with 1014 Space For Ideas. Mitta recently completed an intergenerational dance film *Bilateral Quadrennium* and continues work on a 10-year site-specific dance film project *Struwwelpeter*. Mitta earned with distinction the Cecchetti Society's Diploma and a MA in Dance Creation from Université du Québec à Montréal focusing on Movement Intervention for South Asian survivors of domestic violence. Under Mitta's artistic direction, MeenMoves explores questions of identity, focusing on the unique perspectives of those who check "none-of-the-above", to create socially relevant, quirky, highly-technical dance-theater works for stage and film. Mitta advocates for diversity in dance and has sat on multiple dance juries for granting agencies in Canada and the USA. Mitta is mentor to the Recanati-Kaplan scholars in dance, she is the Harkness Dance Center Artistic Advisor, and she is on faculty at the Limón Institute, 92NY, and Marymount College. Website: meenmoves.com



CAT MILLS (CHOREOGRAPHER)

I am an experimental choreographer exploring the mystery of the unknown, supernatural worlds, and historical secrets. My work reframes time, space, place, energy, and objects through haunting or eerie imagery. I have explored these ideas in a dance film I directed and choreographed in 2025, titled *B.I., H.6.*, which was crucial to my experimentation of technology, site, and movement. This film was selected to present at the ScreenPLAY dance film festival. Another work, entitled *However Indeed Presently*, was shown at the Great Hall Theater in 2024. This collaborative dance was invited to be presented at the Honors Day Showing at Marymount Manhattan College. *Re-Know*, which premiered in 2023, was selected to be presented at the Works In Progress showcase at the Great Hall Theater. Along with my own creative practice, I have implemented my voice in dance works by Stephanie Troyak, Raja Feather Kelly, and Dolly Sfeir.



BIOS



MELIS YEŞİLLER (CHOREOGRAPHER/PERFORMER)

Melis Yeşiller is a Turkish dancer and choreographer based in New York City. She is preparing to graduate from the choreography program at the Martha Graham School and holds a BFA in Classical Ballet and Modern Dance from Istanbul University State Conservatory. Her latest choreography, *The Curse*, was presented through Movement Research at Judson Memorial Church, exploring the state of mind of Medusa from Greek mythology. Prior to this, she created *Threads of the Wild*, a work investigating ecological imbalance and the absence of wolves within an ecosystem, which premiered at Court Square Theatre for the International Human Rights Art Festival in 2025. She also presented *Ünzile*, a duet addressing child marriages through the fractured relationship between a woman and her younger self. Earlier works include *Nysa*, examining order and chaos, and *Niobe*, inspired by Greek myth and focused on grief and transformation. Her early work *Camelia* was showcased at the Martha Graham Studio Theater. Melis has performed in *Carousel of Dreams* for Dior's Saks Fifth Avenue Winter Window Reveal and previously danced with the Mercan Selçuk Dance Company and the Mersin State Opera and Ballet.



TESSA SLYZ (MEENMOVES MENTEE/CHOREOGRAPHER/PERFORMER)

Tessa has been dancing since she learned how to walk and in her early years developed a deep love, dedication, and devotion to the art. Tessa started dancing when she was 4 and began training with Ms. Sameena when she turned 6 years old. Subsequently she became a Recanati-Kaplan dance merit scholar at the 92nd street Y where she has danced for the past 8 years. She also attends Frank Sinatra High School for the performing arts as a dance major and is in her senior year. Next year she will begin pursuing a BFA in dance in college. Additionally Tessa takes classes at Broadway Dance Center where she learns from Broadway choreographers and dancers, and one day dreams of following in their footsteps! Tessa is incredibly excited to open this exciting new chapter in her life and is thrilled to perform this piece celebrating Women's Day with Gracie!



BIOS



GRACIE DUGGAN (MEENMOVES MENTEE/COMPOSER/PERFORMER)

Gracie has been singing for as long as she can remember. Growing up around music and dance, she constantly was inspired to create her own art. At age 11, Gracie began writing her own music and has written multiple songs for the RK Scholarship Program and for Sameena’s “Meen Moves” company since 2021. This year, she has composed an acoustic guitar piece on the bittersweetness of growing up, moving on, and the nostalgia of it all.



KELLY GUERRERO (CHOREOGRAPHER/PERFORMER)

Kelly Guerrero is a dancer, choreographer, and arts administrator. She holds a BFA in Dance and Minor in Business from Montclair State University, where she received a Choreographic Excellence award. Her work has been presented in various concerts in Connecticut, Missouri, New Jersey, and New York. During her studies, she had the privilege of dancing in works by Stefanie Batten Bland, Jessica DiMauro Marks, Martha Graham, Mark Harootian, Larry Keigwin, Fredrick Earl Mosley, Helen Pickett, and Janice Rosario. She has also performed work by Charles Weidman as a guest artist with Nacre Dance Group. Kelly is currently a resident artist with ARTS By The People, and dances with The Moving Architects and H.T. Chen & Dancers. Additionally, she serves as the Managing Director of Dance New Jersey, a service organization advocating for dance and dance education in the state.



BIOS



SOPHIE NIELSON (CHOREOGRAPHER)

Sophia Nielsen is a dancer, choreographer, and scientist whose work is grounded in humanity. She's curious about the hard feelings—loss, betrayal, grief, rage—and the more joyful ones—play, curiosity, belonging—but especially the happy-sad, difficult-to-articulate emotional intersections between them. Sophia will graduate from New York University this spring with a BFA in Dance and a secondary major in Biology. She has performed works by Kayla Farrish, Yasmeen Godder, Seán Curran, Eléonore Valère-Lachky, Lorena Nogal, and Sebastian Garcia Ferro, and has served as rehearsal assistant for Baye & Asa. She has choreographed seven pieces, most recently the playful yet serious Sketches 1-7, which premiered at the Jack Crystal Theater this fall. Her nearly four years of research in computational cognitive neuroscience and developmental genetics at NYU inform the interdisciplinary, creative, and evolving lens through which she approaches dance.



GAYATHRI PRATHA (PERFORMER)

Gayathri Pratha is a Kuchipudi Dancer based in New Jersey/New York. Gayathri has had the opportunity to share her love for Kuchipudi on various stages, both in the US and internationally. In addition to performing, she is passionate about bringing Kuchipudi to a broader audience. She volunteers for Virtual Arts for Humanity, a 501c non profit organization giving artists a platform to showcase their work all while giving back to a good cause. Gayathri is a 2024 Indian Raga Fellow as well as a first place winner for the South Asian Arts Symposium Competition. Currently she is learning under the guidance of Guru Sri Vedantam Satya Narasimha Sastry and Guru Dr. Sridhar Vasudevan.



MeenMoves



Supported by public funds from the Jersey City Arts & Culture Trust Fund. This program is made possible from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a division of the Department of State, and administered by the Hudson County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs/Tourism Development, Craig Guy, Hudson County Executive, & the Hudson County Board of County Commissioners.

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