

MeenMoves
Press Kit
2023
W(h)ine Pairings



MeenMoves bio



MeenMoves creates socially relevant, quirky, highly technical dance-theater works for stage and film. Under the artistic direction of Sameena Mitta, MeenMoves explores questions of identity, focusing on the unique perspectives of those who check “none-of-the-above.” MeenMoves aims to reflect a diversity of worldviews, collaborate early and often with music makers, offer audiences pay-what-you-can options, welcome audiences who may not otherwise turn to or have access to dance, and to amplify the voices of underrepresented creatives of color, particularly those of Muslim women. MeenMoves has presented choreography at Little Island NYC, NJPAC, 92NY, Judson Memorial Church, BAM Fisher, and at many other venues in the New York City area and around the world, including evening-length alternative f(A)cts to sold-out houses at The Martha Graham Studio Theater. Current projects include Come September in collaboration with composer Stephanie Griffin (premiering 2025); Struwwelpeter, a ten-year German dance-film project based on the 1845 children’s book (premiering 2026); and the audience-engagement driven W(h)ine Pairings set to Nico Muhly’s Confessions (premiering 2023). MeenMoves receives support from Harkness Dance Center, Dance/NYC, Jersey City Arts and Trust Fund, Hudson County Office of Cultural Affairs, DanceNJ, JCAC, and the Ontario Arts Council.

Website: meenmoves.com

Instagram: [/www.instagram.com/meenmoves](https://www.instagram.com/meenmoves)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MeenMoves

Fractured Atlas: fundraising.fracturedatlas.org/meenmoves

Sameena Mitta bio (Artistic Director)



Sameena Mitta 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, an 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, the Harkness Dance Center Artistic Advisor, and she is on faculty at the Limón Institute and 92NY.

Website: meenmoves.com

MeenMoves Presents

W(h)ine Pairings

Piece description:

W(h)ine Pairings is an evening-length interactive dance-theater production for six dancers, one sommelier, one audience facilitator, and an audience of any size. Driven by audience engagement, W(h)ine Pairings is about really listening to and actively engaging with the concerns of the entire community present. So much more than a dance concert, W(h)ine Pairings promises to spark compassionate conversation - and help you take the edge off.

A selected audience member kicks off the night by sharing a complaint. Drawing thematic connections with this grievance, the company of dancers and a sommelier pair the complaint with one of 14 short, topical dances and one wine. The sommelier sensorially describes the beverage, triggering the concurrent dancing and drinking, after which the cycle begins anew.

Each dance is inspired by a contemporary problem or question – from gun violence to the Me Too Movement - and each is set to a song on Nico Muhly and Teitur Lassen's album Confessions. The order of the dances changes every performance based on the topics the audience raises with their complaints, but the evening always progresses until all 14 rounds of w(h)ining, dancing, and drinking are complete. To keep everyone lucid and engaged, some of the 14 pairings are water, and breath, and food for thought, and there is an alcohol-free option available.

The performance requires a non-traditional set-up of any performance space, including both tables and chairs for the audience and an open stage. MeenMoves has permission to use a recording of Nico Muhly and Teitur Lassen's Confessions for this production. Additionally, MeenMoves will work with an outside vendor to provide the wine list and the venue will provide the wine, unless other arrangements are made with the venue. Ticket prices will include the cost of the wine, and the presenting venue must allow for audience members to consume wine on site.

Choreography and Concept: Sameena Mitta

Composer/Score: Nico Muhly and Teitur Lassen, "Confessions"

Costumes: Timberlake Studios Inc.

Performers: Information to be sent at a later date

Lighting Design: *Information to be sent at a later date*

Stage Manager: *Information to be sent at a later date*

Approximate Runtime: 75 minutes

Photo Options:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1J2mK_XPnZ6nZYnNDnIPu5gbOvTE5AQE8?usp=sharing

Reviews

MeenMoves / Sameena Mitta presents "alternative (f)Acts"

Freeform Review:



Sameena Mitta's *alternative (f)Acts* is silly. It's wonderfully crafted. It has an impressive economy of means (a design that succeeds because the revisited movement vocabulary is so fun to watch repeatedly). The movement material is challenging to dance. The dancing is beautiful, lively, energetic and effortless. There's all manner of subversion. The video, text, and live music are as sly and playful as the dancing. Everything's tossed together with charming wit and verve. (Dance Enthusiast; June 8, 2017)

MeenMoves presents "alternative (f) Acts"

Freeform Review:



When one attends a dance concert, one does not know what to expect. I must confess at times of being given over to preconceived notions of what will take place. On seeing *alternative (f)Acts*, which was choreographed by **Sameena Mitta**, with her dance company **MeenMoves**, I was in for a transformative journey. With fluid and beautiful dancers, we were treated to a world of reverie and down to earth choreographic phrasing. What was fascinating was watching Limon technique, used in a way that was current, post-modern, conceptual. Sameena Mitta has taken this dance technique and made it her own. It fits as perfectly as an elegant glove on a hand. What can one say, when a live quartet of musicians, (Momenta Quartet) dancers, film all come together is a way that is seamless? With live musicians and an incredible music score by **John Adams**, in an age of iPods, this can't be taken for granted. The string quartet was amazing which consisted of two violins, a viola and cello, with music and sounds that reverberated against the walls.

From the film, we heard stories that were honest, and showed the contradiction of who we think we are, and who we really are given any set of challenging circumstances. What is it like to fall in love, and then loss of falling out of love. Beside from the stories from the film, the dancers also act! With movement that is sinewy, graceful and precise. Spirituality, existentialism are heady subjects, but is pulled off with wit and intelligence. A fun fact was that: Jean-Paul Sartre, refused to accept a Nobel Peace Prize!

I also must take my hat off to **Sarah Timberlake**. Well-designed costumes that took us out of our pedestrian setting, that did not encumber the movement, but flowed with it and was appealing to the eyes. It did not take away from the lines of the dancers, but enhanced it.

Also brilliant lighting by **Jay Ryan**, which was also integral asset for the choreography. I left the Martha Graham Studio theatre in another world, and was instantly shocked backed to reality while waiting for the bus on 14th Street on a Friday night. One the program was a quote by Simone de Beauvoir....." I tore myself away from the safe comfort of certainties through my love for truth—and the truth rewarded me." This was just a very full evening of dance and thought. (Dance Enthusiast; June 15, 2017)