June 2017

Dear friends,

This year has been another incredible year of growth and change for ANIKAYA. Since my last report, new collaborative relationships have been established in Benin, Brazil and Japan, and at home in Boston. The web of Dance Diplomacy grows stronger and more complex with each new collaboration. Projects that we have been dreaming of for years have become a reality. Here I will introduce some of what has happened in the past year, and what is to come in the year ahead.

In ANIKAYA fashion, each of these projects is interconnected. I have attempted to organize them into some kind of linear narrative. But, the truth is they are a four-dimensional venn diagram. This is ANIKAYA’s mission - to break down the perceived boundaries between people, cultures and art forms. Our collective work reveals the deep and underlying connectedness between all of us.

As always, we depend on the support of our community here at home that has allowed me individually and ANIKAYA as an organization to take risks, knowing that we have a safety net. Thank you for making this work possible.

In dance,

Wendy Jehlen
Founder/Artistic Director
ANIKAYA
“AN-I-KAYA” - “gift of the body.”

“an(n)” - “grace, gift” (Hebrew)

“i” (ə) – “of” (Persian)

“kaya” - “body” (Sanskrit)

The work of ANIKAYA is to transmit grace through the vessel of the body.

ANIKAYA Dance Theater has been evolving since 1998 under the direction of choreographer Wendy Jehlen. ANIKAYA’s mission, is to break down the perceived boundaries between people, cultures and art forms. Our work has so far extended to North and South America, South and East Asia, Africa and Europe.

ANIKAYA weaves together music, dance and storytelling to create works that pull from the full range of the body's communicative capabilities. We incorporate traditional forms, internalizing them and then allowing them to reemerge as part of a new movement vocabulary. The result is work that is resonant of deep-rooted traditions, without being bound to any particular genre, place or practice. We have traveled wide and studied deeply to bring you these, the gifts of the body.
CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS

“A man whose eyes love risks his soul -
His dancing breaks beyond the mind's control.”
— Farid al-Din Attar, The Conference of the Birds

The biggest development of 2017 is a project that will weave together many of the collaborations we have been developing over the years into a new work - the Conference of the Birds.

Conference of the Birds will be an evening-length movement theater work inspired by the epic poem of Farid Ud din Attar, and embodying stories gathered from modern-day refugees and other migrants. Conference of the Birds is a tale of a group of birds that set off in search of the mythical bird, the Simurgh. Many of the birds abandon the quest. When the remaining birds arrive in the land of the Simurgh, they find themselves reflected – they are the Simurgh.

With the Boston Center for the Arts as commissioning partner and presenter, and the Islamic Society of Greater Boston Cultural Center as lead community partner, we have received a Building Bridges grant from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art to create the Conference of the Birds at home in Boston, bringing collaborating artists from Turkey, France, Benin, Brazil, Egypt and Japan for an intensive creative residency and premiere in the Spring of 2018.

This is the first time that the Boston Center for the Arts has commissioned a new dance work. It is part of a revolution for dance in Boston. ANIKAYA is honored to be the first in what we hope will become a series of world-class new works created in Boston by Boston area choreographers, and presented by the Boston Center for the Arts.

The narrative of Conference of the Birds will be created during a series of story-gathering workshops being scheduled for the fall of 2017.

Collaborators:

KEMAL KARAÖZ
Turkey

SHAW PONG LIU
USA
These workshops will build a foundation for the narrative of Conference, and the stories gathered will be woven into composite stories that will make up the characters of the “birds”.

With support from a Live Arts Boston grant from The Boston Foundation, we will conduct story-gathering workshops and present works-in-progress of the narratives of the “birds” throughout the fall in public spaces in the Boston area.

In March 2018, the full company will be in residence at the Boston Center for the Arts, culminating in the premiere performances of Conference of the Birds in April 2018. In conjunction with the premiere, we intend to host a gathering of artists, programmers, and others interested in exploring the possibilities of combatting Islamophobia through the dance and theater.

LUCIANE RAMOS-SILVA
Brazil

MOHAMMED YOUSRY “SHIKA”
Egypt

MARCEL GBEFFA
Benin

KAE ISHIMOTO
Japan

TARA MURPHY
USA
RUN LIKE A GIRL

In May, in partnership with Centre Chorégraphique Multicorps and funded by the Embassy of the United States in Benin, ANIKAYA conducted the first fully-implemented series of Run Like a Girl workshops.

Run Like a Girl looks at the words and phrases permeating our cultures that chip away at the self-esteem of girls, creating a false image of girls and women as “weak.” These words and phrases are detrimental as well to boys and men, as they are taught to hide and suppress their emotions, their natural empathetic tendencies, and create a system that limits all of our potential.

We conducted three weeks of activities: one week of training and development for two Compagnie Multicorps, Christy and Orphée, who, with Marcel and Wendy, became the Run Like a Girl teaching/sensitization team. The week consisted of movement work, discussion and research. The following week, the team led a five-day in Cotonou and a four-day workshop in Parakou with dancers and actors, each culminating in a showing for the public.

This process was a demonstration of the power of embodied knowledge, deconstructing patterns of movement and of mind and building new ones. The changes evident in just four to five days of work together are evidence that dance works.
ANIKA Y and Multicorps are grateful for the faith placed in us by the team at the US Embassy in Benin and we look forward to continued partnership in this and other endeavors of Dance Diplomacy.
(R)EVOLVE

September 2016 marked the beginning of a new multi-faceted collaboration with Beninois choreographer/dancer Marcel Gbeffa. The collaboration began with preliminary research for a new work, (R)evolve, a ritual, drawing on ritual practices and geometries of nature and physics, a study of the power of carefully constructed repetition. This work continued in Boston in February, Brazil in March and again in Cotonou in May. In May, with the addition of Togolaise singer/composer Lady Apoc, the work became a trio. The process will continue in Boston in October 2017.

(R)evolve is a carefully constructed ritual, drawing on ecstatic practices from cultures around the world. The result is a pulsing, driving, mesmerizing hour-long journey. The ritual is built on a cycle of repetition and expansion, doubling back on itself like the coils of a snake.

Our research is on how repetition affects the body on a muscular, skeletal, neural, even cellular level. This repetition is fractal, repeating on infinite levels and scales in the movements, phrases and overarching structure of the work.
DELCATENESS IN TIMES OF BRUTALITY

In February 2017, Wendy traveled to Japan with support from NEFA’s New England Dance Fund and the APAP Cultural Exchange Fund to begin a new project with butoh artist DAKEI. DAKEI is an accomplished Deaf Butoh artist and director of the Shizuku butoh company. The project has now been granted support by the Japan Foundation’s Performing Arts Japan program to continue development of the work and bring it to the US, as well as a travel grant from the Network of Ensemble Theaters to document the collaborative process. Delicateness is a response to a work of performance protest in São Paulo, at the beginning of the political crisis in May 2016. The work was titled “Manifesto da Delicadeza em tempos de Brutalidade.” This work is a manifest, a promise.
ENTANGLING

Entangling is a project inspired by Quantum Entanglement, a phenomenon by which two atoms that are physically separated in space and time, become, for all intents and purposes, one. Entangling is a collaboration with dancer/choreographer Lacina Coulibaly of Burkina Faso.

This year Entangling has been performed at the Paul Mellon Arts Center in Wallingford, CT and the Educational Center for the Arts in New Haven, CT, the latter with support from a New England States Touring grant from New England Foundation for the Arts.

NEXT UP: LISTEN

In 2017, ANIKAYA Dance Theater will be working with students at the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to develop a new movement-based performance work, “Listen,” to be performed in public spaces throughout Boston. Listen will employ a series of improvisational and choreographic strategies that develop and utilize physical listening and collective rhythm.

The work will be created over a series of sessions three times per week during the summer of 2017, and performances will take place in August and September primarily on weekends. Performances will take place at outdoor sites throughout the city.

The project will be led by ANIKAYA Artistic Director, Wendy Jehlen, along with two ANIKAYA collaborating artists – Lacina Coulibaly (Burkina Faso/NYC) and John Ying (Boston).
FOCUS – BRAZIL:

ANIKA\'Y do BRASIL

ANIKA\'Y\'s Brazil-based company, ANIKA\'Y do Brasil, is currently a resident company at Centro de Referência da Dança da Cidade de São Paulo (CRD). This year we advanced in the staging of Forest and performed at Fabrica de Criatividade and Centro de Referência da Dança in São Paulo. ANIKA\'Y do Brasil presented workshops on the process and content of Forest as part of their residency activities at CRD.

Producer/Rehearsal Director:
Rodrigo Cândido

Dancers:
Rodrigo Cândido
Raísa Tomassin
Wellington Santana
Átila Muniz
Raquel Flor Nunes
Juliana do Nascimento
Marcel Gbeffa (Benin)

Documentarian:
Fábio Minagawa

BORBOLETAS NOS INTESTINOS

Borboletas nos Intestinos is a collaboration between Wendy Jehlen, Luciane Ramos-Silva (dance) and Pedro Matallo (photography/videography/projection), both of Brazil. The collaboration began as a documentation of Wendy and Luciane\’s site-responsive improvisations and has grown into a project exploring the layering of spaces and contexts through photo and video documentation and subsequent projections of past iterations into future performances. Photos and video are projected onto structures and surfaces in the given environment. The dance is performed within
these projections, and documented again, to be layered into the next performance. Audience members are encouraged to walk among the projections and the dancers during the performance. The performance is a study in vulnerability, an embodiment and visualization of the permeability of our selves.

**CORPOS EM PERIGO/CORPOS PERIGOSOS**

Corpos em Perigo/Corpos Perigosos is a street dance/theater/ritual project being created between three artists/companies: ANIKAYA/Wendy Jehlen (US), Fragmento Urbano & Luciane Ramos Silva (Brazil). We are working from different cultural spaces, but with a common research in ritual and performance as community building and fortifying tools. There is an additional attention to resistance in times of extreme political danger. The collaboration takes the approach that we are all in this together, that we are connected on all levels. The title of the work, “Corpos em Perigo/Corpos Perigosos” refers both to the state of danger we find ourselves in as women, people of color and artists, as right wing governments take control of both of our countries, and the deep and intrinsic power that we have as people inhabiting marginalized bodies to disrupt this destructive process. Our collaboration began in November 2016. We will create a site-responsive work interacting with the environment, each other, and the public.
In 2017, ANIKAYA has received a series of important grants to support our work at home and abroad that have allowed us to expand in a major way. Since our last mid-year report, we have received grants from:

The Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art
The Boston Foundation
New England Foundation for the Arts – through the New England Dance Fund, the New England States Touring fund and the Creative City program
The Japan Foundation
The US Department of State/Embassy of the US in Benin
Network of Ensemble Theaters
Association of Performing Arts Presenters
The Kates Foundation
Somerville Arts Council
Cambridge Arts Council
The James K Spriggs Foundation, a Fidelity donor-advised fund
Individual donors to the Dance Diplomacy crowdfunding campaign - summer of 2016.
Dance Works
This year we have seen in concrete ways how dance and Dance Diplomacy can change lives.

In Brazil, I taught a new workshop titled “Empatia – Rasa e Butoh,” on two very different approaches to the evocation of emotion through movement. During this workshop, one of the participants broke down crying. She had always been uncomfortable being touched. Through this workshop she had gotten in touch with her body in a new way, which allowed her to connect with others physically and emotionally.

At the Educational Center for the Arts, middle school students on the autism spectrum maintained eye contact, and relaxed without hesitation into physical contact in ways their teachers had never imagined.

In Benin during the process of Run Like a Girl, we watched as workshop participants grew as movers, dancers and as conscious human beings, excavating centuries of internalized oppression, and learning to see gender in new ways. The observable changes that occurred during these short, 4-5 day workshops gave me hope for the future of our societies.

This is what dance can do.

Your donation is more important than ever.

This year has been one of incredible growth for ANIKAYA. We need your support as we develop a sustainable foundation for our growing programs at home and abroad. Your support is vital to the success of this work. As we continue to expand into new communities and cultures, and deepen our relationships to the communities we serve, please consider becoming a patron.

All donations are tax-deductible.

Donations by mail may be made to:
ANIKAYA/Akhra, Inc.
67 Dane St.
Somerville, MA 02143

To give online, please visit our webpage: www.anikaya.org/support