

*Updated July 6, 2017 - For Immediate Release*

## **CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF MANHATTAN ANNOUNCES OPENING OF "LET'S DANCE!"**

### **New Exhibit Opening July 1 Features Daily Live Dance Performances and Workshops as well as an Interactive Video Installation that Lets Children Dance Along with World-Class Dance Companies**

**New York, NY – June 19, 2017** – The Children's Museum of Manhattan (212 West 83<sup>rd</sup> Street) today announced the opening of *Let's Dance!*, a new immersive exhibit for children and families that showcases the extraordinary joy, beauty, and diversity of dance across New York City and the world. The exhibition runs from July through December 2017 and introduces visitors to dance from a variety of entry points: as an art form, as an expression of diverse cultures and traditions, and as a healthy physical activity. *Let's Dance!* features daily live performances and workshops along with a *dance portal* projection dome showcasing world-class dance companies inviting children to dance along.

From ballet to Bollywood, from the hora to the hula, *Let's Dance!*, a 1,500-square-foot exhibit located in the Museum's lower level gallery, offers visitors hundreds of ways to engage with dance. Visitors to the exhibit can, among other things:

- Interact with the immersive video projection dome *dance portal* to watch, learn and dance along with more than 25 renowned professional, community, and student dance companies from New York and abroad
- Create multicolor shadow dances on the "stage" while exploring lighting design with a child-friendly lighting box
- Choreograph a series of dance patterns while learning the language of dance and using movable signs, engaging props and fun costumes
- Experiment with authentic percussion instruments, drumming unique beats and rhythms
- Explore and capture new dance positions by manipulating poseable figures
- Be inspired by photography and video that celebrate the breadth of the dance world, including the fabulous New York City Dance Parade, and dance in New York City's public schools as seen in *PS Dance!*
- Participate in a dance workshop then take a seat to experience world-class performances!

The exhibit is the latest iteration of the Children's Museum's ongoing *Gateway to the Arts* initiative.

*“Let’s Dance!*, like all our *Gateway to the Arts* programs, is designed to introduce children and families to the arts and to improve cultural equity by bringing a diverse array of New York City arts and cultural institutions to the Museum,” said Andrew Ackerman, the Children’s Museum’s executive director. “We believe the innovative combination of exhibition and programming found in *Let’s Dance!* will also pique the interest of new audiences and develop advocates for the amazing performers and arts organizations found across our city.”

Dance organizations participating in the *dance portal* include Ajna Dance Company, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ballet Hispánico, Bare Feet with Mickela Mallozzi, Blanca Li, Camille A. Brown & Dancers, Dancing Classrooms NYC, Elisa Monte Dance, Fériba – African Rhythm Tap Company, Halau Hula Kealohilani, KaNu Dance Theatre, Mark Morris Dance Group, Martha Graham Dance Company, New York Theatre Ballet, Silva Dance Company, Steps on Broadway, and Thunderbird American Indian Dancers.

*Let’s Dance!* reaffirms the Museum’s long-standing dedication to the arts as essential to early childhood development. Research shows that dance boosts children’s self-confidence, imagination, memory, social skills and happiness, in addition to being fun and healthy.

To ensure the exhibition included both the breadth of NYC’s dance community and the latest information on the value of dance to a child’s physical and emotional well-being, the Museum convened an advisory committee of dance educators, performers and administrators. A complete list of *Let’s Dance!* advisory board members can be found at <http://cmom.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Advisory-Board-070617.pdf>

Advisory board member, Shale Wong, MD, MSPH, pediatrician, and Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado, School of Medicine and Director of Child Health Policy and Education for the Eugene S. Farley, Jr. Health Policy Center notes, “Daily physical activity in our society is stagnant and continues to decline. Dancing offers diverse health benefits, physical, emotional and social, making it an excellent, accessible antidote to our sedentary and stressful lifestyles. When children are introduced to dance at a young age, it offers a lifelong source of fun activity that improves their health and well-being.”

Jody Gottfried Arnhold, funder and advisory board member of *Let’s Dance!*, founder of Dance Education Laboratory (DEL) 92Y, and advocate for dance education agrees, “Physicality is essential to the development of young children. They discover the world through their senses and physical being. Dance experiences, like those offered in *Let’s Dance!* provide an entry point for children to share their feelings, explore their creativity, and begin to experiment with movement.”

Daily family programs will further enhance the visitor experience. Children will experiment using their muscles to move like robots and animals. They will have the chance to create music and dances about favorite children’s books, develop new moves inspired by pops, snaps and beats, and even train to be superheroes with dances inspired by

superhero theme songs. Afternoon workshops will explore dance-making through movement, architecture, design and sound. Visitors will be able to design working tap shoes, crawl, jump and dance through unusual shapes and architecture found in the exhibit, and engineer a device using markers, crayons and paint to leave a trace of each dance.

In addition to a daily dance party, *Let's Dance!* will feature live performances and workshops with teaching artists including:

#### Performances

- Elisa Monte Dance (July 2)
- Calpulli Mexican Dance Company (July 9)
- Dancing Classrooms: Youth Dance Company (July 22)
- Young Dancemakers Company (July 23)
- Taylor 2: Paul Taylor Dance Company (July 30)
- Ayazamana Cultural Center (Aug. 6)

#### Dance workshops with guest teaching artists

- BOLD Creative Movement with ShalomIsrael Diggs (July 6)
- Dance Discovery with Broadway performer Angel Reed (July 13)
- Dance around the world with Stephanie Marrow (July 20)
- Dancing Classrooms (July 27)
- The BrainDance with Dionne Kamara (Aug. 3)
- Hip Hop Dance Party with Neil Fernando (Aug.10)
- African Diasporic Dance Maxine Montilus (Aug. 17)

Participation is free with admission. Due to space limitations, however, tickets are required for entry to some workshops and may be picked up in the Museum lobby one hour before the event. For a schedule of programs and performances: [cmom.org/calendar](http://cmom.org/calendar). Programs are subject to change without notice.

Funding for the exhibit has been provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, and Jody and John Arnhold. Dance programming has been made possible with public funding from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. Casio America, Inc., Drum Workshop, Inc., Harlequin Floors (American Harlequin Corporation), Putumayo World Music, Steps on Broadway, and Traveling Tutus, Inc. have provided in-kind donations for *Let's Dance!* Learn more at [cmom.org](http://cmom.org).

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#### **About Children's Museum of Manhattan**

The Children's Museum of Manhattan – a nonprofit, citywide resource for children, families, and educators – works to ensure children thrive at home, at school and in the community. Based on West 83<sup>rd</sup> Street, with over 350,000 visitors annually, the Museum creates hands-on learning

environments, programs, and curricula through an alchemy of fun, research, and museum science. In addition to its commitment to delight and educate visitors, the Museum offers resources and strategies for parents, caregivers, and educators to help children become lifelong learners. Thousands more New Yorkers also benefit from the Museum's offering through its outreach programs at schools, Head Start centers, shelters, libraries, and hospitals. [cmom.org](http://cmom.org).