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**Creative Placemaking Initiative Takes Site-Specific Dance into Hyattsville, MD**

*Art Lives Here celebrates Maida Withers and the Dance Construction Company’s pivotal role in the 1970s dance revolution that became known as site-specific work*

**Mount Rainier, MD:** **On September 20th at 8:30 pm** Maida Withers Dance Construction Company will be joined by electronic musician/composer Steve Hilmy in the new location for Gateway Arts District arts organization, Art Works Now, at the old Marche Florists building, 4800 Rhode Island Ave in Hyattsville, MD. Lighting will be designed by Enoch Chan of Deviated Theater. Withers, a pioneer and innovator of site-specific work in the world of dance, proposed a concept to the Art Lives Here partners back in January that would engage audiences with the question, “does art live here?” and “what does it mean if art lives here?” The piece, entitled “Trans Action” allows the audience to decide if “art” (two female dancers) can survive the onslaught of eight dancers in business suits attempting to dominate and suppress her. Withers asks, “join us to get down and get dirty and help make art happen…a plan to keep art alive!” “The intimacy of participation by the audience in a site location seems to forever change the artist and the audience view of the space and feeling about art, dance in this case. It can be liberating for all when dance happens in places other than the formal stage.” (Maida Withers)

Art Works Now Executive Director Barbara Johnson and Joe’s Movement Emporium Executive Director Brooke Kidd met with Withers to discuss the potential for a creative placemaking occurrence. Art Works Now has struggled with the Historic Preservation Commission in moving forward with plans for renovation, a perfect opportunity to use dance to transform the space and engage the community with it’s potential. By breaking the boundaries of space, movement, and classic passive role of the audience, Withers hopes to change the sense of space.

Prior to the performance, Withers will present a free discussion and film presentation **September 17th at 7:30 pm** at Joe’s Movement Emporium entitled **“On Site / Insight”.** Withers will give context to the role and place of space in the creation and performance of dance for “live audiences” with examples of site events such as *Wet and Wonderful in Washington, DC* on the National Plaza (Western Plaza on Pennsylvania Avenue); *Sunday Maneuvers* at Theodore Roosevelt Island National Park, DC; *LENIN*, Lenin Museum, Krasnoyarsk, Siberia, Russia; *Seeing JAZZ MOVE,* Smithsonian International Gallery exhibition, Seeing JAZZ.

These two events are a part of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Maida Withers Dance Construction Company in 1974 in Washington, DC. The event is made possible by funding from Art Lives Here via [Joe’s Movement Emporium](http://www.joesmovement.org/).

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Art Lives Here is the creative placemaking project and visibility campaign of the Gateway Arts District, a two-mile corridor along Route 1 that utilizes arts-led economic redevelopment to unite the towns of Hyattsville, North Brentwood, Brentwood and Mount Rainier, MD. Planning partners include Art Works Now, Brentwood Arts Exchange, Gateway Community Development Corporation, Hyattsville Community Development Corporation, Joe’s Movement Emporium, Prince George’s African American Museum & Cultural Center, Prince George’s Arts and Humanities Council and Red Dirt Studio.