

**FRONT International**  
Cleveland Triennial for  
Contemporary Art



Image courtesy of Dansbana!

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## **FRONT INTERNATIONAL RECEIVES SUPPORT FOR AKRON ART MUSEUM EXHIBITION, PUBLIC SPACE FOR DANCE**

**\$100,000 Knight Arts Challenge Akron Award Will Support an Exhibition at the Akron Art Museum and a Commission for a Public Space for Dance by the Stockholm-based Studio Dansbana! to Premier at FRONT 2021**

CLEVELAND, September 25, 2019 — FRONT Exhibition Company is honored to be a recipient of this year's Knight Arts Challenge Akron, a community-wide initiative funding projects that engage and enrich Akron, Ohio through the arts, presented by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Building on a critically acclaimed show at the Akron Art Museum in 2018, FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art will expand its presence in Akron in 2021. Alongside a significant presentation at the Akron Art Museum, a core partner of FRONT, the project is investing in long-term artistic responses that can engage with multiple publics in Akron in compelling ways.



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With support from The Knight Arts Challenge, FRONT is excited to present a collaboration with the Swedish studio Dansbana! that will culminate in an open-access, public dance floor in downtown Akron developed through a dialogue with community and cultural organizations. Highlighting the value of dance as a tool of personal and collective transformation, the installation will feature a custom architectural dance floor and sculptural bluetooth speakers that can support live performances and everyday engagement. This project, titled “Dansbana! Akron - A Public Dance Floor for All,” will develop as a semi-permanent, interactive public space for Akron.

“Dansbana! is thrilled and excited to collaborate with FRONT International as well as with local dancers and communities in Akron to create a public dance space together,” say **Dansbana! founders Anna Fridolin, Anna Pang, and Teres Selberg.**

The work will premiere as part of FRONT 2021, the second iteration of the Northeast Ohio art triennial which will run from July 17 through October 2, 2021. Building on the success of their inaugural exhibition in 2018 which brought in over 90,000 visitors from more than 25 countries and generated \$31 million in new economic activity for the region, FRONT 2021 will further the Triennial’s commitment to presenting authentic experiences that extend beyond traditional museum exhibitions to generate new and sustained cultural interest in the region.

“This public dance space will bring people of different backgrounds and points of view to express themselves; we can’t wait to see it in action,” says **FRONT Founder and Executive Director Fred Bidwell.** “We are thrilled to have the support and acknowledgement from The Knight Arts Challenge Akron. This type of locally rooted funding is integral to our ongoing mission to develop an even stronger, more vibrant, and sustainable creative community in Northern Ohio.”

The Artistic Directors of FRONT 2021 are designer and exhibition maker Prem Krishnamurthy and Art21’s Executive Director and Chief Curator, Tina Kukielski. Their combined experience bringing innovative and award-winning programming to cities around the world will allow FRONT to rethink conventional approaches to contemporary exhibition making and artistic production and will ask what—given the pressures impacting Ohio, the United States, and the world—will our collective futures look like?

“Though it may seem far off, FRONT 2021 is a living project that’s already in process. We are thrilled that the first funded project aligns with our overall curatorial approach: to slow down the process of the exhibition making and create a lasting impact on the region long before and after FRONT is on view to the public,” say **Prem Krishnamurthy and Tina Kukielski, Co-Artistic Directors of FRONT 2021.** “We are honored to collaborate with Dansbana! and the Akron Art Museum to create a platform that will serve the community in perpetuity.”



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The Knight Arts Challenge aims to help individual artists and arts organizations—across Akron, Miami and Detroit—bring to life authentic works and experiences that capture the spirit of each city. Knight Arts Challenge Akron awarded a total of \$592,000, which will go towards amplifying stories from the city’s diverse communities and perspectives, help artists and arts organizations reach broader audiences, and bring new arts experiences and innovation to the city.

This is the fourth year of the The Knight Arts Challenge in Akron, which has invested more than \$3 million to date for projects that answered one question: “What’s your best idea for the arts in Akron?” The challenge is part of a strategy that funds arts organizations of all sizes and types as well as talented local artists, so that everyone has a chance to make their ideas a reality.

## **About FRONT International**

FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art is a triennial exhibition comprised of artist commissions, performances, films, and public programs that launched its inaugural edition in July of 2018. The first Artistic Director of FRONT in 2018 was Michelle Grabner, a renowned artist, educator, and curator based in Chicago and Milwaukee.

The inaugural edition of FRONT, titled *An American City*, presented work by more than 120 artists from around the world in 28 institutions and unconventional spaces across Northeast Ohio. Many of the projects and installations were commissioned for the exhibition. Over 90,000 visitors from more than 25 countries generated \$31 million in new economic activity for the region.

The second edition of FRONT will take place across Northeast Ohio in summer 2021.

## **About Dansbana!**

Dansbana! is a Stockholm-based organization working to create public places for dance. Created out of a desire to change the gender disparity in public spaces—up to 90% of outdoor public spaces are designed for activities generally geared toward young men—Dansbana!’s vision is to create public dance places together with young women.

The group was founded by architects Anna Fridolin, Anna Pang, and Teres Selberg, whose combined experiences include work in landscape architecture, city planning, dance, and teaching. The name Dansbana! is a reference to the Swedish word for dance halls which served as important social spaces, especially for young people. Dansbana!’s ambition is to update the concept of public dance places to allow a diversity of dancers. They have developed hands-on methods to engage girls,



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local dance organizations, institutions, and city planners in the development and activation of each Dansbana!

### **About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

Knight Foundation is a national foundation with strong local roots. They invest in journalism, in the arts, and in the success of cities where brothers John S. and James L. Knight once published newspapers. Their goal is to foster informed and engaged communities, which they believe are essential for a healthy democracy. For more, visit [kf.org](http://kf.org).

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