



american dance festival

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“AUDIENCE PERCEPTION AND MEMORY”
AMERICAN DANCE FESTIVAL AND DUKE UNIVERSITY
AWARDED SPECIAL FUNDING

Durham, N.C. –The American Dance Festival (ADF) and Duke University are pleased to announce a generous grant for research on “Audience Perception and Memory” from Engaging Dance Audiences. Administered by Dance/USA, the program is made possible with generous funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Professor Ruth Day, Director of the Memory for Movement Laboratory at Duke University, will lead the Audience Memory Program.

“How do dancers remember all those ‘steps’?” This is a burning question shared by many people who attend modern dance performances. Many also wonder why they cannot remember much about the performances they have seen. Ruth Day’s past research on how dancers learn and remember is the basis for this summer’s project. It consists of three parts. The “Dance Perception Quiz” will be posted on the ADF website soon (www.americandancefestival.org); anyone can view brief dance clips and answer questions about them. The “Audience Memory Workshop” is a one-hour interactive event that includes demonstrations, research, and memory tips; it will be offered at several dates and times this summer. The “Memory Enhancement Program” includes a memory lab visit, perception and memory tips, and post-performance memory check-ups. All activities are free and open to the public, regardless of whether they are familiar with modern dance. Hundreds of people are expected to participate during the ADF season this summer. For more information, visit the ADF website or email memoryformovement@duke.edu.

Ruth Day is a cognitive scientist at Duke. She studies how people perceive, understand, remember, and use information – especially in everyday settings. In addition to her research on memory for movement, she also studies medical cognition (how doctors and patients

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understand medical information) and courtroom cognition (how judges and juries understand laws and use them to decide cases). Her lifelong interest in how dancers learn and remember began at the age of 6, when she noticed that some students in her ballet class learned quickly, while others needed more – such as names of movements or mental images. Prior to coming to Duke, Professor Day was on the faculty at Stanford and Yale. She was recently appointed Cognitive Scientist in Residence at ADF.

“Understanding the audience experience is critical for sustaining audience support in the performing arts, especially modern dance,” explains ADF Co-Director, Jodee Nimerichter. “We are delighted to have been selected for this one-of-a-kind study.” The project is part of the first national funding program for studying engagement practices for dance audiences. The Engaging Dance Audiences initiative is a \$1.9 million program and the ADF-Duke project is one of only nine projects selected for funding out of a pool of 179.

The ADF’s 77th season will be presented at the Durham Performing Arts Center and Duke University’s Reynolds Industries Theater from June 10 – July 24, 2010. For detailed information about the 2010 Festival, the Audience Memory Program, community programs, and ticketing, please visit www.americandancefestival.org. Individuals may learn more about the Festival by becoming a fan on [Facebook](#) and/or following the ADF on [Twitter](#).

Founded in 1934 in Bennington, Vermont, the ADF remains an international magnet for choreographers, dancers, teachers, students, critics, musicians, and scholars to learn and create in a supportive environment. The ADF’s wide range of programs includes performances, artist services, humanities projects, publications, community outreach, educational programs and classes, archives, media projects, and national and international projects. The ADF has been presenting the best in modern dance for 77 years. www.americandancefestival.org

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