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**NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHOREOGRAPHY-AKRON RELEASES FIRST BOOK
Shifting Cultural Power: Case Studies & Questions in Performance by Hope Mohr
Comes Out September 2021**



Left: Participants in HMD's 2019 Bridge Project; photo by Hillary Goidell. Right: Author Hope Mohr, courtesy of the artist.

(June 7, 2021) Akron, OH -- The National Center for Choreography-Akron (NCCAakron) has been named a series editor with **The University of Akron Press**. Choreographer **Hope Mohr** (San Francisco, CA) authored the first title in this publication series: *Shifting Cultural Power: Case Studies & Questions in Performance*. The book reflects on her ten years at the helm of **The Bridge Project** and the organization's shift into distributed leadership. *Shifting Cultural Power* will be published September 1, 2021. This book is Mohr's first.

Shifting Cultural Power: Case Studies & Questions in Performance is a reckoning with white cultural power and a call to action. The book locates the work of curating performance in conversations about social change, with a special focus on advancing racial equity in the live arts. Based on the author's journey as a dancer, choreographer, and activist, as well as on her ten years of leading The Bridge Project, a performing arts presenting platform in the Bay Area, *Shifting Cultural Power* invites readers to imagine new models of relationship among artists and within arts organizations — models that transform approach, rather than simply re-cast who holds power. Mohr covers such subjects as transitioning a hierarchical nonprofit to a model of distributed leadership; expanding the canon; having difficult conversations about the racial

inequities that continue to pervade the field; and reckoning with aesthetic bias. This title also features case studies of socially engaged projects in the performing arts; a workbook for embodied research; an archive of The Bridge Project's ten-year history; and transcripts of landmark performance events.

"When we reckon with and decenter whiteness, we open imaginative space for decolonized models of artmaking and art community," Mohr comments. "We create possibilities for shifting cultural power. We go beyond optics and tokenism. The time is now to imagine and implement new models of arts production driven by a commitment to equity and inclusion."

In a field historically dominated by New York City, NCCAkrón seeks, through this publishing partnership, to uplift narratives in dance in a way that is geographically equitable. Books in the series will focus on individuals, regions, and genres of dance that have traditionally been overlooked. A second as yet untitled manuscript slated for publication in 2022 will highlight women leadership in dance with essays documenting stories from across the country.

"NCCAkrón is invested in sharing undertold and lesser-seen stories, in distributing new working knowledge, and pushing for a more conversational and welcoming style of writing about dance," says NCCAkrón Executive/Artistic Director **Christy Bolingbroke**. "I appreciate how Hope documents ten years of programming to create a reference for other artist-activists, while making the evolution of her own operating context transparent. I invite you to read this book and ask new questions. How is your operating environment shifting? How can you challenge what you think you know?"

Release Details

Publish Date: September 1, 2021

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-62922-117-5

Price \$30

ePDF ISBN: 978-1-62922-118-2

Price: \$29.99

ePub ISBN: 978-1-62922-119-9

Price: \$29.99

To be notified when the book is available for purchase, please sign up here:

<https://forms.gle/YP5RpFCpHxQ1413c6>

To request a review copy or an interview, contact Mariclare Hulbert, NCCAkrón Publicist at mariclare.hulbert@gmail.com or 585.278.2302.

About Author Hope Mohr

Hope Mohr has woven art and activism for decades as a choreographer, curator, and advocate. She founded and co-directs The Bridge Project, which creates and supports equity-driven live

arts that centers artists as agents of change. In 2020, Mohr co-stewarded HMD's transition to an equity-driven model of distributed leadership. As a dancer, Mohr trained at San Francisco Ballet School and the Merce Cunningham and Trisha Brown Studios. She performed in the companies of dance pioneers Lucinda Childs and Trisha Brown. While dancing professionally, Mohr earned a JD from Columbia Law School. As an attorney, she provides counsel and support for artists and culture workers. www.hopemohr.org

Advance Praise for *Shifting Cultural Power: Case Studies & Questions in Performance*

"Filled with exquisite insights, *Shifting Cultural Power* demonstrates what we can do to transform curatorial practices toward our shared destinies. Hope Mohr explores the uneven terrain of dance presenting to take on white privilege and attest to the life-affirming rewards of activism. Written with a smart, raw, confessional tone, this book includes practical strategies for reshaping the terms of live art presenting. Essential reading, and affirmation that how we move through the world matters, onstage and off."

~ Thomas F. DeFrantz, Director, *SLIPPAGE: Performance|Culture|Technology*, Founding Director, Collegium for African Diaspora Dance

"In an era when many white-founded arts organizations are investigating how to create more equity through antiracism and decolonization, Mohr highlights so many of the complexities that all too often get overlooked. She shares her own experiences at Hope Mohr Dance and The Bridge Project (with remarkable honesty and humility) as well as deeply researched recommendations from experts of color. Offering useful insights and actionable takeaways, she thoughtfully demonstrates how artists can harness their creativity to help reimagine organizational structures in order to redistribute cultural power."

~ Jennifer Stahl, Editor in Chief of Dance Magazine and Content Director for Dance Media

"In gracefully merging memoir and practicum, Mohr has made an invaluable and ingenious contribution to the deep and stubborn work of power and resource redistribution in the world of art and performance."

~ Moira Brennan, Executive Director of the MAP Fund, Inc.

About NCCAkron

The National Center for Choreography at The University of Akron supports the research and development of new work in dance by exploring the full potential of the creative process. In addition to offering studio and technical residencies to make new work, activities focus on catalyzing dialogue and experimentation; creating proximity among artists and dance thinkers; and aggregating resources around dance making. For more information, visit nccakron.org.

The establishment and general operation of NCCAkron is made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

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