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Petronio Residency Center Names Its First Choreographers

By JOSHUA BARONEJAN. 29, 2018



Nora Chipaumire, center, in her work “portrait of myself as my father” in 2016. She is among the three inaugural fellows at the Petronio Residency Center, which is scheduled to open in July. Gennadi Novash

The Stephen Petronio Company’s dance residency center in the Catskill Mountains, in upstate New York, will open in July with its debut class of choreographers: Nora Chipaumire, Will Rawls and Kathy Westwater.

They are to receive fully funded residencies — including a travel stipend, a rarity for prizes like this — for a week each at the Petronio Residency Center, at the 175-acre Crow’s Nest in Round Top, purchased by [Mr. Petronio’s company in 2016](#).

“The Petronio Residency Center is a retreat in which to study, work and experiment while cut loose from the overbearing pressures inherent in a choreographer’s day-to-day living,” Mr. Petronio said in a statement.

Ms. Chipaumire, who was born in Zimbabwe and now lives in New York, is a choreographer and performer whose work taps into her African identity, like her 2016 dance “portrait of myself as my father.”

Mr. Rawls has collaborated with artists like Marina Abramovic, Jérôme Bel and Maria Hassabi, and recently [worked with the poet Claudia Rankine](#) for “What Remains,” which explored surveillance and black experience.

This is the second residency in 2018 so far for Ms. Westwater, who had a Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography residency for a work to have its premiere in 2019 at the Lumberyard, another new dance center in the Hudson Valley [that is set to open this year](#).

Located roughly two and a half hours north of New York City, the center includes a 6,500-square-foot house for up to nine artists, as well as a 2,500-square-foot open studio with a heated sprung floor and sound system. Mr. Petronio’s company paid for the facilities with the help of a \$3 million fund-raising campaign that included the sale of artworks donated by Anish Kapoor, Jasper Johns and others.

“My dream is to leave the world an intimate place where dance can be made, where history happens, and where the dance community can feel at home,” Mr. Petronio said in his statement.

Ms. Chipaumire, Mr. Rawls and Ms. Westwater were nominated by a group including the choreographer and presenter Gina Gibney and Pamela Tatge, the director of Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival in Becket, Mass. Mr. Petronio was on the selection panel, along with the artists Ralph Lemon, Bebe Miller and Eiko Otake.