

**Application for
The Enoch Pratt Free Library
Artist in Residence Program**



The Not-So-Still Life

May 31, 2024

Matthew R. Venanzi

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May 31, 2024

Heather Kerner
Artist in Residence Coordinator
Enoch Pratt Free Library – Central Library
400 Cathedral Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Ms. Kerner and the Selection Committee:

It is with a sense of humility and honor that I submit my application for the Enoch Pratt Free Library 2025 Artist in Residence program. Humility, because I am but one of the Enoch Pratt Free Library's numerous (and very grateful!) patrons. Honor, because I don't think that the young version of me, walking into that beautiful building across from the Basilica in the mid-1980's or 1990's ever envisioned applying to be a part of the group who brings amazing library programs to the patrons. I have so much gratitude and respect for Pratt Library. It would be a true honor to count myself among the team helping to craft new and innovative programming for the patrons and community. Most of all, it would be a privilege to take part in the Pratt Library's mission to empower, enrich, and enhance the quality of life for all, particularly the part of the mission about doing so through equitable access to opportunity (in my case, equitable opportunity for enrichment...and fun!).

I took a few months of reflection before I decided to apply. Could my portmanteau, or "mashup", of artistic enrichment work? Will I offer something unique and not just a new shade of something already done before? Can I put myself in the shoes of my fellow patrons and sense what they may desire, or enjoy, from or within the arts at the library? I sense the duty that being the Artist in Residence carries and I don't take that duty (privilege, even) lightly.

So what do I mean by a portmanteau, or "mashup", of artistic enrichment. The initiative I am proposing, ***Capturing Spirit: The Not-So-Still Life*** is not rooted in just one art form. It is made up of two primary components:

1. Engaging in an immersive art form (sometimes dance, sometimes music, sometimes culinary arts, maybe others) and
2. Individually taking creative inspiration from #1 and expressing that creativity through a traditional visual art medium (painting, drawing, printmaking), creative writing, or even the very same immersive art form experienced in #1.

If this sounds esoteric, let me draw upon a quote:

"Imitation is not just the sincerest form of flattery - it's the sincerest form of learning."

- George Bernard Shaw

My sincere hope is that a participant who attends one of the "Immersion" series events (there are five categories of events that I have crafted, the "Immersion" series is one of them) will leave the event with two feelings of accomplishment: 1 – having tried something new (playing an instrument, cooking, learning ballet) in a safe, accepting space and 2 – having created a tangible piece of art that they can take home (or we can display at the library!). But even failing #1 (or intimidated by it),

#2 can still happen. Or even if they weren't finding a creative flow in #2, they will still have gotten to try the immersive art activity in #1. Or, at the very least, they will have gotten to observe others learning and crafting art and perhaps taken joy from the enrichment of seeing talented ballet dancers teaching their craft. In truth, the art of observation is not "least" at all. It too is to be applauded.'

And should the "Immersion" series events be too big of a bite for someone to take, there will be other ongoing events and one-off events of a more passive (even meditative) quality.

I invite you to visit my website, <https://www.capturingspirit.com/>, where I hope you can "capture the spirit" of my proposal.

I hope that you, like I, will see ***Capturing Spirit: The Not-So-Still Life***, to be a unique and innovative approach to offering our patrons and community an equitable opportunity for enrichment.

I hope that you will see how I have put myself in the shoes of our patrons and community to offer a wide variety of programming from which to learn and take joy.

I look forward to the opportunity to work with the talented staff from the Pratt to hone these programs even further to suit (and attract!) the participation of our patrons and community.

No matter what, you can count on seeing my at next years Artist in Residence events. Whether as the selected Artist in Residence, or as an active patron who really values the library system and who cannot get enough of what the library has to offer – including the wonderful art programs.

I'll close with a heartfelt thank you to the library for the wealth of enrichment activities that I have attended. Acrylic Painting at Cherry Hill. Upcycled Book Crafts at the Southeast Anchor. Jewelry Making at Edmondson Avenue. Diamond Art Suncatchers at Patterson Park. Fairy Gardens at Govans. And the list goes on. I often bring my mom to events and to hear her now ask me, regularly, "Is there anything at the library tonight?" is music to my ears. We have had great fun together at these events and even made friends who we see at different branches activities! We are a library family.

Thank you so much for your time and for considering my application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew R. Venanzi". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and larger than the rest of the letters.

Matthew R. Venanzi

Table of Contents

Cover Letter	1
Artist Statement.....	4
Body of Work – Overview	5
Body of Work Significant Experience in an Immersive Art Form	7
Body of Work Acknowledged Expertise in a Tangible Art Form	9
Body of Work Acknowledged Expertise in a Tangible Art Form PRESS COVERAGE	10
Dance Magazine - March 2024.....	10
Pointe Magazine - April 2024.....	10
Dance Teacher Magazine - October 2023	10
Pointe Magazine - April 2023	11
Pointe Magazine - April 2022.....	11
Pointe Magazine - April 2021	11
Body of Work Acknowledged Expertise in a Tangible Art Form GALLERY	15
Body of Work Proven track record of creating memorable experiences	20
Proposed Activities – Overview.....	22
Proposed Activities – SERIES	23
Proposed Activities – ONGOING.....	26
Proposed Activities – ONE-OFFS.....	27
Proposed Activities – FIELD TRIPS	31
Proposed Activities – CULMINATION	32
About the Artist	33
Epilogue.....	34

Artist Statement *By Matthew Venanzi*

Since birth, we have each been creating spirit, within ourselves. Even engendering spirit, in one another. But ask us to define spirit and we fumble for words to adequately capture its meaning.

My theory is that we best capture spirit through thoughtful (or perhaps thought-less...) immersion. We capture spirit by belly-flopping into the pool...not by watching an Olympic swimmer swim laps. We capture spirit by spilling paint on our clothes (sorry mom, at least they were watercolors) while we paint a silly series of fruit-inspired sealife postcards...not by walking through quiet galleries. We capture spirit by touching, smelling, tasting the herbs (at the Roland Park branch last Thursday, May 23) and the dark chocolate that accidentally melted in our pocket (sorry again, mom), not by watching (yet another) hour of the Food Network. Sure, the risk is a slight chance of temporary humiliation amongst people we will probably never see again, but the potential reward is a masterpiece...or a lily pad on the way to a masterpiece (creating our own or more fully appreciating someone else's).



And the funny thing is, after we've been in the pool at North Baltimore Aquatic Club...we have a new appreciation for the olympic swimmer. After we've struggled with color theory and playing with transparency with watercolors, we see the paintings at the Baltimore Museum of Art in a new light. And after we've grown the herbs ourselves and used them fresh from our own garden (with great guidance from Courtney of Spore and Seed, who presented at the May 23 event), we watch Top Chef with a new appreciation and perhaps it engenders renewed spirit in us to try a new recipe.

Capturing Spirit: The Not-So-Still Life is about creating a safe space for everyone to experience such spirit-inducing art forms, like dance, music, cooking -- and, in turn, capture that spirit "on paper" using visual art forms like painting, drawing, and photography. Even creative writing or...perhaps...more of the same art form from which it originated. The beauty of this project is that we will use art to inspire art. ART INSPIRING ART! Spirit inspiring spirit. And for those who wish to take part, but may not yet be ready to immerse themselves, the art of observation is ALWAYS welcome.



Let us CAPTURE the spirit, before it is spirited away.

**Let us honor the spirit, those from whom it is inspired,
and those in whom it inspires.**

Body of Work – Overview

Curating a space that includes immersion in an art form

AND

capture of an experience, in tangible form, is no small feat.

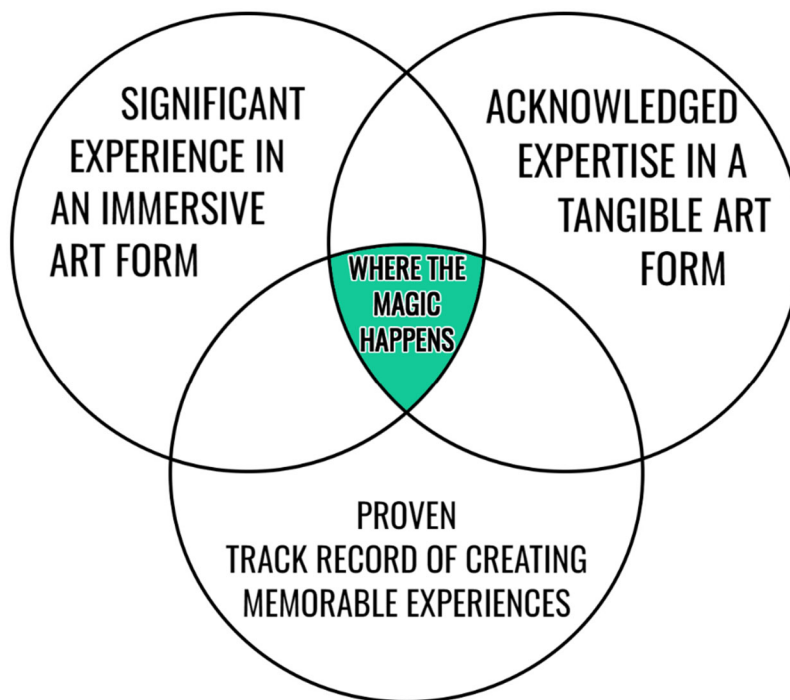
Success in creating and curating this space occurs at the intersection of three integral parts. Picture it like a Venn diagram.

It's my great privilege to share with you a body of work, of three integral parts, that demonstrates my capacity for curating the "Capturing Spirit" experience.

Significant experience in an immersive art form that can be led for and shared with a group. The experience I'll share here is my extensive dance training and performance experience.

Acknowledged expertise in a tangible art form that can be demonstrated and/or taught as a way of "Capturing Spirit". The expertise I'll share is professional photography, in particular, dance, music, and theatre photography.

Proven track record of creating memorable experiences. The background I'll draw upon is nearly a decade of producing/directing dance performance opportunities and dance workshops.



Body of Work (continued)

Before we go further, I feel it important that I emphasize a few things.

- Yes, I can teach dance (mostly ballet, tap, and dancer-oriented stretch)
- Yes, I can teach photography
- Heck, I can even teach how to create memorable events
Speaking of teaching how to create memorable events, I look forward to having members of the community help plan the culminating Gala Performance event!
- And I do practice in artforms other than dance and photography. Watercolor, acrylics, printmaking.

But the really special part of "Capturing Spirit" is that I will be arranging several experts and artisan BEYOND just myself.

We will experience dance with PEABODY DANCERS.

We will experience music with LOCAL PERFORMING ARTISTS. (Maybe also Pratt Teens!)

We will experience cooking with CHEFS IN TRAINING FROM CULINARY SCHOOL or local restaurants.

IN ADDITION to these immersive experiences, there will be straight-technique focused experiences as well --- photography technique, dance technique, etc.

If you can't wait, jump ahead to the activities section to get a better sense of my proposed events and programming.

Body of Work

Significant Experience in an Immersive Art Form

Much like an actor maintains a reel, a dancer maintains a Dance Resume.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have trained (AND CONTINUE TRAINING) with many talented dance teachers.

I am grateful for the privilege of having performed on stages at home and abroad, most notably in New York City and Italy.

I humbly share with you, on the next page, my dance resume, representative of Significant Experience in an Immersive Art Form.

Matthew Venanzi

Dance Resume

6932 Eastbrook Ave. • Baltimore, MD • 21224 ••• matthew.venanzi@gmail.com • (443) 465-8666

Height: 5'9" Hair Color: Dark Brown Eye Color: Brown

Highlights

- Trained and performed internationally in classical ballet and leading edge contemporary dance
- Performed with members of: NYCB, ABT, La Scala, and Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo
- Experience on stages of all sizes: proscenium, black box, studio showings
- Assisted productions of multi-company performances in various New York theatres
- Accomplished photographer in dance study and performance for companies in New York, Italy, Philadelphia, New Jersey
- Dance Photographer published in Dance Magazine, Pointe Magazine, Dance Teacher Magazine
- Pennsylvania Ballet Marketing Committee, Volunteer Corps Chairperson, Young Friends Co-Chairperson
- Administrative Director of New York's only Adult Summer Dance Intensive

Performance and Fine Arts Training

New York

2014 – Present

- BALLET with Kat Wildish (former NYCB, ABT), Kenny Easter (ABT), Teresa Reichlen (NYCB), Frank Dellapolla (Met Opera)
- CONTEMPORARY with Diego Funes (SAB, DeFunes Contemporary Dance Company), Alfie Parker Jr. (Chicago, Aladdin)
- PARTNERING with Jon Drake (Footloose), Kat Wildish (former NYCB, ABT)

Italy

2015 – 2017

- BALLET with Matteo Corbetta (La Scala, Artedanza)
- MODERN with Sonia Pellacani (Cirque du Soleil)
- HEELS with Giovanna Staffoni
- Other: Costuming, Stage Makeup

Philadelphia, Baltimore

2002 – Present

- BALLET with Gail Melfi (Peabody), Luz Iturbe (Dance Theatre of Harlem), Jessica Kilpatrick (School of Pennsylvania Ballet)
- TAP with Tracy Burton-Hooper (Towson University)
- MUSIC THEORY with Joseph Fischer (Cadets Drum and Bugle Corps, Drum Corps International)
- BROADWAY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC with Brian Ecton (Towson University)
- JAZZ IMPROVISATION with Arturo Sandoval (Grammy Award Winning Recording Artist)
- STUDIO ART and SCULPTURE with David McShane (Philadelphia Mural Arts, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art)

Performance Experience

Kat Wildish Presents, Inc. (New York)

2014: *Don Quixote* (excerpts)
 2015: *It's Ballet* (film)
 2015: *Sleeping Beauty* (excerpts)
 2015: *Swan Lake* (excerpts)
 2016: *Le Corsaire* (excerpts)
 2017: *Le Corsaire* (additional excerpts)

Artedanza (Italy)

2015: *Sleeping Beauty* (excerpts)
 2017: *Le Bayadere* (excerpts – Solor, Bronze Idol)

Calvert Hall College High School (Baltimore, Florida)

1998 - 2002: *Various classical, pop, Broadway, and jazz trumpet and euphonium performance*

Academic Education

La Salle University: Philadelphia, PA 2002 - 2006
 Bachelor of Science – Comp Sci & Business
 University Honors and Cum Laude
 Overall GPA: 3.45
 GPA in Fine Arts Coursework: 4.0

Business Experience

Strategic Business Advisor and Management Consultant:

New York, NY / Philadelphia, PA / Baltimore, MD / Italy
 2006 - Present

Specializing in Performing Arts Education, Management, Growth, and Development

Body of Work

Acknowledged Expertise in a Tangible Art Form

It feels strange to just tell someone that I'm an expert in something. Thankfully, true to form, photography is an art form best shown.

I'm humbled that organizations have Acknowledged my Expertise in photography by using my work in their publications.

(See Press Coverage on the next page)

Body of Work

Acknowledged Expertise in a Tangible Art Form

PRESS COVERAGE

One of the greatest honors in performing is to receive a standing ovation.

The equivalent for a photographer is to see your work in print, mass media, or otherwise curated for a public audience.

I'm grateful to the following publications who have chosen to use my work.

Dance Magazine - March 2024

Why the Rise in Performance Opportunities for Adult Recreational Dancers Matters

Article by: Stav Ziv

Pages 42-43 (center photo spread)

<https://www.dancemagazine.com/adult-dancer-opportunities/>

[Call Number: PERIODICAL / Uniform Title: Dance magazine \(New York, N.Y.\) / Vol 98 #3](#)

Pointe Magazine - April 2024

Adult Students, Get Ready for These 2024 Summer Intensives

Article by: Lindsay Martell

<https://pointemagazine.com/summer-intensives-for-adult-students-2024/>

Dance Teacher Magazine - October 2023

How Far Can You Push Adult Dance Students?

Article by: Garnet Henderson

<https://dance-teacher.com/how-far-can-you-push-adult-dance-students/>

Pointe Magazine - April 2023

Calling All Adult Ballet Students! These 2023 Summer Intensives Are Just for You

Article by: Lindsay Martell

<https://pointemagazine.com/2023-summer-intensives-for-adult-ballet-students/>

Pointe Magazine - April 2022

Adult Students: In-Person Intensives Are Back. Who's Ready for a Ballet Getaway?

Article by: Lindsay Martell

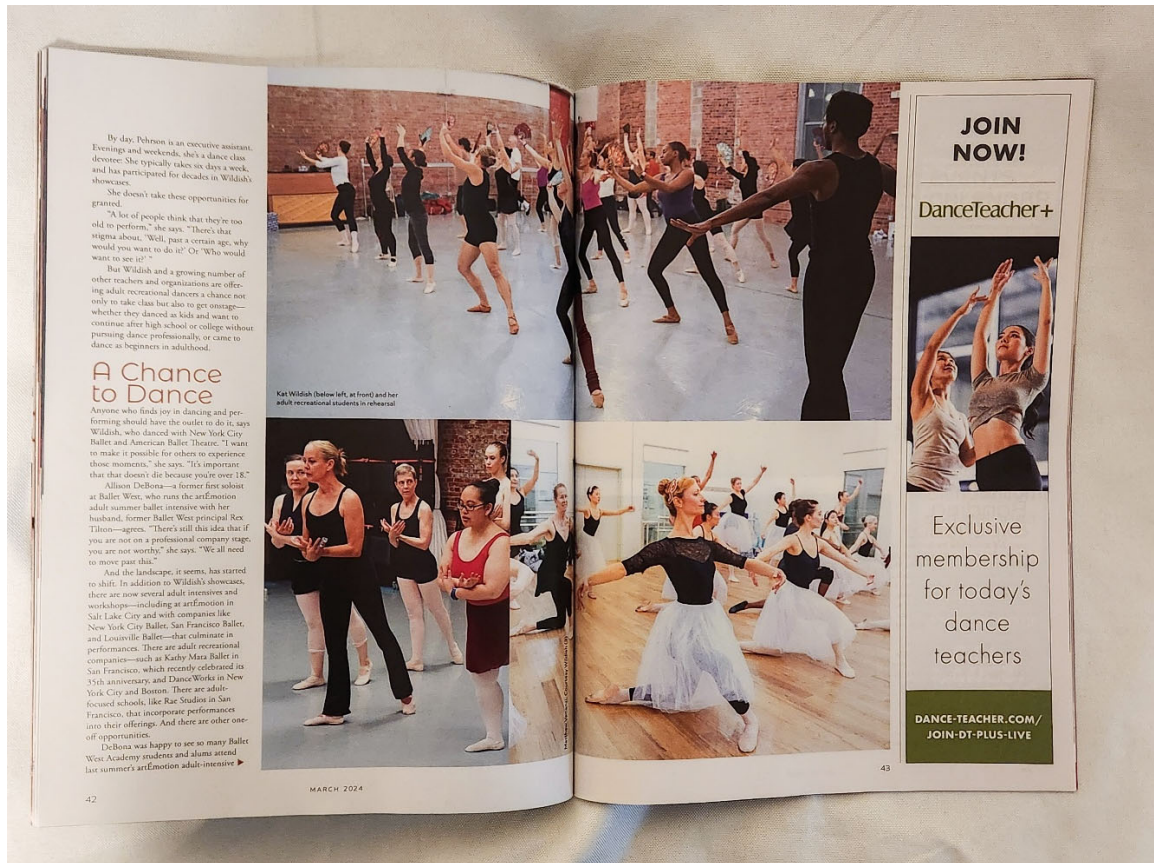
<https://pointemagazine.com/adult-summer-intensives-2022/>

Pointe Magazine - April 2021

Check Out These 2021 Summer Intensives Especially for Adults

Article by: Lindsay Martell

<https://pointemagazine.com/adult-ballet-summer-intensives-2021/>





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DanceTeacher

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KAT WILDISH TEACHING. PHOTO BY MATTHEW VENANZI, COURTESY WILDISH.

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member exclusives | teaching tips

How Far Can You Push Adult Dance Students?



BY GARNET HENDERSON

October 6, 2023

Adult Students, Get Ready for T

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Photo by Matthew Venanzi, courtesy Kat Wildish Summer Intensive.

SUMMER STUDY

Adult Students, Get Ready for These 2024 Summer Intensives

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Lindsay Martell

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April 9, 2024

Body of Work

Acknowledged Expertise in a Tangible Art Form

GALLERY

Below, you'll find some samples of my photography.

I invite you to visit the gallery on my Artist in Residence application website:

<https://www.capturingspirit.com/tangibleartform.html>

I am also pleased to share a link to more extensive selection of my work.

Additional Gallery: [Click Here](#)

Select Samples









I invite you to visit the gallery on my Artist in Residence application website:

<https://www.capturingspirit.com/tangibleartform.html>

I am also pleased to share a link to more extensive selection of my work.

Additional Gallery: [Click Here](#)

Body of Work

Proven track record of creating memorable experiences

Much like "spirit" is hard to put into words, if I want to show you that I can create memorable experiences, it would be far more effective to CREATE a memorable experience for you, than to ~~boast~~ wax poetic on my track record of creating them.

But alas, until we meet, examples will have to suffice! (and hopefully entice!)

EXAMPLE #1

Performing in New York Showcase

For the past 8 years, I have been co-producing/directing an annual showcase of dance companies, dance schools, and recreational dance performers. Dancers perform in a REAL New York City theater in front of a paying audience.

We sell out two shows and the performers each receive photos and videos of their performance.

I manage everything from performer recruitment to theater coordination to day-of crew oversight.

And share in the hugs and tears (of joy!) shared by both first-time performers and veterans.

Body of Work

Proven track record of creating memorable experiences

Additional Examples

EXAMPLE #2

Stanford University "Code in Place" Computer Coding Class

I've had the privilege, for 3 years, of teaching an online coding class to learners from across the globe.

Cue the #RecordScratch... coding class??

How does teaching a class on coding have anything to do with memorable experience, much less art?

COMPUTER CODING CAN BE DRY AND BORING! Especially over Zoom!

To keep learners engaged, I create a fun and engaging environment with real-world problem-solving challenges.

Each week, I facilitate a 1-2 hour lesson on a coding concept, with the ultimate goal of a self-directed "project" that each learner can craft and code from start to finish.

To be honest, I kind of created a monster.

One year, by popular demand, I kept the class going for 9 months longer than the official "six week course"!

EXAMPLE #3

Adult Dance Summer Intensive

Summer intensives allow a dancer to hone their training and make big leaps in a dedicated, supportive environment.

Young dancers have known the immense opportunity that summer intensives afford a dancer.

Not to mention, the lifelong friendships that form in the shared safe space of the dance studio, with masterclass instruction and live music.

But summer intensives usually cut-off after the age of 18.

Why should ADULTS miss out on the benefits (AND FUN) of dedicated training in a safe, supportive space, with their fellow adult dancerees?

My longtime ballet teacher and I saw the demand for an ADULT SUMMER DANCE INTENSIVE and crafted such an offering.

The first year alone saw more than 20 participants (we had to rent more studio space!) and, over the past several years, we expanded the program to be even more custom-tailored to individual dancers needs.

Proposed Activities – Overview

An important part of the Capturing Spirit initiative is...

...incorporating what people like about it and

...doing more of what they feel inspires them.

So these ideas are malleable! And I have more ideas! Just ask...

Let's break the activities down into five categories:

- **PERIODIC / SERIES:**
Immerse in Art and Co-Create
- **ONGOING:**
Every Day Happenings that are not so everyday!
- **ONE-OFF:**
Some Big, Some Small, All Interesting!
- **FIELD TRIPS:**
Because we have a vibrant community all around us!
- **CULMINATION:**
The Enoch Pratt Free Library Performing and Visual Arts Gala & Showcase

Proposed Activities – SERIES

Immerse in Art and Co-Create Capturing Spirit: The Dynamism of Dance

Teen or Adult (including Seniors)

Facilitation will include dancers from Peabody, Baltimore School for the Arts, and/or local high schools or colleges.

Participants will experience dance through both “immersion”, doing it, and through capturing it visually/artistically (very “meta”, right?).

Participants will come away with a newfound appreciation for what goes into dance training and performance.

And what nuance one might look for when watching a dance performance.

Most of all, I hope to make the artform of dance more accessible to participants. Maybe even inspire someone to take a dance class!

STRUCTURE:

1. Dancers will teach participants a 20 minute barre.
2. Dances will teach participants 10 minutes of choreography.
3. Break for 5 minutes. (allow changing setup of supplies, etc.)
4. Dancers perform. Participants get to watch, very up close.
5. Participants will “become” visual artists* (see * footnote) and “capture” the spirit of the performance art of dance. (30 minutes)
6. Performance will be casual/informal so that questions, starting/ stopping, participation can be welcomed during this time.
7. If time permits, re-gather for reflections and sharing.

Take Home:

Participants will be able to take home the product of their visual artistry. Finished painting, sculpture, drawing, digital photos, etc.

Additionally, participants will “take home” a newfound, or enhanced, understanding of what goes into the making of a dance performance – a taste of technique, choreography, performance aesthetic, and experience of seeing/experiencing performance in a manner not possible when attending public performance in a theater. Perhaps, even some joy and pride in having tried something new, that is also “good for you” – learning to dance.

* Visual artistry can take the form of photography, drawing, painting, and/or sculpting. Perhaps even inspired creative writing/poetry. Option to provide means for several forms of visual artistry/expression or provide only 1-2 means of expression, to simplify setup/breakdown, and ultimately to help participants explore “creativity within confines”**.

** “Creativity within confines” is meant as a DRIVER of creativity, not a limitation on it. Think how a coloring book provides lines in which to color but does not restrict you on which colors to use. Or, how painting with only the primary colors forces you to either, express in only primaries or experiment with mixing of colors (and ultimately deepening creativity).

Proposed Activities – SERIES

Immerse in Art and Co-Create Capturing Spirit: The Meticulousness (and Freedom!) of Music

Children or Adult (including Seniors)

Facilitation will include musicians from BSO, local chamber groups or “pop” groups, Peabody, Baltimore School for the Arts, local high schools, colleges.

Participants will experience music through both “immersion”, doing it, and through capturing it visually/artistically (again, very “meta”, right?).

Participants will come away with a newfound appreciation for what goes into music training and performance.

And what nuance one might look for when experiencing a music performance.

STRUCTURE:

1. Musicians will participants in how to play the recorder. (20 mins)
2. Musicians will teach a high-level music theory lesson. (5 mins)
3. Break for 5 minutes (participants can independently practice).
4. Musicians perform. Participants get move around, get close.
5. Participants will “become” visual artists and “capture” the spirit of the performance art of music. (30 minutes)
6. Performance will be casual/informal so that questions, starting/ stopping, participation can be welcomed during this time.
7. If time permits, re-gather for reflections and sharing.

Take Home:

Participants will be able to take home the product of their visual artistry. Finished painting, sculpture, drawing, digital photos, etc.

Participants will also get to take home their own recorder instrument (\$3-\$5 cost per instrument).

Participants will also “take home” a newfound, or enhanced, understanding of what goes into making of musical performances – a taste of technique, music/arrangement selection, how to engage and hold audience attention, and the one-of-a-kind up close “passenger seat” in a performance – better than backstage!

* Visual artistry can take the form of photography, drawing, painting, and/or sculpting. Perhaps even inspired creative writing/poetry. Option to provide means for several forms of visual artistry/expression or provide only 1-2 means of expression, to simplify setup/breakdown, and ultimately to help participants explore “creativity within confines”**.

** “Creativity within confines” is meant as a DRIVER of creativity, not a limitation on it. Think how a coloring book provides lines in which to color but does not restrict you on which colors to use. Or, how painting with only the primary colors forces you to either, express in only primaries or experiment with mixing of colors (and ultimately deepening creativity).

Proposed Activities – SERIES

Immerse in Art and Co-Create Capturing Spirit: The Fervor, Frenzy, and Fun of Food

Children, Teen, Adult (including Seniors), AND FAMILIES

Facilitation will include Chefs-in-training from Franciscan Center's "DIGNITY PLATES TRAINING ACADEMY". Alternatively, local restaurant / catering chefs / cookbook authors (for example, Paula Shoyer of The Kosher Baker).

Experience food and food preparation through both "immersion", doing it, and through capturing it visually/artistically (picking up on the theme?).

Participants will come away with a newfound appreciation for what goes into cooking, food preparation, menu planning, running a professional kitchen, and general food artistry.

And perhaps the courage to try cooking on their own, or try a new kind of recipe outside of their usual style of cooking.

Most of all, I hope to highlight the wonderful work the Franciscan Center (or a local food business) and make culinary arts more accessible to participants. Maybe even inspire the next Top Chef...or inspire someone to take an active role in the community to help fight food insecurity!

STRUCTURE:

1. Chefs will teach some basic food and taste theory - why certain flavors work better together than others. (15 mins)
2. Chefs will teach some basic kitchen skills (safe knife skills, prevention of cross-contamination). (5 mins)
3. Break for 5 minutes (participants can observe chefs setting up their workstation / "mise-en-place").
4. Chefs will "perform" the preparation of a recipe, perhaps in the style of a cooking show. Participants get move around, get close up to watch.
5. Participants will "become" visual artists and "capture" the spirit of the chefs in their element. (30 minutes)
6. The food prep will be casual/informal so that questions, starting/ stopping, participation can be welcomed during this time.
7. ENJOY THE FOOD of course!

Take Home:

Participants will be able to take home the product of their visual artistry. Finished painting, sculpture, drawing, digital photos, etc.

Participants will also get to take home their newly practice kitchen skills, perhaps a menu planning handout/aid. Perhaps some fresh herbs.

Proposed Activities – ONGOING

"Ballet at the Biblio"

This will be a daily (well, every day that I am onsite) event.

Participants will take dance class, learning proper and safe technique.

Participants will attend a 60 minute class (or 30 minutes if you think 60 mins will intimidate).

GOAL:

Learn about ballet, have fun(!!!), get a short workout, or just come and watch (even if just for a few minutes).

"Rehearsal Space Pop-up"

This will be an "open" offering any time that I am onsite.

Community members can use by Artist in Residence space to rehearse or workshop choreography they are working on.

GOAL:

Provide a safe and inclusive space for dancers (and aspiring dancers) to rehearse or work on their technique in self-study.

"Dance on Demand"

This will be an "open" offering any time that I am onsite.

Anyone can come by and get a 15 minute "on-demand" mini dance (ballet, tap) or stretch class.

GOAL:

Learn about dance, have fun(!!!), get a "moment away" from a busy or tough day (staff are welcome too!!!), get a taste before you try "Ballet at the Biblio".

"Camera Can-Do"

This will be an "open" offering any time that I am onsite.

Anyone can come by and get help learning to use their camera. This can range from basic camera orientation, to guidance on composition, to help editing photos, to maybe even a mini photo walk through the library.

GOAL:

Learn about your camera, have fun(!!!), get your photo taken, or take my photo!

Proposed Activities – ONE-OFFS

Compassion Clothing Closet Fashion Show

Teen or Adult (including Seniors)

On my tour at the Enoch Pratt (Hi Shaileen and Heather!), I saw the Compassion Clothing Closet. I really admire this initiative. It warms my heart, especially, because I have volunteered with similar types of programs.

Let's have a fashion show (if Ms. Walker is okay with it) to highlight the program (and maybe drum up more donations!).

We will style the models, maybe have a makeup artist, and hold the fashion show, complete with a runway and, of course, photographers!

OMG, First Lady Dawn Moore would be a great emcee for the fashion show. (She gave a really great intro for Dr. Sharon Malone at the April 11, 2024 "Grown Woman Talk" event!)

Out of respect for the target population of the Compassion Clothing Closet, we can ask for volunteers to be models....they do not have to be part of the target population unless they want participate of course!

We can even make this a two-day event (not necessarily consecutive). On day one, we can have students from Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) come to help style the models. And on day two, we'll hold the fashion show.

Proposed Activities – ONE-OFFS

Song and Dance are for Him, Her, and Them: Bronze Idols and Tiaras

Children, Teen, Adult (including Seniors), and Families

Realizing that the "Immerse in Art and Co-Create" may be intimidating for some people, "Dance is for Boys and Girls" will serve two purposes.

1. ONE - A more passive art activity still inspired by immersive art forms (dance and music).
2. TWO - An awareness (and encouragement) that dance is an inclusive art form, not just for females but also for males and non-binary persons.

We will talk about the ever evolving performing arts worlds of dance and music.

We will highlight the challenges of the past and the progress happening to make dance and music more Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive.

The art activity will be decorating/painting mini sculptures, Bronze Idols (a character/role from the ballet, La Bayadere) and tiaras.

NOTE: The Bronze Idol reference is particularly special because there is a sculpture of this ballet character/role right here in Baltimore (on President St. in front of Port Discovery).

Would you like to see the sculpture I'm talking about? [Here is a Google Streets link.](#)

OPTION: We can do this close to the holidays and invite a local dance school to have their Sugar Plum Fairy and Cavalier attend.

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Proposed Activities – ONE-OFFS

Capturing Spirit: Drag and the Divine

Teen, Adult (including Seniors)

Baltimore has a vibrant and beautiful LGBTQQIA community. We also have a rich history (some good, some not so good) of how the community lifestyles that differ from what was once called traditional/mainstream.

Thankfully, the definition of mainstream has vastly expanded and the LGBTQQIA community is no longer the "fringe" that it once was. But maintaining respect for the community is a work in progress.

Our work in this area is never finished.

Let's CELEBRATE Pride with an homage to the beautiful art form that is DRAG! We have a vibrant drag community and who better to invite to teach us than some of Baltimore's award winning drag performers.

AND WHAT BETTER CHANCE TO CELEBRATE ONE OF BALTIMORE'S EARLIEST TRAILBLAZERS IN DRAG...

...Harris Glenn Milstead, better known by the stage name DIVINE.

BONUS: Who knows...maybe we can convince Divine's good friend, another Baltimore great, JOHN WATERS to come and join us! This might just turn into another fashion show!

Proposed Activities – FIELD TRIPS

CFG Arena Tour and/or Press Pass Visit for a Concert Rehearsal

A cool fact I learned when researching the history of the Central Pratt Library is that, during the 1931-1933 construction of the 400 Cathedral Street site.....the library staff, services, and collections were temporarily relocated to the old Rouse-Hempstone Building at West Redwood Street and Hopkins Place.

What's so interesting about that, you might ask?

Well, Baltimore's premiere event space, the CFG Arena, now occupies that Hopkins Place site!

During a field trip to the CFG Arena, participants will have the opportunity to see how a "spirited" event comes together in such a massive arena!

Pending arrangements with CFG Arena management, maybe we can even attend a concert rehearsal/sound check and (you guessed it!) take a moment to CAPTURE SPIRIT right there at the arena!

Community Concerts at Second

Situated equidistant from FIVE Pratt branches is one of Baltimore's best kept secrets for top-tier chamber music...best of all, the concerts are free!

Community Concerts at Second are held in a beautiful (visually and acoustically!) space at 4200 St Paul St, Baltimore, MD 21218. (very close to the Waverly, Northwood, Govans, Roland Park, and Hamden branches of the library)

Let's take in a rehearsal and practice our "capturing spirit" with sketchbooks, cameras, and creative writing!

The Sport of Art (yes, you read that right!)

Let's take a field trip to Oriole Park at Camden Yards, where participants will have the opportunity to see how a "spirited" sporting event comes together in such a massive stadium!

Pending arrangements with Orioles management, maybe we can even attend a practice "capture spirit" from the front row seats behind homeplate, the visit team dugout, or the press box!

Proposed Activities – CULMINATION

The Enoch Pratt Free Library Performing and Visual Arts Gala & Showcase

ATTENDEES: All are welcome

ATTIRE: Street or Stylin' (maybe Hoesy can lend me that awesome blazer!)

EVENT DESCRIPTION:

Part 1 - A fully produced showcase of performance art and presentation of visual art, incubated during the artist's residency.

Part 2 - A celebratory affair with food (of course, from a local business featured in the food event from the "Immerse in Art" series), music, and dancing.

A safe and celebratory space for the creators of art, those who attended events during the residency, to display their work, if they wish. And a chance for the community to take part in the spirit and joy that comes from seeing their community peers art creations.

Yes... of course, there will be a (homemade) photo booth.

I really want to share the one-of-a-kind feeling and energy that comes from an "Opening Night" for the artists in our community, who created alongside me during my residency.

So often an everyday person thinks of them self as a "mere mortal", even a neophyte, in the art world.

I want people to experience what they see in the movies or read about in the Style section of the newspaper.

The culmination of my artist residency should be more about those I have inspired and enabled than about me. Or really, by making it about them, it's how we can make my work feel complete. Nothing brings me more joy than seeing the joy someone else gets from something I helped them create, or made possible for them to create.

About the Artist

My name is Matt. I was born in Baltimore, MD. I grew up in Baltimore. I left for college in Philadelphia, PA. After college, I started a career in management consulting. I liked it. Sometimes I loved it, or I thought I did. But it never totally fulfilled me. After a move to New York, I found ballet. Not long after, I found what drew me to dance...but only when I saw it through the lens of my camera. It was then that I embarked on a mission to capture spirit.



In 2018, I returned home to Baltimore to be closer to family.

Best of all, here in Baltimore, I get to share the joy of dance with my mom. ASK ME ABOUT THAT.

Why I Dance

Does it seem strange that I would really kick off my bio by telling you why I dance? Indulge me :)

For me, the studio and the stage are a sacred place. A place of discipline, but also comfort, joy, even temporary escape...or maybe, truly, not escape, but return to home, to self.



I can push "pause" on the clamor of "the rest of life" and share with my fellow dancers in moments of grace, form (and play with form), even flight. What else in life can be so indulgent while honoring an artform and centuries of storied "greats" whose work we still study?

Oh yeah, and it's good for you... in mind, body, and spirit. And there's music. And friends. And sometimes even cake, on birthdays and opening night.

Why I Love Dance as a Subject for my Art (dance...and music, food)

Dance is fleeting. We do it and then it is finished, until the next performance or the next class.

Music is similar. Once the echoes of the concert hall (or practice room) fade, it's finished...until the next song, performance, or rehearsal.

Food? Exactly...once it's gone, it's gone.

We could go on. But dance, music, food (and so many other forms of artistic expression) illustrate just how ephemeral "spirit" can be.



I could tell you that I am capturing those fleeting experiences or that I'm capturing spirit. And that is absolutely true.

But let me simplify. I like seeing people in their happy place. I like seeing people in the flow of their passion.

I have the privilege of helping honor my fellow artisans, their passion, and their dedication through my photography.

That those artists, their families, and the arts community at-large get lasting memories from the photos I shoot...that's icing on the cake. And.....we're back to cake again!

Epilogue

“Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.”

--Ferris Bueller

If you've made it this far, I sincerely thank you.

I hope that my proposal entices you to invite me for collaboration.

I hope that my proposal, accepted/awarded or not, is a small (okay, 30 some page) demonstration of advocacy for the Artist in Residence program. I hope that Pratt continues the program for years to come. I feel it is as good for the community as it is for the artist. Probably, hopefully, even better for the community.

It's true, life does move pretty fast. In the midst of the ever-growing number and intricacy of things the vie for our attention, we need things that help us stop and look around. And engage.

We need programs like this. Thank you for having it.

-Matt



The Not-So-Still Life