**We believe art is essential.**

That’s why Links Hall was a cultural first responder in 2020-2021.

"Every aspect of our lives in the world involves art in some way, form and fashion, and you can’t have art without experimentation. Links Hall is constantly a place where artists get to do that in a cultivated and supported way.”

--- Artist Spence Warren

**ARTISTS SPEAK**

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### 2021 By the Numbers

- 8,500+ people participated in Links programs, in-person and online
- 126 events + programs
- 75 artists paid
- 6 artist residencies
- 3 artist commissions
- 640 hours studio time
- 42 hours mentoring
- 100 hours filming + production
- *THAW Abundance* virtual art party presented 50 artists for 1,500 audience members online

### About Us

- 70% of Links artists are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)
- 50% of board and staff are BIPOC community leaders
- 50% of board and staff are artists
- 74% of consulting budgets go to women of color-owned businesses (61% are Black-owned)
- 88% of artist residency program jury panelists are BIPOC (75% are artists)
In 2020, many venues invested in cameras and livestream technology to move their seasons online. Following through on our promise to provide artists with resources and platforms to develop new work, Links Hall put new equipment directly in the hands of performers. Links invited self-produced artists to experiment, explore, and push the boundaries between performance, film, and new media. Here’s what we discovered together:

“Links recognizes its responsibility and opportunity to make its resources available to the community, while also recognizing that the answers to [the pandemic] come out of dialogue and collaboration and an open thought process. It’s not the fear and scarcity model.”
-- Artist Jacob Snodgrass

Yoshinojo Fujima aka Rika Lin green screened the white box studio, to create an interactive dance film with virtual reality. Funded in part by a CDF Digital Dance Grant & Asian Improv aRts Midwest.

EDUCATION

8 half day technology workshops at Links Hall, where 32 artists learned free software for virtual performance from our Production Manager

LABORATORY

In our 2nd annual performance + media festival Links Lab, 15 artists had 15 days to create, rehearse, and premiere 2 works for live + livestream audiences

PERFORMANCE + FILM

Links Hall & Constellation were the exclusive film venue for 100 performing artists for the Walder Foundation’s series Chicago Takes 10
Collaboration

In 2021, Links Hall strengthened partnerships with fellow cultural organizations by:

- Co-presenting *The Map of Now* interactive digital festival, with Lucky Plush Productions, Steppenwolf Theatre, Harris Theater for Music & Dance, and Logan Center for the Arts UChicago
- Providing livestream services for BIPOC artists and events, including: Congo Square Theatre’s fundraising gala, Soft Cage Films gala, and the August Wilson Student Monologue Competition
- Co-hosting community convenings by Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events (DCASE), Chicago Dancemakers Forum, See Chicago Dance, and more

Inspiration

While audiences joined us online, we helped artists develop new work, commissions, and premieres including:

- 17 residencies and fellowships awarded to Chicago artists
- SOL Womxn of Color Storytelling Collective *Where My Story Begins* (Chicago)
- Leila Awadallah/Body Watani’s *TERRANEA: hakawati of the sea* (Minneapolis + Beirut + Palestine)
- Midwest Premiere: Thaddeus Phillips’s *Zoo Motel* (Bogota)

“This year specifically, Links aimed to do everything they could to support any and all artists who opted to work with them—which, to me, speaks volumes about who they are as an organization.”

--- See Chicago Dance named Links Hall the Fearlessly Inspired Organization of 2020

Co-MISSION Resident Artist Kierah King and ensemble record a livestream performance for Links Hall’s 2021 *Festival of New Works*. 
Social Justice

Links Hall published *The Equity Report* in Summer 2021 detailing our recent work building pay equity for artists + arts workers, greater access for performers from Chicago’s South + West sides, and right-sizing organizational capacity. In 2022, we will work with artists and thought leaders Marc Bamuthi Joseph and Rika lino of Sozo Vision, building deeper cultural strategies and anti-racist organizational systems for Links Hall.

Capacity Building

Links Hall is thrilled to announce a $150,000 capacity building grant from the Walder Foundation, to support the creation of our first database, upgraded donation processing + box office systems, and a new website. This gift provided underwriting to hire a staff Marketing + Development Manager and project leaders Ahsek Innovation.

Save the Dates

Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival: January 20-30, 2022

THAW: Coming April 2022

CoMISSION Festival of New Works: June 16-26, 2022


Annual Appeal Printing Sponsor: School of the Art Institute of Chicago