

# ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

## *Holding Space* (World Premiere – 2021)

Choreography: Jamar Roberts

Music: Tim Hecker

Costume and Scenic design: Jamar Roberts

Lighting design: Brandon Stirling Baker

Film Directed and Produced by: Nel Shelby Productions

Colorist: Jason Bahling



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in  
Resident Choreographer  
Jamar Roberts' *Holding Space*.  
Photo by Christopher Duggan.

Against a backdrop of civil unrest and our relentless threat upon the natural world, *Holding Space* examines the ways in which we are taking care. It asks: in what ways can we collectively accommodate one another to better traverse this new and unprecedented terrain? This ensemble work functions as a container, a sacred space created to give shape to, and hold, the complex emotions of this moment. At its core, it is about healing and the quest for sustainable pathways towards wholeness. Roberts other works for the Company include: [Members Don't Get Weary](#) (2017), [Ode](#), (2019) a powerful meditation on the beauty and delicacy of life in a time of growing gun violence, and last year's dance film [A Jam Session for Troubling Times](#), celebrating the centennial of revolutionary saxophonist and composer Charlie "Bird" Parker.

### **Jamar Roberts**

Miami native Jamar Roberts graduated from the New World School of the Arts after beginning his studies at the Dance Empire of Miami, where he continues to teach and mentor students each year. He received a fellowship to The Ailey School before becoming a member of Ailey II, Complexions Contemporary Ballet and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 2002. Mr. Roberts starred in *Moonlight x Ailey*, a short dance film (choreographed by Artistic Director Robert Battle) that pays homage to the Oscar-winning film *Moonlight*. *Dance Magazine* featured Mr. Roberts as one of "25 to Watch" in 2007 and on the cover in 2013. He performed at The White House in 2010, and as a guest star on *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Dancing with the Stars*, and *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. In 2015 Mr. Roberts won Outstanding Performer at the prestigious New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Awards and was a guest star with London's Royal Ballet. Prior to being appointed as Ailey's first-ever Resident Choreographer, he made his Ailey II choreographic debut with *Gêmeos* (2015), and his Ailey Company debut with *Members Don't Get Weary* (2017).



AAADT's Resident  
Choreographer Jamar Roberts.  
Photo by Andrew Eccles.

Roberts other recent commissions include [Cooped](#) for the Guggenheim's *Works & Process*, a dance film driven by the disproportionate amount of black and brown bodies affected by the pandemic and heralded by *The New York Times* as "one of the most powerful artistic responses yet to the Covid-19 crisis"; [In Memory](#), a dance film for the March on Washington Film Festival in honor of the late Congressman John Lewis; *'Morani/Mungu'* for New York City Center's Virtual Fall For Dance Festival; and for New York City Ballet's Festival of New Choreography.

## **Nel Shelby**

Nel Shelby preserves and promotes dance by documenting live performances, producing livestreams and virtual programs, and creating marketing videos and documentary films. Nel Shelby Productions serves a diverse list of dance clients, and the entire team has training in movement. Nel is Producer/Director of NY Emmy-nominated documentary PS DANCE!, a documentary about dance education in NYC's public schools, and she is Video Producer for Jacob's Pillow and Vail Dance Festival. She lives in New York City with her husband, dance photographer Christopher Duggan, and their two kids. View Nel Shelby's work at [www.nelshelby.com](http://www.nelshelby.com) or on Instagram at @nelshelby.

### ***Holding Space*** **Music Credit Information**

**"Prism", "Virginal I", "Black Refraction", Stigmata II", and "Borderlands"** by Tim Hecker