

MINNPOST

We get all excited about up-and-coming young artists. We heap praise and Lifetime Achievement Awards on revered older artists. But what about

those in mid-career? Paul Herwig, co-artistic director of the Ivey-winning Off-Leash Area, thinks it's time to shine some light on them. So he's starting something new in the Twin Cities this weekend: **the annual Right Here Showcase, a festival of contemporary performance.**



“It’s a classic scenario,” Herwig told MinnPost. “Artists in their own town aren’t supported until they leave. I’m like – let’s do it now. This is a taking-a-stand project, long overdue.”

Herwig got the idea for Right Here after touring North American performing arts festivals in Toronto, Portland, and New York.

All featured local and regional artists on the same bill as their national and international counterparts. Herwig returned home and applied for a grant from the State Arts Board to start Right Here. With the grant, he was able to give each artist a commission and technical support: lighting design, a stagehand, a sound operator, a house manager, promotion, and a place to present his or her work: the James Sewell Ballet Tekbox at the Cowles. And, he emphasized, “everybody’s getting paid.”

Six artists will perform over two weekends, two artists each night. All are at least 30 years old, currently reside in Minnesota, have lived here for at least five years, and have been working professionally in the performing arts for at least ten years. Each will perform an hour-long piece, with a half-hour break in between. “Just like the Fringe,” Herwig said. “They’re great, compact little gems.” Food and wine will be available in the lobby during the breaks, free to audience members. Artists will likely show up to chat.

The artists appearing in the inaugural Right Here Showcase are **Bart Buch (puppetry), Gadu (Kats) Fukasawa Schmitz (butoh dance), Kym Longhi (movement and theater), Rosy Simas (contemporary dance), Deborah Jinza Thayer (contemporary dance), and Vanessa Voskuil (contemporary dance).** Each will perform a new work created for Right Here, or a recent work that has been substantially re-envisioned or redeveloped. “These are excellent people at a national level that more people ought to know about,” Herwig said. “Their work deserves to be seen.”

[Go here](#) to read about the artists and what they’ll do at the showcase. [Reserve tickets here.](#)

There’s a \$10–\$25 suggested donation for each night. All three evenings (tonight–Sunday, Nov. 14–16) start at 7:30 p.m., with performances scheduled at 7:30 and 9.