

Annual Report

April 2024-March 2025

We respectfully acknowledge that the work of Kinesis Dance Society, now operating as soma anima arts, takes place on the ancestral and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the x̱m̱əθkw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō, and Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to live, create, and share on these lands. Through our movement practices and artistic inquiry, we strive to honour the stories, stewardship, and enduring presence of Indigenous communities, and to deepen our responsibility to the land and to one another.

The 2024–2025 season marked a transformative chapter in the life of our organization. As we formally transitioned operations under the name soma anima arts, we carried forward the fearless spirit of contemporary dance instilled by founding Artistic Director Paras Terezakis, while stepping into a renewed vision rooted in empathy, ecology, and embodiment. This shift reflects our commitment to cultivating inclusive, intergenerational, and imaginative artistic practices that respond to the world we live in.

In April 2024, a significant leadership transition took place as Rachel Helten assumed the role of Artistic Director. Rachel brings a deep connection to contemporary dance and interdisciplinary collaboration, which now shapes the evolving identity of soma anima arts. Under her guidance, the company has embraced a practice of somatic and relational inquiry, as well as site-sensitive creation, building on KDS' legacy while moving boldly into new territory.

This year, we continued to nurture vital artistic projects and foster meaningful community connections. Our programming featured original creations, community-engaged processes, and site-responsive work presented across local and regional venues. From interdisciplinary explorations to intergenerational dialogue, the season demonstrated the adaptability, vision, and resonance of our work.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our board of directors, collaborators, funders, and community partners for supporting us during this pivotal transition. Your belief in the transformative power of dance continues to inspire and sustain us.

As with many arts organizations, we continue to feel the effects of inflation. While our operating costs rise steadily, revenue streams have remained largely unchanged—and in some cases, have decreased. Donations have become lighter, and competition for grants has intensified, placing significant strain on our financial and human resources. These pressures have tested the resilience of our staff and volunteers, who continue to show extraordinary commitment in challenging conditions.

Our programming is sustained through a diverse mix of funding sources, including municipal, regional, and federal project grants - such as those from the City of Vancouver, Metro Vancouver, the Province of BC (via the BC Gaming Commission and BC Tourism), and the Government of Canada (notably through the New Horizons for Seniors Program). We are also grateful for the support of private foundations, including the Hamber and Deux Mille Foundations, as well as income generated through earned revenue, individual donations, and fundraising efforts.

Amidst this financial climate, we have also been actively engaged in organizational renewal. As part of the leadership transition, Carline and Rachel participated in the year-long Pathways Lite program to support their professional growth. We are in the ongoing process of revisiting and refining our mandate, mission, and values, as well as updating our strategic plan and internal policies to better reflect our current vision and needs. This evolution also includes the creation of a new graphic identity, featuring a redesigned logo and website, that will reflect the spirit of our transition to soma anima arts. These developments are part of a broader effort to build a sustainable, artistically vibrant, and community-rooted future.

2024-2025 Project & Activities

Outreach Workshops

The positive impact soma anima arts continues to have in the community is due in a large part to the success of its multi-faceted community outreach Dance Out Loud program, supported through BC Gaming.

In 2024-2025, this program was made of a vast array of activities:

- Weekly collaborative dance workshops for children: conducted in French in three francophone schools, as part of after-school care activities, with children from KG to Grade 5 (Ecole des Colibris, Ecole Rose-des-Vents, Annexe Queen Elizabeth)
- Collaborative Creative Dance Classes: Weekly workshops for seniors at Trout Lake Community Centre
- Flowing Verse: a free workshop merging poetry and movement
- Vortex | 4D sound + dance jam: a series of immersive dance workshops in partnership with Lobe – spatial sound studio.



Artemis' Embrace: a community-engaged dance flash mob

The project began in 2023–2024 with a research phase led by Rachel Helten under the mentorship of Paras Terezakis, rooted in themes of strength, courage, and the determination to embrace our unique identities

In the summer of 2024, we deepened our connection with the community of North Vancouver through a series of free, inclusive workshops and a culminating outdoor performance at Ray Perrault Park in August. Over 50 participants joined us in this joyful act of collective expression, accompanied by the lively sounds of Balkan Shmalkan, an East Vancouver-based community band. Set in a public park, the performance transformed everyday space into a vibrant site of celebration, inviting audiences to witness and reflect on shared humanity, belonging, and place. The event sparked enthusiastic engagement and opened meaningful dialogue around the role of place-based performance in community life.

This second phase of the project, carried out during the 2024–2025 season, was supported by North Vancouver Recreation and Culture, the Province of BC (via the BC Gaming Commission and BC Tourism), the Hamber Foundation, and the Deux Mille Foundation. A video of the performance was also shared across local community centres during BC Culture Days, extending the project's reach and resonance throughout the region.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/1008499238>



Bright Shadow

Bright Shadow is an interdisciplinary exploration of utopia and dystopia, expressed through contemporary dance, live music, and interactive technology. The project illuminates humanity's potential and poses the essential question: What world do we hope to build? It invites audiences into a space of possibility, inspiring hope and encouraging embodied visions of a more compassionate and peaceful world amid the chaos of today.

Following an initial research phase in 2023–2024 in collaboration with Paras Terezakis, Bright Shadow premiered in its first iteration during our April 2024 fundraising event. This early version laid the foundation for a bold and evolving body of work.

In 2024–2025, despite the absence of public funding, Rachel Helten expanded the project through a rich interdisciplinary lens, weaving together interactive elements and collaborative processes with dancers Allison Lang, Ileanna Sophia Cheladyn, and Ana Sosa; musicians Ben Helten and Kofi Obiri-Yeboah; and digital artist Ezequiel Peralta. Their combined efforts brought new depth, complexity, and resonance to the piece, further activating its central themes of transformation and collective imagination.

Bright Shadow was presented as a work-in-progress during the Dance in Vancouver festival in November 2024, where it drew a full house at the Faris Theatre at The Dance Centre—demonstrating strong public interest and engagement with this evolving, hybrid creation.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/1049397018/a1c7719253>



Generations

Thanks to the generous support of the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program and the Province of BC – BC Gaming Commission, we launched Generations, a heartfelt new initiative that brings the vitality of dance and live music to individuals living in care facilities or with medical challenges across Metro Vancouver.

Generations is a multifaceted project grounded in the belief that contemporary dance and music can uplift, connect, and inspire, particularly within underserved communities. Designed specifically for residents in assisted living and retirement homes, the project brings dancers and musicians directly into care spaces, transforming hallways and rooms into stages for creativity and connection.

Artists travel from room to room, engaging residents in gentle, improvisational movement tailored to individual abilities. These intimate encounters encourage self-expression, spark joy, and invite shared moments of presence. The experience is further deepened by live music, creating a multi-sensory, emotionally resonant environment. When possible, these interactions evolve into participatory workshops, enriching the sense of community and co-creation.

At its core, Generations is inspired by the resilience, wisdom, and stories of the elders we meet. The project honors their lived experiences, offering dance and music as vessels for recognition, celebration, and intergenerational connection.

In the 2024–2025 season, Generations visited three care facilities: Central City Lodge and Cooper Place in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and Tapestry Arbutus on the West Side. At each location, we offered a combination of pop-up performances and regular workshops—bringing movement, music, and moments of joy to those who need it most.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/1089835398/dee1f228ac?share=copy>



Gentle Glory

In February 2025, Rachel Helten undertook an artist residency in Buenos Aires, Argentina, followed by a creative development period at What Lab in March. During this time, she began developing *Gentle Glory*, a solo work-in-progress that explores gentleness and empathy as pathways to liberation.

Rooted in her lived experience navigating C-PTSD and mental health challenges, Rachel examines how a deep connection to self, Mother Earth, and the wisdom of animism can foster strength and healing in an often violent world. Created in collaboration with musician Ben Helten, the piece blends contemporary dance, poetic text, and original music to investigate the role of emotional intelligence and vulnerability as courageous acts of alchemical transformation.

Gentle Glory advocates for the radical power of care, celebrating sensitivity, sentience, and the human capacity for deep attunement. It reflects on how proximity can both humanize and dehumanize, and calls for an ethic of tenderness in our relationships—with ourselves, one another, and the living earth.

A work-in-progress showing was shared with the public in March 2025 as part of Co.ERASGA's Spring Salon Series, offering an intimate first glimpse into this unfolding exploration of resilience, embodiment, and kinship with the natural world.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/1074356481/a762c9a0cb?share=copy>



One of our many challenges this year (like past years) has been to find ways to finance our programming. Grant applications are more competitive than ever, straining resources, staff and volunteers to a new level.

| Successful Grant applications | | Unsuccessful Grant applications | | Successful Grant applications received in 2023-2024 but for project happening in 2024-2025 | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|---|--------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Funder | Project | Funder | Project | Funder | Project |
| Government of Canada: New Horizon | Generations | COV-CASC (Spring Intake) | Generations | Metro Vancouver | Generations - Youth |
| BC Gaming | Outreach | BCAC Arts Impact | Transition | COV-CASC (October Intake) | Artemis' Embrace – IDD 2025 |
| Hamber Foundation (Fall intake) | Artemis' Embrace | BCAC Project Assistance (Spring Intake) | Bright Shadow | Grant applications submitted in 2024-2025 for project happening in 2025-2026, with results still pending at yearend | |
| Deux Mille Foundation | Artemis' Embrace | Creative BC) | Bright Shadow | | |
| BCFFE 2024 | Artemis' Embrace | CCA-Explore&Create | Bright Shadow | Click Foundation | Artemis' Embrace – IDD 2025 |
| | | BCAC Project Assistance (Fall Intake) | Bright Shadow | Louise Bentall Award | Bright Shadow |
| | | Community Prosperity Fund | Generations | CCA Residencies | Enduring Rhythm (Argentina) |
| | | Vancity Community Foundation | Generations | COV-CASC (Spring Intake) | Bright Shadow |
| | | Molson Foundation | Bright Shadows | Hamber Foundation (Spring Intake) | Bright Shadow |
| | | CCA Travel | Argentina Feb 2025 | NVRC | Gentle Glory |
| | | | | BCAC Arts Impact | Bright Shadow |

2024-2025 Fundraising initiatives Goal: \$15,000 Total raised \$12,535

April 2024 Fundraiser

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Costs | (\$4,425) |
| 124 tickets sold | \$6,035 |
| Donations | \$5,980 |
| Silent auction | \$1,988 |
| Bar + Raffle | \$807 |
| TOTAL raised through fundraiser | \$10,385 |

Various Call for Donations

| Name of Donor | Donation amount |
|--|------------------------|
| Carline Dolmazon (monthly donor) | \$1,205 |
| Raphaëlle Abitbol | \$85 |
| Denis Blais | \$200 |
| Andrea Van der Ree Vera | \$120 |
| Marla Eist | \$40 |
| Kirk Chantraine | \$500 |
| TOTAL raised through donation campaigns | \$2,150 |

Our 2024 Giving Tuesday and Holiday Campaign faced significant challenges this year. Long-time donors who had consistently supported us during the holiday season did not return, and we saw a noticeable dip in contributions. We recognize that this may be due, in part, to the transition in artistic leadership—an important and necessary shift that has not yet been matched by renewed donor engagement. While we are confident that new supporters aligned with our evolving vision will come, this period of transition has highlighted the need to rebuild and reintroduce our work to both past and potential donors.