

San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival (SFEDF) FAQ's

First, thank you! We are grateful to our community for your continued support and enthusiastic participation in the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival for so many years! Thank you to the amazing artists and staff who have made the festival a local tradition and a national model for cultural dance production. We salute your talent, dedication and hard work to bring our stories to the stage!

In 2023, World Arts West will not be presenting the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival. However, we are very excited to partner with the Presidio in San Francisco again this year, for another full length, FREE, outdoor festival. Look out for more information on this event coming soon on our website, emails, and social media!

A Brief Background and Context

The San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival was founded in 1978 to create a platform for the visibility of cultural artists in the San Francisco Bay Area. In the 1980s and 1990s World Arts West steadily grew to include other programs and services as well as the Festival. In recent years the festival had become a highly produced, large-scale presentation but not a financially sustainable model.

In 2019 World Arts West made a transformative change in staff and leadership. Dr Anne Huang is the first Executive Director of color, immigrant and San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival artist to lead the organization. For the first time since 1978, the World Arts West board and staff reflect the diversity of its artist community.

San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival was put on hold in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic and budget constraints. In 2021 the festival was presented as a film. In 2022 we were able to return to live performances safely. Thanks to our partnership with the Presidio, we were able to present an accessible, free, outdoor festival season for the community. The World Arts West Dance Series featured 13 dance groups, close to 150 artists, and brought over 11,000 people to the Presidio!

The Future of San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival

Even before the Covid pandemic made a lasting impact on the resources of arts organizations and how audiences engage with performances across the world, World Arts West needed to reevaluate our presentation model to create a fiscally responsible production format. World Arts West, like presenters around the nation, is navigating how we can bring back our annual Festival in a more equitable and sustainable way, which includes a deeper understanding of our artist community.

With support from the Wallace Foundation, World Arts West is embarking on a groundbreaking research project to learn about the World Arts West cultural artist community. By listening to the

artists we serve, we'll gain a deeper understanding of the demographics of our artist community, what they need, and how we can best serve them.

Whether or not we are able to present an annual festival in 2024 and beyond depends on many factors. Our staff is exploring different performance presentation models through the lenses of **artist equity, fiscal responsibility, and attracting audiences**. These are some of the questions we are asking ourselves:

- What is the festival audition process?
 - Are in-person auditions that require months of time to prepare, and significant expense to the artists, equitable?
 - Should we implement video submissions to make our application process more accessible for artists?
 - What is the responsibility of WAW to curate the festival so that it is continually diverse, inclusive, and uplifts emerging companies?
- What is the right size and type of indoor venue/s? What is the availability and cost of indoor venues?
- What is a realistic timeline to create and produce the festival?
- What parameters are we working under as far as budget, capacity, and health protocols?
- What are new sources of funding?
- Should we live stream the festival?
- What are new ways to engage our audience and volunteers?
- How can our community help us achieve our goals?
- Who will we partner with to achieve our goals?

We will keep our community updated as we find answers to these questions and move forward with bringing back an annual festival to the Bay Area and beyond. Join our email list, follow us on social media and look for information on our website which will be updated later this year!

If you have thoughts or questions during this process of discovery and change, feel free to drop us a line at info@worldartswest.org.

Questions about Archival Material (Photos and Videos)

World Arts West gets several inquiries a year for videos or photos from performances and programming, especially the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival. Currently our archive is stored in two locations and not everything is digitized and/or online. So please bear with us as we catalog and organize our 45 years of memorabilia. Our goal is to create a researchable online platform which will include past SF EDF performances and programs, photos, community history, stories about cultural artists, and more.

If you have an urgent request please be as specific as possible and include the year and the artist/group name. Otherwise, we ask that you wait until the end of the year when we will have a

more comprehensive inventory compiled. At that time we will have a better picture of how and when we will be able to share archival materials and we will share our progress through our website and social media. World Arts West is working on streamlining a simpler process for these types of requests from participating artists and researchers.

If you are interested in volunteering to help us move our Archive Project forward, or donating money or resources, please contact us at info@worldartswest.org. Thank you!
