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PAUL MITCHELL

ODOT LAUNCHES SMALL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

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The Oregon Department of Transportation's Small Business Initiative is an ongoing series of activities to increase economic opportunities for Oregon's small businesses. As part of that effort, ODOT is launching a Small Contracting Pilot Program to increase the number of small professional and technical services firms that are awarded ODOT contracts.

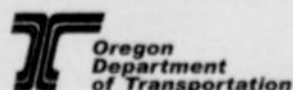
A simplified process will pre-qualify firms to participate in the pilot program and have the opportunity to be selected as prime contractors for ODOT contracts valued at \$75,000 or less.

Beginning Oct. 2, a Request for Qualifications to participate in the pilot program will be posted on ORPIN, the Oregon Procurement Information Network web site.

Access the RFQ
<http://orpin.oregon.gov>
or call (503) 731-3254

Need more information?
www.oregon.gov/ODOT

Visit the ODOT Procurement Office
www.oregon.gov/ODOT/contracting.shtml
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dance

The Daughters of Modern Dance

Women choreographers from four countries
bring their work to Portland

by Rebecca Ragain

In a field that is always looking forward—to the next performance, the next dance, the next season—New York choreographer Gina Gibney is influenced by the past.

When she entered the dance world nearly 30 years ago, women dominated the art form. Many of the founders of modern dance were women—Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, Martha Graham, Mary Wigman, Hanya Holm—and their presence was still strongly felt.

Gibney, a lesbian, says that it was the fact that modern dance was pioneered by women that drew her to the field in the first place. Many of her role models and mentors were women, beginning with her early dance instruction from Kathryn Karipides, a teacher at Case Western Reserve University.

"[Karipides] was an incredible force," recalls Gibney. "She had this beautiful point of view about

dance and a tremendous respect toward the art form."

Later in her career, Gibney had the chance to work with prominent modern dance choreographer Hanya Holm. Gibney's time with Holm came at a point in her career when she wasn't sure she could make it as a choreographer.

Gibney says: "[Holm] made it clear that if I had the will, I could do it. She made you feel strong as a woman."

During the past 15 to 20 years, the demographics of the dance world have changed, says Gibney. Although she believes there are more female than male dancers in the United States, now men dominate the field, running the majority of dance

organizations and finding greater opportunities as choreographers.

"Women in my generation, and slightly before and after, have faced unbelievable challenges to gain traction in their careers," Gibney says.

But she refuses to let the demographics of the dance scene keep her down. She concentrates on her choreography, not the careerism of her field, and strives to create the best work she possibly can.

Gibney says: "The challenge for a woman artist is to really focus on the work and extruding their own artistic vision and to not focus on what has become anything but a level playing field. Keep going and don't let that stop you."

As the founder and artistic director of her own company, Gina Gibney Dance, she feels a responsibility to support the next generation of women artists. In 1997 she reconceived her company as an all-female

troupe, in response to her concern that women were losing ground in professional dance.

The five-member company is a mix of lesbian and straight dancers, which Gibney calls "a communal tribe."

"We do a lot of physical contact, we rehearse together, we train, we debrief.... It really is nice to have a strong gay presence in that," she says. "Some of the female choreographers that I respect the most are gay, but I think we're a real minority."

In addition to employing the dancers, Gibney tries to help the members of her company develop their careers. She shares with them what she has learned about the importance of being articulate,

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—Gina Gibney



Concerned that women were losing ground in professional dance, lesbian choreographer Gina Gibney reconceived her company as an all-female troupe in 1997.

ANDRZEJ J. OLEJNICZAK