

SANKOFA DANZAFRO





THE COMPANY



SANKOFA

DANZAFRO

In Akan, a Ghanaian language, Sankofa means "to return to the root". More than a word, it is an African philosophy that proposes to know the past as a condition to understand the present; as a way to see the future. This thought has guided the path of the Afro-Colombian dance and music company **Sankofa Danzafro**. Founded by Rafael Palacios in 1997 with its home in Medellin, Colombia, Sankofa is dedicated to training and creation in dance as well as interacting with the community. Through the practice of dance, Sankofa's mission is to bridge the gaps between the many African diaspora communities in Colombia – along with other populations whose human rights have been violated. Sankofa's choreographic language searches for the poetics that are at the root of Afro dance, experienced through the frame of today. In this way, Sankofa honors both the traditional and the contemporary. Through its programs, the company nurtures community mentorship, social awareness, personal growth, and supports the sustainability of local cultures inside of the national dynamics of Colombia.

Sankofa's achievements have been noted with recognitions such as the 2008 National Dance Award to Rafael Palacios for "San Pacho ... Blessed!"; a mention in 2010 by the United Nations as a "good practice of Afro-descendant social inclusion in Latin America" with the cross-cultural collaboration "Steps in the Earth Project," (created with dancers in the Pacific, Chocó and Urabá regions and the Archipelago of San Andrés y Providencia) which resulted in the publication of a book of the same title; and by the Training of Trainers and Danza Viva Program of the Ministry of Culture between 2008 and 2016. Sankofa has a wide repertoire of works and has toured to countries such as Brazil, France, Peru, Spain, Jamaica, Burkina Faso, Canada, Uruguay, and China. The company made its "electrifying New York debut" (NY Times) in the US invited by the Battery Dance Festival in 2015. The performances at The Joyce Theater were part of the company's debut US tour, which also included engagements in Boston (Celebrity Series), West Palm Beach (Kravis Center), Kansas City (Open Spaces Festival), Los Angeles (USC Voices & Visions), Laguna Beach (Laguna Beach Dance Festival) and Davidson, NC (Davidson College).

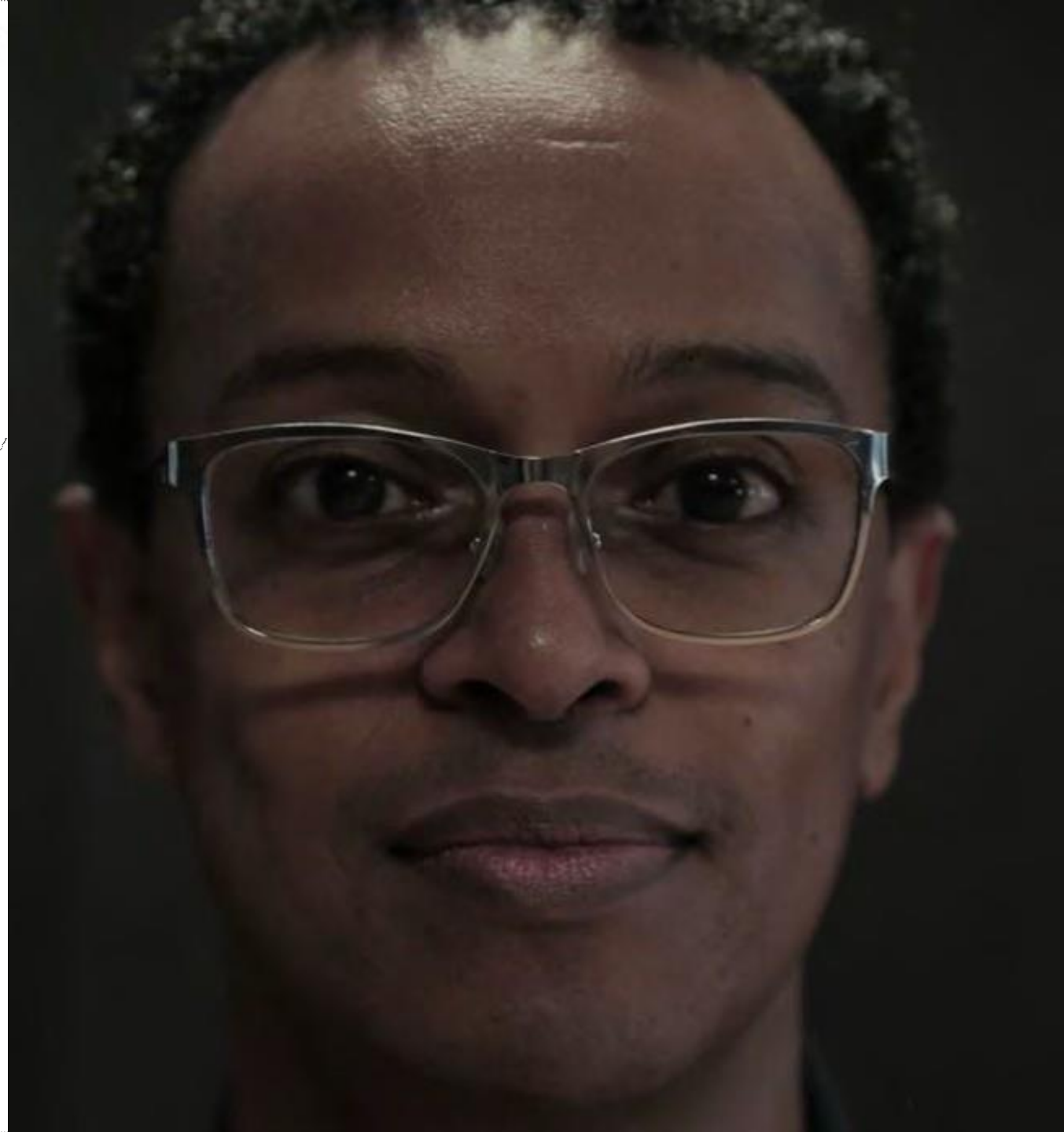
Sankofa Danzafro's mission is
“to dance to be **heard**, rather than to be seen”



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Rafael Palacios is a Colombian choreographer, teacher and dancer, researcher of traditional, Afro-contemporary, and urban dance. His experience as a dancer in Africa and Europe, studying with Germaine Acogny and Irene Tassemedo has been the basis for the founding of Sankofa Danzafró. His creations explore social and racial inequality, ancestral knowledge and a search for a new place of Afro-Colombian culture in the Colombian society. With a trajectory of more than twenty years, his works for Sankofa Danzafró have been presented in theatres and festivals around the world, showing the diversity of afro-Colombian dance. He has been a guest choreographer for the Celebration of the 159 years of Abolition of Slavery, in Medellín, Colombia in 2010 for which he created *The City of Others*. He was also guest choreographer for *The Summit of the Americas* (Cartagena 2012), Inauguration of the *World Games* (Cali, 2013), and for the First International Dance Biennial of Cali (Colombia, 2013). In 2008 he received the National Dance Award from the Ministry of Culture with the work *San Pacho ... Blessed!*.

Rafael Palacios has been a social activist through dance and has been committed to education of afro-descendent youth since he started his work in Colombia. *Steps on Earth*, his project of knowledge exchange among black communities in Colombia, received mention of the UN as a good practice of Afro-descendant social inclusion in Latin America (Cali, 2010). In 2018 he received the National Prize for the Arts with his work *The City of Others* awarded by the Universidad de Antioquia. Palacios is a specialist in Epistemologies of the South of CLASCO (Latin American Council for Social Sciences) and is currently getting his master's degree in Education and Human Rights at the Latin American Autonomous University.



LIQUID GEOGRAPHIES



Geografías Líquidas (Liquid Geographies)

Geografías Líquidas dives into the deep and fluid connections between bodies of water and Black communities. Inspired by Velia Vidal's poetry collection *Cuerpos de Agua (Tidal Waters)*, the work views water as a living archive — a vital, symbolic, and spiritual force that carries the memories, struggles, and resilience of Afro-descendant peoples. Through the embodied knowledge of Sankofa's afro-colombian dancers, the project traces rivers, seas, swamps, and streams as witnesses to histories of movement, care, and resistance.

Blending poetry, dance, and reflection, *Geografías Líquidas* unfolds as a poetic and political exploration of memory, belonging, and identity. It invites audiences to consider how water sustains and shapes life, while also confronting the global currents of racism, extractivism, and exclusion that continue to divide the Americas' North and South.





Performers: *

María Elena Murillo Palacios.

Yndira Perea Cuesta.

William Camilo Perlaza Micolta.

Sandra Vanesa Murillo Mosquera.

Maryeris Mosquera Batista.

Liliana Hurtado Hinestroza.

Diego León de los Ríos Naranjo.

Piter Alexander Angulo Moreno.

Estayler Osorio Fuentes.

Paula Valentina Benavides Villarreal.

Erika María Meneses Foronda.

Wendy Carolina Perea Perea.

Wendy Hinestroza Martínez.

Lucy Daneysa Sánchez Mosquera.

Kevin Stiven Sánchez Mosquera.

José Jaime Díaz Pereira.

Olabanke Oyinkansola Goriola.

Marsae Lynette Mitchell.

Juan José Luna Coha.

Gregg Anderson Hudson Mitchell.

* Cast may vary by tour

Artistic Direction and Choreography:

Rafael Palacios

Lighting and Set Design:

Álvaro Tobón

Costume Design:

Diana Echandia

Research Advisor:

Carlos Correa Angulo

Photography:

Jeisson Riascos (Murcy)

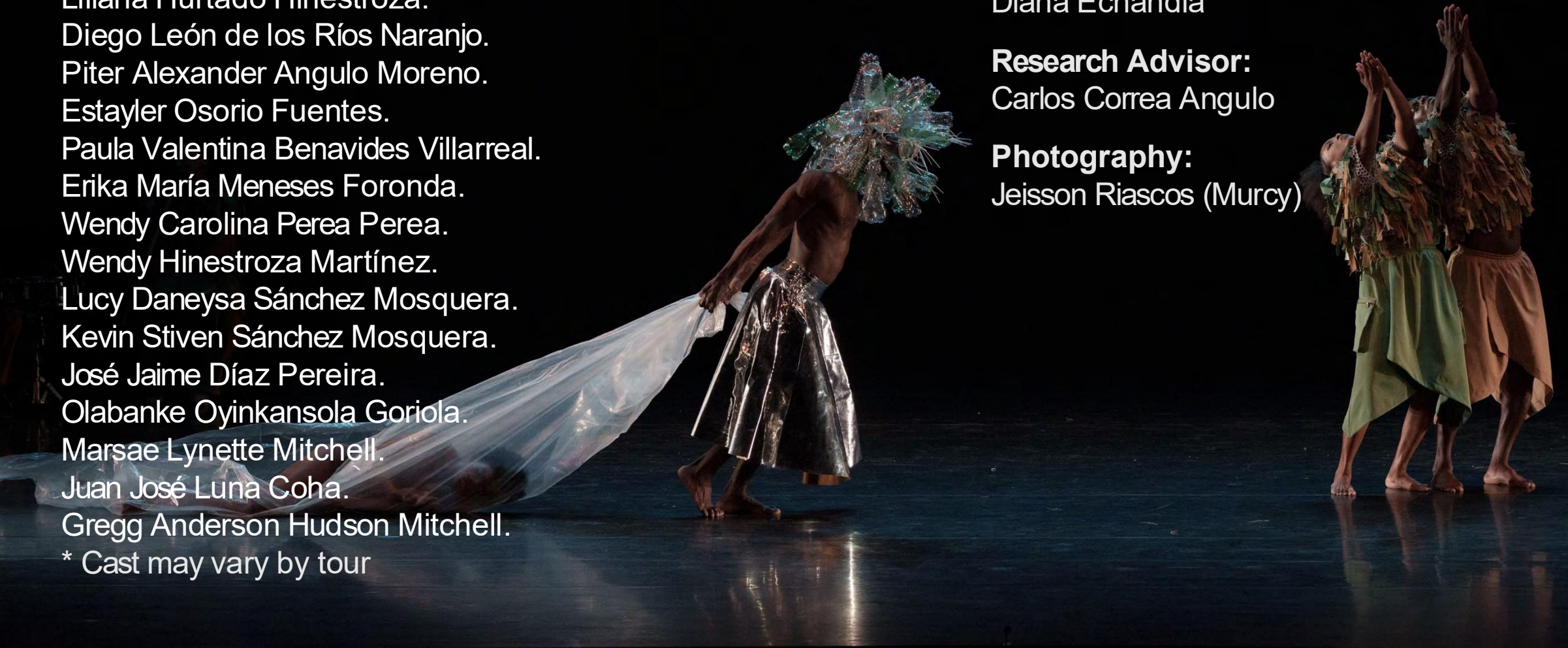






Photo: Paulina Perez

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