

Choreographing a collaboration

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Dancers, other artists to join in creating work at Williams

WILLIAMSTOWN — A group of artists, including choreographer Blondell Cummings and writer Jamaica Kincaid, will work together at Williams College this month on a dance production to premiere at the Adams Memorial Theatre on Jan. 24.

The project is the result of a \$30,000 grant to the college, one of 646 such awards for fiscal year 1986, from the Massachusetts Council on Arts and Humanities. According to state Sen. Peter C. Webber, the grant is part of an effort by the Commonwealth to "enrich cultural life" in the state.

Working with Williams coordinator of dance Sandra Burton are Cummings, Kincaid, artist Bob Smith, who will design the set, and composer Michael Riesman. The collaborative effort, "Basic Strategies No. V," will be performed by professional dancers and several invited Williams students.

Part of series

"Basic Strategies No. V" is part of a series of dance works choreographed by Cummings, who began when she was a resident artist at Williams in 1983. At that time, "Basic Strategies No. 1" was performed. According to Burton, the works explore "the general themes of basic human needs and the needs of society." "Basic Strategies No. V" will focus on money and how it affects people's lives.

The project includes a number of public workshops and a panel discussion by the guest artists. On Monday, Smith will offer a workshop on the MainStage of the Adams Memorial Theatre from 4:30 to 6. Cummings' workshop will be held on Tuesday from 2:30 to 4 in the La-

rome Robbins Foundation. Kincaid, who will develop the spoken text for the performance at Williams, was born in St. John's, Antigua. She is the author of two books, "At The Bottom of the River" and "Annie John," and her short stories have appeared in The New Yorker, Rolling Stone magazine and The Paris Review. Kincaid is currently on the faculty of Bennington College.

Collaborative director Cummings is the artistic director of Cycle Art Foundation, a multidiscipline collaborative. She was an original member of Meredith Monk/The House, and was seen in Philip Glass's "The Photographer — Far From the Truth." She is on the faculty of Lincoln Center Institute as an affiliate artist and is a consultant to the Ohio Arts Council.

Cummings has been choreographing since 1978, and her works have been presented in the United States, Austria, Hong Kong and China. She has been awarded choreography fellowships from the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Je-

rome Robbins Foundation.

Smith's work has been exhibited in one-man shows and group shows in this country and Europe since 1969. Much of his work consists of small "environment boxes" that create scenes out of a variety of materials and found objects, such as wallpaper, tiles and shells.

Maker of 'boxes'

Smith's contribution to the project at Williams is his first large-scale set design. He studied graphics at the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and since then has been awarded two Museum of Fine Arts traveling scholarships.

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Mark Mitchell

