

WELCOME TO CADD 2026!




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7th Bi-Annual CADD Conference

Duke University, Rubenstein Arts Center
Feb 20-22

Black Phoenixing: Dancing Through the Ruins

Keynote Speakers



**Pawlet
Brookes MBE**



**Thomas F.
DeFrantz**



**Raquel
Monroe**



**Onye P.
Ozuzu**

2026 Awardees

Joe V. Nash Awardee:

- Dr. L'Antoinette Stines, OD

Kariamuwelsh Awardee:

- Bradley Simmons, represented by Atiba Rorie

Richard A. Long Awardee:

- Yanique Hume

In Performance:

- The National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica

Register online @ www.cadd-online.org



Free registration for Duke faculty, staff and students



PERFORMANCE CULTURE TECHNOLOGY
Thomas F. DeFrantz, Director



Duke | Religious Studies



THE MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN DANCE:
EMBODIED INTERDISCIPLINARY PRACTICE



CADD was conceptualized by its founding members and first convened in April 2012 as the African Diaspora Dance Research Group at Duke University.



FOUNDING MEMBERS:

Takiyah Nur Amin
Shireen Dickson
Thomas F. DeFrantz

Nadine George Graves
Jasmine Johnson
Raquel Monroe

C. Kemal Nance
Carl Paris
John Perpener

Makeda Thomas
Ava LaVonne Vinesett
Andrea E. Woods Valdés

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Dr. C. Kemal Nance and Dr. Andrea E. Woods Valdés

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CATERING & SIGNAGE

Ava LaVonne Vinesett & Asili Johnson

FINANCES

Jenise Taylor

TRANSPORTATION SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2026

11:00 – 1:00 PM

- Pick up from AC Hotel & Hilton Garden Inn Hotel to Rubenstein Arts Center

8:30 – 12:30 AM

- Pick up from Rubenstein Arts Center to AC Hotel & Hilton Garden Inn Hotel
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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2026

7:00 – 9:00 AM

- Pick up from AC Hotel & Hilton Garden Inn Hotel to Rubenstein Arts Center

5:30 – 7:15 PM

- Pick up from Rubenstein Arts Center to Reynolds Theater*

8:30 – 10:30 PM

- Pick up from Reynolds Theater to AC Hotel & Hilton Garden Inn Hotel
-

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2026

7:00 – 9:00 AM

- Pick up from AC Hotel & Hilton Garden Inn Hotel to Rubenstein Arts Center

1:00 – 3:00PM

- Pick up from Rubenstein Arts Center to AC Hotel & Garden Inn Hotel
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*Transportation to Reynolds Theater will be via the CADD Shuttle from the side entrance to the Ruby.

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KEYNOTE PRESENTATION



ONYE P. OZUZU

Introduced by Raquel Monroe

FRIDAY 1:00 PM - Getting Made: Black and Woman at the Intersection of Institutional Chang-making and Artistic Practice

Onye Ozuzu is a dance administrator, performing artist, choreographer, educator, and researcher, and former Dean of the University of Florida College of the Arts. Actively creating and presenting work since 1997, she has shared her work nationally and internationally. Her collaboration with jazz composer Greg Ward, *Touch My Beloved's* Thought—a live dance and music performance honoring Charles Mingus—premiered at the Pritzker Pavilion in Chicago's Millennium Park in 2015, commissioned by Links Hall and Constellation. *Project Tool*, her 2018 Joyce Award-winning and 2016 Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artist project, examined the relationship between mind, body, and tool. It was also supported by the National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund, co-commissioned by Links Hall in partnership with Dancing Grounds and NPN. Ozuzu's current work, *Space Carcasses*, created with artists Native Maqari, Simone Rhouby, Joshua Akubo-Gabriel, and Ben LaMar Gay, is supported by NPN and the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA). The piece uses 3D audio and visual technologies to record, re-contextualize, and re-imagine architectural spaces resonant with histories of African diaspora migrations. *Space Carcasses* is co-commissioned by Bates Dance Festival (Lewiston, ME), QDance Center (Lagos, Nigeria), and Hope Mohr Dance—The Bridge Project (San Francisco, CA).

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

THOMAS F. DEFRANTZ

Introduced by Takiyah Nur Amin

FRIDAY 1:00 PM - Dancing the African Diaspora: Look at Me!



Performance|Culture|Technology, a humanities and creative research lab. Believes in our shared capacity to do better and engage creative spirit for a collective good that is anti-racist, proto-feminist, and queer affirming. Convenes the Black Performance Theory working group and is founding director of the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance. Faculty and teaching at the University of the Arts Mobile MFA in Dance; ImPulsTanz; SNDO; Juilliard; New Waves Institute; P.A.R.T.S.; Bennington College; Movement Research; faculty at Hampshire College, Stanford, Yale, MIT, NYU, Duke, the University of Nice. DeFrantz contributed concept and a voice-over for a permanent installation on Black Social Dance that opened with the Smithsonian Museum of African American Life and Culture in 2016. slippage.org.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

RAQUEL MONROE, PH.D.

Introduced by Dr. C. Kemal Nance

SATURDAY 10:30 AM - Black Power, Black Rage, Black Love: Choreographing Infrastructure in the Flames



Raquel Monroe, Ph.D. is an interdisciplinary performance scholar/artist/administrator and mother.

Her in-process monograph *Chi City Moves: Black Queer Feminist Choreographic Praxis in Chicago* employs Black queer feminist choreographic praxis to theorize performances and acts of protest by

Black femme choreographers in Chicago during the Black Lives Matter era. Monroe realizes her passion for collaboration as a member of the interdisciplinary arts collective the Propelled Animals.

Monroe is the Dean of the Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts at Howard University.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

PAWLET BROOKES MBE

Introduced by Andrea E. Woods Valdés

SATURDAY 10:30 AM - Black Dance as Living Archive: Serendipity, Resilience, and Reimagining Futures



Pawlet Brookes MBE is the Founder, CEO, and Artistic Director of Serendipity Institute for Black Arts and Heritage, a Leicester-based organisation committed to championing Black arts, heritage, and cultural equity in the UK and internationally. Under her leadership, Serendipity has become an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and a national leader in archiving, producing, and programming work that makes the invisible visible. A curator, producer, and advocate, Pawlet established Let's Dance International Frontiers, an annual festival bringing global dance practitioners to Leicester, and has spearheaded major initiatives including the Living Archive, preserving Black British arts and heritage for future generations. She has published extensively through Serendipity's imprint, creating platforms for Black British and international voices across dance, performance, and cultural history. Pawlet serves on the Midlands Area Council of Arts Council England, contributing her expertise to funding policy and sector strategy, and is a regular speaker on equity and representation in the arts. In recognition of her contribution, she was awarded an MBE for Services to the Arts and Cultural Diversity in 2022. She was conferred with an Honorary Fellowship from Northern School of Contemporary Dance in 2023, an Honorary Doctor of Arts from De Montfort University in 2025, and an Honorary Fellowship from Falmouth University in 2025, marking her impact as both a cultural leader and an alumna of UK higher education. Her work is grounded in a clear vision: to reimagine cultural narratives, dismantle structural inequalities, and ensure that creativity is recognised as essential infrastructure for a fairer and more inclusive society.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

CADD 2026 AWARDS CEREMONY

SATURDAY 1:00 PM

PRESENTED BY CADD EXECUTIVE BOARD

CADD IS PLEASED TO OFFER AWARDS TO OUR OUTSTANDING MEMBERS WHO INSPIRE US ALL TOWARDS CARING FOR BLACK DANCE IN ITS INFINITE VARIETY.

CADD 2026 SHOWCASE PERFORMANCES

FRIDAY 7:30 PM

FACILITATED BY STAFFORD C. BERRY JR.

Asili Johnson, Jazelynn Goudy, Iquail Shaheed, Lia Haynes, Stafford C. Berry, Jr., Antoinette Coward-Gilmore, Enya-Kalia Jordan, shani collins, Oluyinka Akinjiola

RICHARD A. LONG AWARD

YANIQUE HUME

The Richard A. Long Award, named in honor of outstanding researcher Richard Long, PhD, bestowed upon a researcher who has extended the understanding of Black Dance for an expansive readership.



Dr. Yanique Hume is a scholar, dancer and choreographer who is Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Cultural Studies at the University of West Indies, Cave Hill. Dr. Hume's research is constitutively interdisciplinary, sitting comfortably between the fields of the humanities and creative arts. She employs a multifaceted approach to cultural inquiry steeped in the traditions of cultural anthropology, cultural studies, comparative religion, performance studies and a critical dance practice. Her scholastic and creative output is presented across diverse platforms for the dissemination of knowledge including books, articles, workshops, invited talks, dance workshops and choreographies. As a professional dancer and choreographer, she has worked with L'Acadco - a United Caribbean Dance Force, and Danza Caribe of Cuba. Her choreography draws on over 25 years of training in Afro-Caribbean dance with specializations in Haitian, Jamaican and Cuban movement vocabularies.

Dr. Hume is also the co-editor of *Caribbean Cultural Thought: From Plantation to Diaspora* (2013); *Caribbean Popular Culture: Power, Politics and Performance* (2016); and *Passages and Afterworlds: Anthropological Perspectives on Death in the Caribbean* (2018).

About Richard A. Long

Born February 9, 1927 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania U.S., joined the ancestors January 3, 2013 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Richard A. Long was an American cultural historian and author, who has been called "one of the great pillars of African-American arts and culture." As an academic, he taught at University of Pennsylvania, University of Paris, University of Poitiers, Atlanta University, Emory University, Morgan State College and West Virginia State College, and had worked as a visiting lecturer at universities in Africa and India.

Richard Alexander Long was the fourth of six children born to Thaddeus B. Long and Leila Washington in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Temple University, where he received his B.A. in 1947 and M.A. in 1948. He did doctoral studies at the University of Pennsylvania, was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Paris, and received his Ph.D from the University of Poitiers in France in 1965.

He begun his teaching career as a graduate assistant at Temple University, Long subsequently taught at West Virginia State College. He also spent a decade and a half as a teacher at Morgan State College (now University). He taught English and French at the Hampton Institute and was also director of its College Museum. At Hampton in 1968 he founded the Triennial Symposium on African Art, now an annual conference at Atlanta University's Center for African and African American Studies.

In 1968 he became a Professor of English at Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University), where he was founder of the African American Studies program. From 1971 to 1973 he was visiting lecturer at Harvard University. In 1973 he went as an adjunct professor to Emory University, where in 1987 he joined the faculty as Atticus Haygood Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts.

Long served as a consultant and as a committee member of many cultural organizations and institutions, including the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, both the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Smithsonian Museum of African Art, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, the Society of Dance History Scholars, and the Zora Neale Hurston Festival. In addition, Long served on the editorial boards of several publications, including the Langston Hughes Bulletin, Phylon and the Zora Neale Hurston Bulletin.

Long is the author of many important books, including *African Americans: A Portrait* (1983), *Grown Deep: Essays on the Harlem Renaissance* (1988), and *The Black Tradition in American Dance* (1989).

JOE V. NASH AWARD

L'ANTOINETTE STINES

The Joe V. Nash Award, named in honor of outstanding archival researcher Joe Nash, bestowed upon a researcher who has demonstrated fierce commitment to an archival understanding of Black Dance method.



Dr. L'Antoinette Stines is a preeminent figure in Caribbean arts, celebrated as a dancer, choreographer, actress, teacher, author, and cultural historian. Her enduring commitment to codifying and promoting Caribbean movement traditions has positioned her as a visionary leader in the field. Dr. Stines is the pioneering creator of L'Antech, (definitive codified modern/contemporary dance technique of the Anglo-Caribbean), an influential technique which is a foundational component of the Caribbean Examination Council's CSEC and CAPE Performing Arts syllabi, cementing its academic impact on the direction and future of Caribbean dance. The Founder and Artistic Director of L'Acadco: A United Caribbean Dance Force, she has showcased the dynamism of Caribbean artistry to global audiences, leading the company on international tours. Her choreographic style, which is the canvas for L'Acadco, is a powerful expression of her island's culture, ancestry, and the natural mystic in the air.

Holding a PhD in Cultural Studies from the University of the West Indies, Dr. Stines has lectured extensively across four continents. Her scholarly work includes the book, *Soul Casings: Inside the Spirit to the CARIMOD Daaance Technique*. L'Antech, which documents her journey from classical ballet to the creation of L'Antech. Her significant contributions have garnered widespread recognition, notably the Order of Distinction in the rank of Officer (OD) (2025) from the Government of Jamaica for her services to the Arts, the Silver Musgrave Award (2023), the Icon of Dance Award by Carifesta XV (2025), and the RJR/Gleaner Communications Group Arts and Culture Award (2018). Recently, she choreographed the third chapter of 'Ulysses' in Germany (2025) and produced L'Acadco's 42nd Season of Dance. Dr. Stines's focus now turns to launching the L'Antoinette Performing Arts Akadamie (LAPAA) and hosting the major cultural event, Daaancing the Ancestral Fyah in Jamaica in 2026.

L'Antoinette's acceptance will be accompanied by a performance in the L'Antech technique by Jessica Shaw.

About Joe V. Nash

Born October 5, 1919 in New York City, joined the ancestors April 13, 2005.

Joseph Vincent Nash was born on October 5, 1919, in New York City into a family with two brothers. From 1946 to 1947 Nash performed all over the country as a principal dancer with Pearl Primus's dance company. Nash made his Broadway debut in a 1946 revival of *Showboat*. A year later he made his London debut in *Finian's Rainbow*. He later joined the company of Donald McKayle, and then continued to work in three original Broadway productions: *My Darlin' Aida*, *Flahooley*, and *Bless You All*. In 1954 he danced with famed entertainer Pearl Bailey in *House of Flowers*. The show also featured a young Alvin Ailey.

In 1948 Nash began teaching at Marion Cuyjet's Judimar School of Dance in Philadelphia with students who included Judith Jamison. Back in New York, Nash began working for the education department of the National Council of Churches in the 1970s, helping to develop the field of multicultural Christian education. His passion remained dance and he became a fastidious collector of African-American dance memorabilia. The New York Times noted that his collection included "playbills from the 1930s, books, articles, slides, cassette recordings of interviews with dancers and of conference proceedings, rare issues of dance magazines, newspaper clippings and a vast number of books." Nash wrote about dance, and authored the groundbreaking 1976 essay "Dancing Many Drums" in National Scene Magazine Supplement. Nash also won many awards including the Harlem School of the Arts Humanitarian Award; Manhattan Borough President's Excellence in the Arts Award; Audelco Outstanding Pioneer Award; Lehman College, Dance Award; International Association of Blacks in Dance, Honoree Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement; and the Brooklyn Academy of Music DanceAfrica Council of Elders Award, 20

KARIAMU WELSH AWARD

BRADLEY SIMMONS – AWARDED/POSTHUMOUSLY ATIBA RORIE ACCEPTING

The Kariamu Welsh Award, named in honor of outstanding artist and researcher Kariamu Welsh, PhD, bestowed upon an artist and researcher who expands the presence of African diaspora dance and music forms with expertise and passionate rigor.



Bradley Simmons Sr. (1951- 2025) was a native of New York City who began studying Afro-Cuban and African percussion at the age of nine. As a teenager, he traveled throughout the city to study with master percussionists from Haiti, Cuba, and Africa, committing himself to learning traditional rhythms, styles, and techniques through oral traditions.

He became a highly sought-after conguero and shekere player for community and religious events, including bembes, weddings, and cultural gatherings. Known for his deep knowledge and mastery of African drums, Bradley was internationally recognized for his contributions to African and Afro-Cuban music and culture, always honoring the traditional forms of the instruments and rhythms he played. Bradley also taught throughout the United States, including at the Larocque Bey School of Dance and the Gloria Jackson School of Dance in New York City.

Bradley performed around the world and on Broadway in productions such as *Guys and Dolls* and *Timbuktu*. He shared stages with artists including Eartha Kitt, Gregory and Maurice Hines, Miles Jaye, and Oba Babatunde, and recorded with The Fatback Band and drummer Norman Connors. His television appearances included *The Mike Douglas Show* and the *Cerebral Palsy Telethon*. He served as the Music Director of the Chuck Davis African-American Dance Ensemble in Durham, North Carolina and directed his own production, *Cultural Journey: The Elements of Percussion*, at the National Black Arts Festival in 1990 and 1996.

Beyond performance, Bradley was a cherished professor at Duke University, a mentor to many, and a respected cultural bearer. Though he passed in 2025, his legacy lives on through the rhythms he preserved, the students he guided, and the communities and hearts he touched. Ashé

ATIBA RORIE



Atiba Rorie has been playing percussion instruments since he was a young child. He currently holds a BA in Music from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and has also studied with Babatunde Olatunji, Fahali Igbo, Bradley Simmons, Chief Bey, and The National Dance Ensemble of Ghana in a one month intensive in Accra, Ghana, and a one month intensive study in Guinea, West Africa. He has taught at Winston Salem State University and Guilford College. He currently is the Dance music coordinator UNC Greensboro. He is the founder of the dynamic band Africa Unplugged. Rorie is also a musician within various professional ensembles; with these ensembles he has performed at many venues including Dance Africa in New York, Tedx Greensboro, National Black Arts Festival, Black Dance USA, and two Presidential Inauguration Celebrations. In 2005 Rorie was invited to participate in a Drums of Passion Tribute to Babatunde Olatunji at the Percussive Arts Society International Conference. Rorie has been a guest artist at CaldCluegh Community Center, Duke University, High Point University, Agnes Scott College, Williams College, Shakori Hills Grassroots Festival, Black College Dance Exchange, North Carolina School of the Arts, and Radford University.

About Kariamum Welsh

Born September 22, 1949 in Thomasville, NC, joined the ancestors October 12, 2021.

Mama Kariamum grew up in the Bedford-Stuyvesant part of New York City. She Welsh received her Doctorate of Arts in Dance History from New York University (1993) and her BA (1972; in English) and MA (1975; humanities) from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

As a teacher, Kariamum Welsh brought dance to the people, teaching at community centers as well as at university level. Many of her students have gone on to their own careers in dance and academia, spreading her influence. In the 1970s Welsh established her own dance group, Kariamum & Company: Traditions, which adopted the Umfundalai dance technique, a pan-African contemporary technique that she created. The word umfundalai is Kiswahili for "essential."

In 1985 Welsh joined Temple's department of Africology and African American Studies and in 1999 Temple's dance department, eventually becoming the director of Temple's Institute for African Dance Research and Performance. She retired in 2019. She was a prominent scholar of cultural studies including performance and culture within Africa and the African diaspora. Welsh served as the Director of the Institute for African Dance Research and Performance.

Welsh was the author and editor of numerous books, including *African Culture: The Rhythms of Unity* (1989), *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical and Philosophical Inquiry* (1995), and *Hot Feet and Social Change: African Dance and Diaspora Communities* (2019). She was also the founding artistic director of the Zimbabwe National Dance Company

FRIDAY EVENTS

12: 00 PM PROCESSIONAL: AVA LAVONNE VINESETT

12: 30 PM WELCOME & OPENING CEREMONY (VDH)

1: 00 PM KEYNOTE: THOMAS F. DEFRANTZ & ONYE O. OZUZU

2: 30 -2: 50 PM

RAC 131 (paper) Black Dance and the Authority of Experience Ninoska Escobar

How do contemporary Black diaspora dance practitioners engage the significant practical and theoretical work that has enabled Black dancing bodies to create Black subjectivities from lived experiences? Drawing on foundational Black feminist thought, this paper will explore the significance of historical and emerging interpretations of an “authority of experience,” as demonstrated in the work of select contemporary Black diaspora dance practitioners.

RAC 202 (paper) Queer Phoenixing in the Discotheque: Reclaiming Black and Latinx Lineages of the Latin Hustle

Abdiel Jacobsen, Dr. Ahtoy Juliana WonPat-Borja

This presentation reclaims the Afro-diasporic, queer, and Latinx origins of the Latin Hustle—an influential partner dance born in 1970s New York City but later whitewashed through commercialized disco culture. Drawing on oral histories, duoethnography, and archival research, we illuminate how queer Black and Latinx pioneers shaped the dance’s aesthetics, role-fluid partnering, and spectacular fabulousness. We analyze how these dancers forged spaces of resistance, belonging, and cultural innovation amid systemic erasure. This session highlights Latin Hustle as a living archive of queer brilliance, embodied memory, and diasporic survival.

FRIDAY EVENTS

2: 30 - 3: 30 PM

RAC 201 (workshop) Nothing Is Missing: Embodied Tools for Softness, Strength, and Self-Holding
A. Raheim White

This workshop is an invitation to return to the wholeness that already lives within us. Drawing from the Koshas—ancient Vedic wisdom explored through a Black lens—we will excavate the layered, multidimensional self through guided movement, meditation, breath, and reflection. Together, we will practice remembering that even as we move through rupture, pressure, and ruin, we are not broken. We are becoming. Participants will experience embodied strategies for grounding, self-trust, and energetic boundaries—relearning how to meet themselves softly, powerfully, and fully from the inside out.

2: 30 - 3: 40 PM

RAC 123 Film Black Being, Oh My Brother: Collaborative Phoenixing Through Poetry, Dance, and Film
Panelists: Kristi Vincent Johnson, Jaki Shelton Green, Christa Oliver, Laura Casteel, Jaylun Moore

This panel features artists whose collaborations reinterpret the poetry of North Carolina Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green through dance, film, and music. Centering *Black Being* and *Oh My Brother*, the discussion examines how interdisciplinary practice functions as a mode of “Black phoenixing,” a continual act of cultural rebirth and creative resilience. By merging choreographic embodiment, cinematic storytelling, and poetic language, these works expand the ways Black narratives are experienced, inviting audiences to witness transformation through collaborative creation amid historical and social fragmentation.

2: 50 - 3: 10 PM

RAC 131 (paper) Decolonizing the Stage: Choreographic Practices of Resistance and Reimagination in the African Diaspora
Careitha Davis

This presentation will explore the diverse methods of decolonization employed by choreographers who engage with African diasporic and Indigenous dance traditions. The focus will be on how performances originating from colonized cultures have been either adapted under Western influence or maintained in their authentic forms as acts of resistance and cultural preservation. Drawing from both practice-based inquiry and scholarly research, I will examine case studies of choreographers who reclaim embodied traditions as tools of cultural memory, while also navigating the pressures of Eurocentric aesthetics in the concert dance world. Special attention will be given to Afro-Caribbean and West Indian forms, where the legacies of slavery and colonialism continue to shape pedagogy, performance, and representation. These examples will highlight how choreographers resist erasure by foregrounding Indigenous rhythms, storytelling, and ritual practices in their work, often reimagining them for contemporary stages without severing ties to their cultural origins.

FRIDAY EVENTS

3:00 - 4:00 PM

RAC 124 (workshop) **Fire Fallowing: how we tend to the ashes and seeds of our own academic journeys and those of each other**
Panelists: Adesola Akinleye, Enya-Kalia Jordan, Antoinette Coward-Gilmore, Cami Holman, Crystal Davis

This workshop moves with the spirit of Black Phoenixing, asking how we tend to the ashes and seeds of our own and others' academic journeys. Drawing from the metaphor of fallow burning, the session invites participants to imagine community as fertile soil made ready by the shared fire of academic study. Together, we will explore how kinship, reciprocity, and embodied witnessing can sustain Black and Indigenous scholars through and beyond the PhD process. This is a space to breathe into the fire for each other, burning bright to imagine support as a regenerative act of tending to seeds.

RAC 202 (workshop) **Black Phoenixing: Reimagining Ourselves through Body-Mapping**
Panelists: Truth Hunter, Shani Collins

This workshop moves with the spirit of Black Phoenixing, asking how we tend to the ashes and seeds of our own and others' academic journeys. Drawing from the metaphor of fallow burning, the session invites participants to imagine community as fertile soil made ready by the shared fire of academic study. Together, we will explore how kinship, reciprocity, and embodied witnessing can sustain Black and Indigenous scholars through and beyond the PhD process. This is a space to breathe into the fire for each other, burning bright to imagine support as a regenerative act of tending to seeds.

RAC 224 (workshop) **Communal Traditions: Building Black Infrastructure Through Dance**
Ajara Alghali, Quianna Simpson

This interactive workshop invites participants into the embodied practices that make African Diaspora dance conferences powerful sites of Black radical infrastructure and choreopolitical resistance. Through guided movement exercises, we will explore how rhythm, groundedness, improvisation, and call-and-response—core elements of African and Diasporic dance—challenge Western dance hierarchies and affirm Black bodies as sources of knowledge, memory, and cultural continuity. Participants will engage in choreography-building activities inspired by the practices sustained at conferences such as Kankouran, Maimouna Keita, and Diamano Coura. These activities illuminate how choreographic processes become acts of self-determination and how communal resistance emerges when dance is created and shared through collective action and community care.

3:10 - 3:30 PM

RAC 131 (paper) **Performing magic: Black femme and enby solo performance in the hull**
Marguerite Hemmings

This paper brings into orbit different performance works that engage the solo Black femme and nonbinary (enby) body in relation to the lived memory of us in the hull of the slave ship, womb of our contemporary carceral world. Knowing that our efforts toward liberation are still unfinished, how do we perform our now-freedom within the now-vessels of total captivity? In other words, how do we perform magic? These works

FRIDAY EVENTS

bring into play a Black femme and enby performance technology of re-co-compos(t)ing carceral, binary worlds right in front of our eyes; in physiopsychic-virtual-real time, and in communion with our Dead

3: 30 - 3: 50 PM

RAC 131 (paper) The Quest for A Joyful Afrofuturist Dance Education Praxis Andrea K. Markus

A story of my trek into Afrofuturism which began during my doctoral studies, first as an exploration of literature and data to then unfolding as a framework for my teaching practice, artistic expression, and scholarly research resulting in my dissertation, “(Ubuntu + Sankofa) x Dance: Visions of a Joyful Afrofuturist Dance Education Praxis,” which proved to be the germination of the seed of what I hope to become a lush, fertile, even speculative field of Afrofuturist endeavors that infuse all of my work and activities as a scholar, teaching artist, and choreographer across New York City, the country, and overseas.

3: 30 - 4: 30 PM

RAC 201 (workshop) Reimagining Tradition through Dance Tracy Armah

This movement workshop explores Ghanaian traditional dance as a vessel of rebirth and resilience. Drawing from Adowa, Kpanlogo, and Bamaya, participants will embody rhythms and rituals that transform ancestral memory into contemporary expression. Through grounded movement, improvisation, discussions and rhythmic dialogue, the class engages with dance as an act of renewal, a way of “rising through the fire.” Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of how Ghanaian dance traditions sustain cultural identity while inspiring creative transformation in diasporic and contemporary performance spaces.

3: 30 - 5: 00 PM

Off Campus – Stagville (performance)

**THE BLACK PALIMPSEST: Rewriting the Body and Space through Ancestral Memory and Movement
Tristian Griffin**

THE BLACK PALIMPSEST is a choreographic and sonic offering that traverses Durham’s sacred landscapes, centering the Stagville Historic Site—once among the South’s largest plantations. Through movement, sound, and ritual, ancestral memory rises from the soil, carrying stories of pain, resistance, and rebirth. Guided by Tristian, a collective of artists—dancer, poet, singer, DJ, visual artist, and musicians—conjure layered histories that shape Black identity. At its heart, Tristian searches for ancestral truth, suspended between fact and intuition. In communion with the land, THE BLACK PALIMPSEST becomes both remembrance and revelation—an invocation of spirit, lineage, and enduring Black presence.

FRIDAY EVENTS

3: 40 - 4: 00 PM

RAC 123 Film Theater (workshop)

Rising Through the Diaspora: The Making of the Diaspora Folklorist

Kevin McEwen

Exploring how African Diasporic dance artists serve as cultural historians, educators, and archivists—preserving ancestral legacies while innovating new forms of expression. Drawing from the work of the Kofago Dance Ensemble and its educational initiatives, this lecture-presentation highlights how embodied practice, community engagement, and higher education intersect to sustain Black radical infrastructures. Through video review and dialogue, participants will witness how the body functions as both archive and altar—offering a framework for cultural preservation, rebirth, and empowerment within the global African Diaspora.

4: 00 - 5: 00 PM

RAC 123 Film Theater (workshop)

Oxowusi — A Dance Film

Augusto Soledade

Oxowusi is a short dance film that weaves elements of Candomblé initiation with the Yoruba tale of Oxóssi, the one-arrow hunter who becomes an orixá. Through choreographic and cinematic storytelling, the film explores how ancestral memory shapes contemporary Black life and dance. This session features a screening followed by a presentation on the creative process—from conceptual development and scriptwriting to pre-production planning, filming, and post-production. Participants are invited to consider how film serves as a platform for Afro-Fusion dance, identity formation, and mythic re-storying, and how movement and ritual sustain cultural continuity across the African Diaspora.

RAC 124 (workshop)

Samba as Black Resistance and Resilience

Keishonda Simms

Before Samba was recognized as a national art form, it was a community practice and response. Samba is an amalgamation of the cultures that enslaved Africans brought with them to Brazil, their response to slavery and colonization, and displays of resilience. Samba is a community art where everywhere contributes, has responsibilities; and, most importantly, Black Brazilians were able to experience belonging and freedom. This session will focus on the power and jubilation of samba de roda by exploring the dance technique, history, and language of the folk form and its evolution into contemporary styles such as samba afro.

RAC 131 (workshop)

Transformative Play

Liv Bryant

This investigative movement workshop explores cultural memory, critical play, and somatic movement as methods of improvisation/composition to further the transmission movement, recipe, and story. It centers rest and pleasure while simultaneously encountering movement memories through layered investigations. This workshop converges worlds of memory, futurity, technology, and food. We will use dried rice as a portal to dream, explore, and remember. Class will include improvisational scores, play with dried rice, and physical recalling of food sensations and recipes. How can our collective remembering invite a reimagining of possibilities within dance?

FRIDAY EVENTS

RAC 224 (workshop) Ethiopian Movement from a Pan-African Lens RAS Mikey Courtney

This Ethio-Modern Dance workshop explores the embodiment of Ethiopian cultures from specific regions including: Eskista, a traditional shoulder dance from the lower-highland region; Wolaita, a region in Southern Ethiopia whose movement characteristics are commonly associated with isolations of the hips; and Gurage, also from the South and known as a fast-paced full-bodied movements. As an urban contemporary artist of the African Diaspora, Dr. RAS has researched and developed this theoretical movement concept since 2008. Ethio-Modern Dance integrates cultural experiences of Ethiopia, and other cultures such as Western classical, contemporary/modern, urban dance and somatic practices, woven through the language of movement.

4: 00 - 5: 10 PM

RAC 202 (workshop) Lowelyfe: Turf Wars Playshop Quilan Cue Arnold

This interactive playshop invites participants into the world of Lowelyfe: Turf Wars—a choreographed battle format inspired by Hip-Hop’s “Bronx is burning” origins, where street and club dance becomes a tool for character-building and communal myth-making. Drawing from transformational stories—from the Black Spades to Zulu Nation, and the Ghetto Brothers’ Hoe Avenue Peace Treaty—participants will train for a narrative-based freestyle battle by connecting to their inner child, ancestral memory, and improvisational storytelling. Rooted in kayfabe traditions, theater, and Hip-Hop dance, the session culminates in a freestyle showdown where dancers embody original characters and battle to defend their story, deliver their soul, and claim dominion over their sacred turf.

4: 30 - 5: 30 PM

RAC 201 (workshop) Embodied Diplomacy: Choreographing Change Through Dance and Policy Brianna Forbes

This session investigates how dances along the African Diaspora operate as both an expressive art form and a dynamic framework for diplomacy and policymaking. Through a blend of dialogue and movement-based exploration, participants will consider how the language of the body can influence structures of governance, empathy, and collaboration. By drawing connections between artistic practice and civic innovation, this session invites artists, cultural leaders, and curious citizens to imagine how dances along the African Diaspora might shape new pathways for dialogue, equity, and global understanding.

*Movers from all genres are welcome. Please bring journals and writing utensils.

5: 00 - 6: 00 PM

RAC 131 (workshop) Out of the Margins: Blackness, Ballet, and More Nyama McCarthy-Brown, Stephanie Powell

This workshop features two participant-facilitators—one sharing her perspective as an African American woman from the West Coast, and the other drawing from academic, community, and oral history research. Attendees are guided through personal narratives and pivotal life moments in ballet. These stories serve as entry points to examine colorism, allyship, and agency in dance spaces.

Participants are invited to reflect on their own connections to ballet, a form historically tied to exclusivity. The session fosters dialogue around identity, access, and representation. Featuring the oral history of Stephanie Powell as presented by Nyama McCarthy-Brown in the book, *Skin Colored Pointes*, the workshop offers a space for listening, sharing, and expanding the narrative of who gets to dance.

FRIDAY EVENTS

3: 00 - 6: 00 PM

CADD SHOWCASE REHEARSALS

6: 00 - 7: 30 PM

DINNER (TENT)

7: 30 - 9: 30 PM

CADD SHOWCASE: FACILITATED BY STAFFORD BERRY

9: 30 - 12: 00 AM

AFTERPARTY ROOM 124: DJ JAMES K. GREEN III

CADD Showcase Performance & Awards Ceremony are held at the von der Heyden Studio Theater, Rubenstein Arts Center, 2020 Campus Dr, Durham, NC 2770

SATURDAY EVENTS

8:00 - 9:00 AM

BREAKFAST

9:00 - 10:00 AM

RAC 123 Film Theater (paper)

9:00 – 9:20 AM

The Hospitality of Black Dance

Noel Price-Bracey

The Hospitality of Black Dance lays bare the dichotomy of communal practices against “the vulture” capitalism. Asking what level of vulnerability or hospitality Blackness brings to the table, I look at Rennie Harris street dance choreography Beautiful Human Lies: Chapter 4 set on white contemporary dancer, Megan Bridge, as one case study among others to traverse these waters. This presentation celebrates hospitality as a foundation of community and sends modern caution to Black-Artists – All who eat at the table should not take liberty to study the recipe and sell back our food with missing ingredients.

9:40 – 10:00 AM

Fugitive/Affrilachian/Freedom Dreaming: Embodied Movement & the Archives Catron Booker

Fugitive/Affrilachian/Freedom Dreaming: Embodied Movement & the Archives is a paper presentation/film screening. The talk will present an overview of the research process for two experimental films that center embodied movement rituals as a means of linking Black histories of rebellion and resistance across various regions of the Southern United States. The films integrate Black archival practices, embodied movement and performance art. Through film I work not only to assert strategies of re-membering as Toni Morrison teaches, but also utilize the medium as a vehicle of historical continuity that projects an expansive future of a collective path forward.

SATURDAY EVENTS

9: 00 - 10: 00 A M

RAC 124 (workshop) Fix Me Jesus: Blackness, Christianity, and Dance Through the Generations
Deirdre Jonese Austin

This workshop explores how dance forms practiced by Black Christian women in the United States have changed and evolved over time. We'll reflect on their African roots, discuss the function of dance in the lives of Black Christian women today, and imagine Black Christian dance futures. We'll trace movement practices, from the ring shout to liturgical (praise and worship) dance to pole dance, as we interweave scholarly resources, oral histories, ethnography, and autoethnography. Throughout the workshop, participants will be invited to participate in an embodied meditation, move through a spiritual dance exercise, and witness a pole dance.

RAC 131 (workshop) Preserving Black Dance & Performance with The Radical Archive Project
shady Radical

This interactive workshop activates The Radical Archive Project (T.R.A.P.) as a living digital and embodied site of Black dance memory. Participants will explore how archives "phoenix" from the ruins of erasure through hands-on engagement with T.R.A.P.'s archive search tool and collaborative mapping exercises. Blending movement, digital demonstration, and community dialogue, the session invites dancers, scholars, and archivists to trace ancestral gestures, build radical infrastructures, and explore how digital and embodied practices sustain Black diasporic dance traditions across generations.

RAC 224 (workshop) Rooted to Flow Fatima Logan-Alston

Rooted to Flow is a contemporary dance experience that blends African Diaspora traditions to ground and flow with movement that elongates and aligns the body and reduces stress and tension. This experience encourages participants to connect to their breath and uses guided imagery to access sequential initiations and stability through weight release and oppositional lines of energy. In the Rooted to Flow experience, the history and heritage of the African Diaspora traditions applied are explained through the guided imagery and grounded somatically through musicality. This is a holistic rooting experience that works through aesthetic beauty to empower through Truth..

9: 00 - 10: 10 A M

RAC VDH (panel) Art, Axé and Activism on the Ilha de Itaparica, Bahia, Brazil
Katya Wesolowski, Mika Lillet Lior, Corali Francisco-Zelkane

Itaparica Island in the Bay of All Saints in Bahia, Brazil is ancestral land to Afro-Brazilians and rich in artistic and spiritual life. Home to hundreds of houses of Candomblé and numerous capoeira schools and cultural centers, the Island also suffers from inadequate infrastructure and underemployment. A controversial bridge project that would connect Bahia's capital city of Salvador across the bay to Itaparica is promoted as "progress." Yet religious and cultural leaders on the island fear it will destroy sacred lands, bifurcate communities with a superhighway, and bring increased "weekenders" and trash. This panel introduces some of the rich dance and sacred traditions on the island and the work Afro-Brazilian leaders and activists are doing to build and sustain axé (spirit force) in their communities.

SATURDAY EVENTS

RAC 202 (panel)

Ubuntu and Beyond: Burning Down Babylon to Rebuild Anew

Adanna Jones, Abdiel Jacobsen, Tawanda Chabikwa, S. Ama Wray

The panel proposes a revisiting of concepts such as ubuntu, African feminism, selfcrafting, and Cosmo-uBuntu as fertile grounds from which contemporary dance practices and pedagogical paradigms can be refigured. If the notion of phoenixing can be understood as a “rising from the ashes,” Afrikan embodied wisdom traditions are certainly the ashes from which we all rise. By considering/critiquing the impacts of the Middle Passage and colonialism, the live embers from which transformation, contemplation, and healing emerge as irrevocably tied to Afrika’s epistemologies. Our existence in a global anti-black formation demands that we seriously consider on what grounds new thought and creative praxis we stand.

10: 00 - 10: 20 AM

RAC VDH (paper)

A Black Fly Gurl (i)teration of the Ebonic Body in Motion

Enya-Kalia Jordan

This paper discusses the theory of Ebonic Bodies and how they are in motion through choreography, pedagogy, rest, and rigor. Based on a study of Black women’s movement practitioners in Brooklyn, these phoenixes dance through ruins. In line with African Diapoic traditions, they use those ruins to innovate a new form of embodiment specific to Brooklyn’s dialect of AAVE and Black womanhood. Enya-Kalia Jordan theorizes that these unique combinations of elements, and the interaction among them, create a distinct consciousness, a specific way of being in the world, and a definite knowledge system. Thus, the theory of Ebonic Body serves as a bridge between phenomenological, epistemological, and ontological frameworks from the perspective of the Black fly gurl from Brooklyn.

10: 30 - 12: 00 PM

KEYNOTE: RAQUEL MONROE PH.D. & PAWLET BROOKES MBE

12: 00 - 1: 00 PM

LUNCH

1: 00 - 2: 00 PM

AWARDS CEREMONY

2: 00 - 3: 00 PM

SATURDAY EVENTS

RAC 123 Film Theater (paper) The Waiting Room: Dancing in the Crossroads Rachel Russell

Combining dance practice, ethnography, and performance analysis, I conjured a theoretical framework named: The Waiting Room. The Waiting Room is a Black feminist geographic model for understanding the lives and dreams of dance healers who access the conceptual space through their practices of African Diasporic dance. I argue that while in the space, dance healers (living) commune and work with the other dance healers, the nonliving, and supernatural beings who also reside in the space. This session will use guided mediation, sound, and the presentation of a paper to share the framework and model of The Waiting Room.

RAC VDH (workshop) Talawa Technique- Gravity Bends Here Thomas Talawa Prestø

Through the Talawa Technique: Gravity Bends Here trains polycentric dancing—the capacity to activate multiple centers of motion simultaneously, multiplying ourselves without canceling ourselves. We cultivate polyrhythmic action that multiplies choice. PolyRhythm functions as a mobile institution never fully colonized, carried across the Atlantic and continually renewed. Through Encultured Technique, we reclaim the body as a decolonial temple and resource for rhythmic literacy, personhood, and community. Participants practice Water Walks—copyrighted bottle-balancing drills cultivating Africana proprioception, head–neck–spine organization, and spatial awareness. Participants walk away with tools to bring to their own practice and teaching and perspectives for deeper discourse.

RAC 124 (workshop) Dope Vibes and New Age Tribes: Carving A Black Space in African Diasporic Dance Afaliah Shayla Tribune, Michelle Cole

This workshop centers the cultural significance, academic value, and embodied rigor of Dances of the African Diaspora. Through movement, critical dialogue, and community exchange, participants examine how African Diasporic Dances function as archives of resistance, rhythm, and reclamation. Rising through the ruins of institutional constraints, we merge historical context with innovative pedagogy to equip educators, artists, and arts administrators with tools to teach, practice, and honor African Diasporic forms with intention and cultural alignment. Together, we reimagine dance education as a culturally responsive, inclusive practice celebrating Black creative lineage while envisioning new futures rooted in movement, community, and liberation.

RAC 201 (workshop) “Red Clay to Pavement”: The Evolution of Movement as Play Danielle Criss

“Red Clay to Pavement”: The Evolution of Movement as Play is a movement experience that centers the principles of African Diasporic life and movement as a way to reclaim our dance vernaculars as a tool of play and liberation. Participants will engage in movement derived from Africa and its descendants, and vernacular movement rooted in the liberative experiences of Southern African American life to explore how our rooted traditions can inspire our evolution. Movement will engage us in play, reflecting on how reclaiming our ancestral tools for play and liberation can benefit us in the many facets of our existence.

SATURDAY EVENTS

RAC 202 (workshop)

From Ruins to Compost: Embodying Memory and Rhizomatic Storying

Nicole Morris Johnson, Chanon Judson

Memory keeping institutions charged with determining whose pasts and insights matter for informing the futures that emerge from them have often excluded Black histories. However, practitioners of Black movement have refused this silencing in part by creating their own infrastructures for preserving Black pasts and for seeding the freedom dreaming that informs Black futures. Through an introduction of “mangrove logic” as methodology, this workshop explores how Black insights rejected by institutional archives become not ruins, but compost. This workshop will introduce and walk participants through a storying process that will center surrender, deep listening, and intuitive way-making.

RAC 224 (workshop)

L'Antech Technique

Dr. L'Antoinette Stines, OD

She is the founder and artistic director of L'Acadco: A United Caribbean Dance Force, an industry-leading [contemporary dance company](#) based in Jamaica. Stines is the creator of the first Anglo Caribbean Modern Contemporary training procedure called L'Antech. L'Antech is an eclectic Caribbean contemporary technique (CARIMOD) that synthesizes African influences, Caribbean folklore, and is dominated by Jamaican Afro-Caribbean forms.

2: 00 - 3: 10 P M

RAC 131 (panel)

Embers of Flight: Innovation and Hybridity in Black Performance

Jonathan González, Marguerite Hemmings, Tiffany Merritt-Brown

This panel gathers three dance-artists/scholars—Jonathan González, Marguerite Hemmings, and Tiffany Merritt-Brown—to engage the conference theme Black Phoenixing through choreographic and theoretical practices that move between experimentation and futurity. Each presentation explores how the question of Africanist aesthetics persist, mutate, and reconfigure in contemporary performance, asking how dance practice becomes a site for both survival and transformation. Through works spanning embodied archives, improvisational scores, and hybrid forms, the panel examines how Black performance rises from its own ashes—retaining ancestral knowledge while generating innovative vocabularies of movement, memory, and becoming.

2: 20 - 4: 00 P M

RAC 123 Film Theater (paper)

2:20 – 2:40 PM

Great Zimbabwe: Witchcraft, Selfcraft, and Black Phoenixing

TAWANDA CHABIKWA

This presentation forwards the concept of selfcraft as a vital act of Black “phoenixing”. Centering the concepts of selfcraft and the madzimbabwe peoples’ understanding of unhu (personhood), the presentation paints—through the narratives of various Afrikan-born transnational contemporary dance artists—a pluralistic picture of the exigencies of Zimbabwean chivanhu cosmology and the liberatory imperatives of self-reflexive experimental Afrikan contemporary dance as a transnational expression of blackness that is also participating in the political legacy of Afrikan self-crafting. Through acts of memory and acts of futuring while expressing transversality and navigating generative misunderstandings as they traverse the globe, these artists continue to do work that continues the liberatory and emancipatory work of selfcraft.

SATURDAY EVENTS

3:00 – 3:20 PM

Feeling Right in the Studio: Black Aliveness, Affective Pedagogy, and Dance Education at PWIs

Bianca Johnson

This paper examines how Black women navigate, survive, and regenerate joy in dance programs shaped by Western concert dance traditions and racialized pedagogies. Drawing on participant observation in contemporary technique classes at a predominantly white institution, I analyze how spatial positioning, vocality, and tempos of work structure belonging, hypervisibility, and self-suppression. Using Kemi Adeyemi's notion of "affective rights to space" alongside Kevin Quashie's concept of Black aliveness, I argue for affect-informed studio practices—slowness, rest, affinity mentorship, and reflective protocols—that support Black women's flourishing. This session reimagines the dance classroom as a site of liberation, care, and collective becoming.

3:20 – 3:40 PM

Go-Go's Global Groove: Freedom Dance in Chocolate City, Washington, D.C.

Geneva Greene

We reflect on the liberatory essence of Black dance and its role in building a global, intergenerational future via the traditions of go-go and the Chocolate City. Go-go dance movements affirm Black identity and social practices that build resilience necessary to imagine new paths. By remembering the past, seizing economic control and self-determination of Black cultural traditions, and connecting across generations, Black communities may envision a future woven into a global fabric. Go-Go as dance communication goes beyond motions of the body to connecting with historical practices of freedom. It relays African cosmology and American history through music and movement.

3:00 - 4:00 PM

RAC VDH (panel)

Phoenixing: Practice and Administration as Subversiveness

Panelists: Wanda Ebright, Elizabeth Reeves

In this panel session, join Prof. Elizabeth Reeves and Dr. Wanda Ebright as they discuss how they have persisted or Phoenixed through cycles of ruin in academia. This will include how Prof. Reeves uses authentic movement practices with theatre students to inform her current work as a professor and director, and how Dr. Ebright quietly manifests authority and persistent subversiveness in her role as an academic dean for the arts. The panel will leave time for participants to share how they persist, revitalize, and renew themselves to continue in the academy.

RAC 204 (workshop)

Waacking Towards A Solarpunk Future

j. bouey

This workshop is a re-invitation to the body through the practice of Waacking and co-imagining of a

SATURDAY EVENTS

future in harmony with nature and free of oppression. Waacking, a dance and performance practice stemming from the gay clubs of 1970s Los Angeles and in association with Punking, contains many elements of being that encourage us to embody what we imagine. A few of these elements will be introduced and explored through a co-imagined setting of a solarpunk future while embodying our imagined selves free of oppression during this workshop.

RAC 202 (workshop) Adinkra Symbols: Motif Notation as a Creative Cultural Movement Tool
Dr. Patricia Dye, Dr. Andrea K. Markus, Dr. Susan Pope, Jamie Shakur

In this dynamic 60-minute interactive workshop, participants will explore the rich meanings of Adinkra symbols through creative movement and dance. Using these powerful cultural symbols as inspiration, we will choreograph and record motif combinations that reflect the stories, values, and philosophies rooted in West African traditions. Together, we will create dances that bring the Adinkra symbols to life—discovering how they embody creativity, storytelling, and legacy. Participants will gain a deeper appreciation for how these symbols connect us to our ancestors and inspire new ways to express identity and community through movement. As dancers, choreographers, educators, scholars, and cultural workers, we will celebrate how Adinkra’s movement language affirms who we are and strengthens our connection to the Afro-Diasporic legacy. This workshop invites all to move, reflect, and share stories that continue to shape the evolving landscape of Black dance and dance education.

RAC 202 (workshop) The Bámbula Effect: Embodying the Circle as Ancestral Technology
Celia Benvenuti

The one-hour workshop, The Bámbula Effect: Embodying the Circle as Ancestral Technology, explores circular movement as an ancestral, pluriversal practice rooted in African cosmology. Drawing from the Kôngo cosmogram and Afro-diasporic orisha dances within Cuban Santería and Brazilian Candomblé, participants engage in embodied exercises that connect physical, spiritual, and ancestral realms. Through guided circular movement, rhythmic improvisation, and reflective writing, the workshop examines how these practices preserve collective memory and activate cosmologic energy. Participants experience the body as an archive of transformation, linking dance, spirituality, and African epistemologies from the Caribbean to Brazil through the sacred geometry of the circle.

4: 40 PM

4: 00 -

RAC 123 Film Theater (paper)

4:00 – 4:20 PM

Refusal in Practice: Centering African Diaspora Dances Michelle Cole

This session will analyze how higher education structures impact Black dance educators’ teaching of African diaspora dance forms. Through critical literature review and lived experiences, the paper will illuminate systemic challenges such as course marginalization, epistemic exclusion, and budgetary constraints. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how these structural barriers manifest, rooted in the ruins of white supremacy, and how practicing refusal can be a site of emerging from these ruins. Beyond Limits will prompt reflection on how dance spaces—both physical and curricular—can be reimagined to center African diasporic movement practices and ancestral knowledges, without conforming to Eurocentric standards.

4:20 – 4:40 PM

visiting and incorporating social choreographies for survival

SATURDAY EVENTS

Jacqueline Bennett

This session will explore the ways that African Americans have utilized various social choreographies to survive difficult moments and ways that this information can be used in the present and in the creation of dance. I will explore ways that various techniques such as secret gatherings, intentional storytelling, and creating spaces of belonging for each other. I will explore ways that this information and knowledge can create spaces of healing and liberation even within performance.

4: 00 - 5: 00 P M

RAC VDH (workshop) Dances of the Orixá: Through Ash and Ancestry

Tamara Şàngóbámikę Williams

Dances of the Orixá: Through Ash and Ancestry is a dance workshop that honors the strength, beauty, and resilience carried through our ancestral lineages. Grounded in African-Brazilian traditions of the Orixás, participants will explore movement from northeastern Brazil rooted in Yoruba, Angola, Nago, and Fon practices. These dances connect us to the natural elements of earth, water, air, and fire, while reminding us of the power that lives within our bodies and communities. We will tap into the Spirit of dance and how it can serve as both prayer and resistance.

RAC 124 (workshop)

Rhythm Shuffle (Tap Dance)

Gerson Lanza

This technique workshop offers an embodied introduction to tap dance as a percussive Black vernacular form. Participants will explore the body as a rhythmic instrument through movement, sound, and improvisation. Rooted in the African diasporic continuum of rhythm and resistance, this session connects historical context with contemporary practice to deepen participants' understanding of tap's cultural significance. Through guided physical exercises, rhythmic drills, and short phrasework, participants will engage in developing musicality, coordination, and groove. Integrated discussion, video excerpts, and reflective prompts will invite critical thought on lineage, innovation, and the social function of tap within Black dance traditions.

RAC 131 (workshop)

Aging, Injuries, and Menopause, Oh My!: Dancing and Teaching African Diaspora Dance While Life is Lifting **Sheila A. Ward**

Aging starts from the moment of conception and continues throughout the lifespan. This interactive presentation, specifically focused on African Diaspora Dance forms and Black dancing bodies, is designed to help us safely teach, take class, and/or perform as we age. This also creates safe, supported, and inclusive environments. Presentation discussions will include anatomical, orthopedic, and neural factors, pregnancy and menopause, core stability, joint precautions, and common alignment issues, and suggested strengthening and conditioning activities. We need to know how our beautiful Black bodies are put together and work so we can take care of them and dance for a lifetime.

RAC 201(workshop)

The Circle Must Not Be Broken: Spirituality, and Communal Growth in African Diasporic Dance Forms **Gloria Ahlijah**

Preserving and innovating African and African diasporic dance traditions are essential for cultural continuity and empowerment. Rooted in ancestral heritage, these dances have historically shaped African identity and served as tools of resilience and communal solidarity. The workshop culminates in the purification ritual I refer to it as ntik)kl) (purification). This ritual not only reinforces the sacred dimension of dance but also encourages participants to carry forward its transformative power into their communities and professional spaces. By merging scholarship and practice, this workshop affirms how African and African diasporic dance is a profound cultural system that sustains identity, nurtures resilience, and inspires future generations.

SATURDAY EVENTS

RAC 202 (workshop) Recessology: Citing the Technology of Black Girl Play In and Out of the Cypher
Aysha Upchurch

Can we get serious about play for a minute? A large part of Hip Hop's magnetism is due to its invitation to play in-between and beyond prescribed norms. Moreover, the contributions of Black girl's embodied genius has been the backbone of Hip Hop dance and popular cultural embodied expressions. In this lecture-workshop, Aysha Upchurch will share her research and practice centering Black girl dance and movement games in her instructional role and how she is hoping to expand how we cite Black women and girls' contributions to Hip Hop dance history.

RAC 201 (workshop) Embodying the Korejuga: Ancestral Wisdom and Protection Phoenixing through the Mask
Montë Murphy, Lenny Amoo

The Korejuga, or "Dance of the Joker," embodies rebirth, protection, and ancestral wisdom through masquerade. Rooted in the Bamana traditions of Mali and Senegambia, this dance bridges spiritual and physical realms while transforming satire into sacred guidance. Participants will explore Korejuga movement, rhythm, and ritual as acts of resilience—rising through ruins to reclaim joy and liberation. This workshop honors the masked dancer as living archive, revealing how ancestral embodiment "phoenixes" through us today—reminding that from ashes, Black dance continually reclaims its purpose, spirit, and power to renew community.

5: 00 - 6: 30 PM DINNER(TENT)

7: 00 PM DOORS OPEN FOR NATIONAL DANCE THEATRE COMPANY OF JAMAICA PERFORMANCE

7: 30 PM NATIONAL DANCE THEATRE COMPANY OF JAMAICA PERFORMANCE

Performance is at Reynolds Industries Theatre, Bryan University Center, 125 Science Dr, Durham, NC 27708.
Take the Duke University shuttle to the Theatre which meet in front of the Ruby.

SUNDAY EVENTS

8: 00 - 9: 00 A M

BREAKFAST

9: 00 - 10: 00 A M

RAC 124 (workshop)

Afrodance is the dance, Afrobeats is the music

Ishmael Konney

This session explores the dynamic evolution of Afrodance as a street/popular style of dance in Africa. We will explore movements from Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Congo and Ivory Coast as the leading creators of Afrodance. The session will emphasize the communal experience Afrodance fosters, particularly through the learning and performance of group phrases, showcasing its power to unite and energize communities.

RAC 131 (workshop)

Integrating the Healing Arts into African Diasporic Dance: Movement as Restoration and Rebirth

Elvie Schooley, Heather Mitchell

This workshop explores how healing arts practices such as breathwork, mindfulness, sound healing, and somatic awareness can be woven into African diasporic dance classes to deepen embodiment, emotional intelligence, and communal care. Rooted in Africanist aesthetics of rhythm, repetition, groundedness, and call-and-response, participants will experience dance as a holistic language of restoration. Through guided movement, reflective dialogue, and rhythmic connection, participants will engage the body as an archive and instrument of liberation. This session invites educators, dancers, and community leaders to reimagine African diasporic dance not only as performance or pedagogy but as a healing technology that nurtures balance, cultural memory, and collective transformation.

RAC 201 (workshop)

Movements Toward Life

Aleta Brown, Fana Fraser

With the belief that when we gather, we all have something to offer and are offered something that we need, Movements Toward Life invites participants to celebrate living through this exchange of everyday embodiments of survival. What types of fugitive, life-affirming possibilities emerge when we move together, toward life? In this workshop, we will “body forth” (Berry, 2024, p. 59) ancestral lineages and contemporary technologies of survival. By acknowledging that we have all, in varying contexts, danced “Through the Ruins”, we invite participants to explore movements that sustain them and witness movements that sustain others.

RAC 202 (workshop)

Movement of the Defiance: Martial Retentions in African Diaspora Dance

Thomas Talawa Prestø

“Movement of the Defiance” examines martial retentions embedded within African diaspora dance traditions. Across the Americas and the Caribbean, stomps, spirals, grounded stances, percussive gestures, and circular formations carry tactical logics shaped by histories of combat, defense, and collective protection. This session investigates how identical movement phrases shift meaning depending on context—ritual, protest, social gathering, or combat—rather than changes in rhythm or technique. Through embodied exploration, participants will analyze how diasporic dance preserves strategic intelligence while appearing celebratory. The workshop positions Black movement as archive: encoding vigilance, coordination, and insurgent survival within aesthetic form.

SUNDAY EVENTS

9: 00 - 10: 00 A M

RAC 224 (workshop) Dreaming Otherwise: Black Radical Imagination as Artistic Practice
Eboné Amoson

This workshop guides participants through embodied exploration of the Black Radical Imagination as choreographic practice and survival technology. Inspired by Robin D.G. Kelley's "Freedom Dreams" and Tricia Hersey's "Rest is Resistance," participants engage a four-part framework derived from radical practice itself (rest, dream, write, share, move, organize, test, fail, reflect, revise, repeat). Through meditation, writing, improvisation, and collective sharing, participants experience how ancestors dreamed freedom into existence and how we build futures amid institutional collapse. We practice "Black Phoenixing": rising from ancestral foundations to construct what does not yet exist. Participants leave with replicable tools for using embodied practice to sustain hope—dancing not just through ruins, but building beyond them.

10: 00 - 10: 50 A M

RAC VDH Black Phoenixing: Living the Legacy Interview & Q + A with The National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica
Marlon D. Simms and Dr. Andrea E. Woods Valdés

9: 00 - 11: 20 A M

RAC 123 Film Theater

9: 00 – 10: 10 AM (panel) Spatial Dance Methods: Recentering and reprogramming Black Design proverbs through embodied practice

Tanniqua-Kay Buchanan, Rhianna Cranston, Angel Anderson

This project explores a layered approach for remembering, unmaking, and remapping the black dancing body methods. Through Spatial Dance Methods, it recenters Black design proverbs to unearth ancestral movement knowledge and reveal how bodies, landscapes, and infrastructures shape one another. Guided by choreographic scores, the work creates intuitive cartographies that reclaim space through Black spatial intuition and ritual. Black communal dance becomes revitalizing infrastructure, a laboratory for new social systems that resist violence and erasure. Here, place becomes performance, body becomes archive, movement becomes prophecy, and Black dance emerges as hybridity within a planning tool, geospatial technology, and world-making practice.

10: 10 – 10: 30 AM (paper) Viper Genealogies: Mercedes Baptista and black diasporic representation in the 1970s New York

Erika Villeroy da Costa

Between the 1950s and 1970s, Afro-Brazilian choreographer Mercedes Baptista and her company marked a shift in the staging of Black sacred and social dances in Brazil. Through archival research and oral histories this paper centers the records and stories of Balé Folclórico's company members, attending to the limits of repair and the relation between hypervisibility and erasure of Black female artists. By interrogating lone person narratives within the context of collective memory work, it investigates how fragmentary records can be reinterpreted by working through absence as a resource in archival practice, tracing innovative approaches for interpreting shared histories in dance studies.

SUNDAY EVENTS

**10: 30 – 10: 50 AM (paper) Unconcealing the Cosmic Dark: Sage Ni’Ja Whitson’s TRANSTRATERRESTRIAL
Jisun Kim**

My presentation examines how Sage Ni’ja Whitson’s performance TRANSTRATERRESTRIAL manifests “Black Queer and Transembodied” aesthetics by exploring the idea of the “unconcealment” of the “cosmic dark.” The piece takes place in a dorm completely shrouded in darkness, where Whitson utilizes VR technology to manifest the unconcealing of darkness through their dance, as streams of light are drawn on the ceiling of the dorm following their movements. The performative aesthetics of the piece illustrate how darkness allows light to be seen—light becomes visible only when darkness unconceals it—subverting the hierarchical dichotomy between light and darkness.

10: 00 - 11: 00 AM

**RAC 124 (workshop) Breaking the System: Foundations of Breaking Technique
Jose Velasquez**

Breaking the System is a 60-minute technique workshop that digs into breaking as both movement and message. This session takes participants through the core elements of the form — top rock, footwork, transitions, freezes, and flow — while uncovering how each one carries the story of rhythm, survival, and freedom. We’ll train the body, but we’ll also train the ear and the spirit. Using groove drills, freestyle exercises, and cypher interaction, dancers will experience what it means to communicate through rhythm rather than choreography. The focus isn’t on tricks or showing off. It’s about control, presence, and understanding the culture that made the dance possible. This workshop is for anyone ready to learn how breaking became a system of movement built out of struggle, style, and self-definition.

**RAC 131 (workshop) Embodied Practices of Resistance and Reimagination in the African Diaspora
Careitha Davis**

This workshop extends the research presentation into an embodied exploration of decolonizing methodologies in dance-making. Participants will engage in guided movement practices, critical discussion, and collaborative choreographic tasks that center African diasporic and Indigenous aesthetics as frameworks for resistance, reclamation, and reimagination. Through movement, reflection, and dialogue, the workshop will invite participants to interrogate their own stance within colonial systems of performance and to imagine alternative ways of creating and sharing dance knowledge.

**RAC 201 (workshop) Realizing Immortality Through the Mystery of Bellydance
Kayla Anderson**

Bellydance itself is an ancient artform of dance with its' earliest documentation being found in the temples of Ancient Egypt (Kemet). This workshop honors the African roots of bellydance while demonstrating its' cross cultural application. It is an invitation to re-activate the ancestral memory embedded within our wombs and ignite healing of our bodies, bloodlines, and communities. Bellydance has always been a sacred practice for us, by us to aid in our personal realization of immortality and wholeness. Join me as we return to our true divine nature and uplift our minds, bodies, spirits, and communities through the mystery of bellydance.

SUNDAY EVENTS

RAC 202 (workshop) Joy in Motion: Composing Identity and Belonging Through Black Social Dance
Shaela Davis

This movement “party” celebrates Black social dance as a site of embodied identity, lineage, and collective memory. Together, we will share our favorite social dances and the stories that move through them—tracing how our individual and collective identities show up in motion. Through exchange, reflection, and play, we will uncover intersections across our cultural legacies and explore how Black social dance continues to shape community and belonging. How will you show up to the party?

RAC 224 (workshop) Moving With Memory: A Path Towards Tomorrow
Joya Powell, Tyrone Bevans

In this session participants will explore the thematic and embodied curiosities of Movement of the People Dance Company’s latest work-in-progress “for <—> from.” The choreography delves into the recognition of our vulnerability, and a surrender into morphing transformations. A visceral multilived experience grounded in lessons of resilience our ancestors echo into our individual and collective journeys. Grounded in the notion that our benevolent ancestors have passed down tools to help us get to tomorrow, and uplifting communal practices of song, dance, and storytelling. We will harvest these seeds to create a collective movement recipe towards hope.

11: 00 - 12: 15 PM

RAC VDH CADD – SLIPPAGE – MELLON project, Dancing a Black Social Geographies of Freedom Project
Overview
Dancing Away from Colonial Time: Black Queer Social Refusal From the Rubble Up
Thomas F. DeFrantz
Shireen Dickson Webster B. McDonald, Thomas F. DeFrantz, Shireen Dickson

10: 00 - 12: 00 PM

RAC 124 (workshop) The Art of Play: Reclaiming Joy, Freedom, and Imagination in Black Dance Practice
Camille Weanquoi

This embodied workshop explores play as a radical act of freedom and creative intelligence within Black dance traditions. Participants will move, imagine, and reflect through guided improvisation, rhythm games, and collective storytelling that center curiosity, laughter, and ancestral joy. Drawing from my methodology, the Deep Root Framework, the session reframes play as a tool for remembering—remembering how to feel, trust, and connect to the spirit of creation. By blending movement ritual, community dialogue, and reflection, The Art of Play invites participants to rediscover joy as a serious and sacred practice for sustaining the Black creative body.

RAC 131 (workshop) Delicate Territory - Discovering Ancestral Memory Through Movement
Alexandra Joye Warren

This embodied workshop explores play as a radical act of freedom and creative intelligence within Black dance traditions. Participants will move, imagine, and reflect through guided improvisation, rhythm games, and collective storytelling that center curiosity, laughter, and ancestral joy. Drawing from my methodology, the Deep Root Framework, the session reframes play as a tool for remembering—remembering how to feel, trust, and connect to the spirit of creation. By blending movement ritual, community dialogue, and reflection, The Art of Play invites participants to rediscover joy as a serious and sacred practice for sustaining the Black creative body.

SUNDAY EVENTS

RAC 202 (workshop)

Thick Like Me...Embracing Our Curves

Alesondra Christmas Stapleton, Davianna Griffin, MFA, Jazelynn Goudy, MFA

This workshop problematizes the assumed connection between health and body size, advocating for an embrace of body liberation. By leaning into the eight dimensions of wellness and analyzing contemporary counter-narratives of thick Black women dancers, we use movement as a liberatory practice. Through critical reflection on body narratives, Black feminist-rooted reflexivity, and inclusive movement practices, we co-create strategies to expand how Black women's bodies are seen and valued in dance. We interrogate how anti-fat bias in dance reflects broader systemic oppressions that have long attempted to erase the multiplicity of Black embodiment, allowing us to rise in defiance and affirmation.

RAC 224 (workshop)

The National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica Class

The National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica Company Members

12:15-12:30 PM

CADD PHOTO (VDH)

12:30 - 1:30 PM

LUNCH

BIOGRAPHIES

Enid Marie Acevedo Colón is a Puerto Rican artist, scholar, and organizer based in New York City. She is a December 2025 M.A. candidate in Arts Politics at NYU Tisch School of the Arts and holds a B.F.A. in Drama and Politics from the same institution. Her interdisciplinary practice bridges performance, research, and organizing, examining how performance, electoral politics, and civic engagement intersect to shape public imagination and social transformation. Her current projects include *De la Costa*, a documentary on coastal displacement and resilience in Puerto Rico, and research exploring creative strategies for political participation and collective storytelling. She has collaborated with Pregones/PRTT, North Star Projects, ShetArts, and the Verbatim Performance Lab, presenting work in Puerto Rico, Uganda, and New York.

Sitso (Gloria Ahlijah) is an Assistant Professor of African Contemporary Forms of the African Diaspora at the University of Iowa, Department of Dance. She holds a Master of Fine Arts in Dance from the University of Michigan. Her research centers African Contemporary Dance within the African diaspora, focusing on preserving traditional African dance forms while positioning African Contemporary dance as a global concert practice. She is extensively trained in West African traditional dance, African Contemporary Dance, and Afrobeat. Her choreographic work explores themes of cultural continuity and identity, amplifying individual narratives through dynamic storytelling.

Oluyinka Akinjiola is a Nigerian-American dancer, choreographer, Assistant Professor of Dance, and founder of Rejoice! Diaspora Dance Theater. She holds academic credentials as outlined in the document and leads a platform dedicated to Black contemporary dance rooted in African and African Diasporic movement vernaculars. Her choreographic works—including *UPRISE*, *A Midsummer Night at the Savoy*, *Been Ready*, *ICONS*, *Alegria*, and *Ibukin/The Celebration*—blend tradition, complex rhythms, and futurist imagination. Her work has been featured at the International Association of Blacks in Dance, *Carnaval* (Salvador, Brazil), *TEDxMtHood*, and *Newmark Theater*. She is a recipient of the Oregon Dance Education Organization's Teacher of the Year Award (2020) and a two-time National Endowment for the Arts awardee for research and production of *Griot* (2025).

Dr. Adesola Akinleye is a choreographer, artist-scholar, and place-maker, and serves as Co-Artistic Director of DancingStrong Movement Lab and Associate Professor and PhD in Dance Program Director at Texas Woman's University. She holds a PhD in Dance and works at the intersection of Afro-Indigenous worldviews, somatic practice, and urban ecology. Her interdisciplinary practice spans choreography, community-engaged arts, and research across dance, architecture, design, and extended-reality technologies. She is the author of *Dance, Architecture and Engineering* and co-author of the forthcoming *Dancing Place: Scores of the City, Scores of the Shore*. Her work foregrounds co-creation, relational knowledge systems, and art as community care.

Ajara Alghali is the Director of the TéMaTé Institute for Black Dance and Culture. She holds a background in Cultural Planning and performance. Her work centers cultural preservation, equity, and community development, bridging traditional arts and advocacy. She leads initiatives that promote inclusivity and visibility in cultural spaces while advancing sustainable models for heritage retention.

David Alston is a musician, composer, and educator, accomplished in world and classical percussion. A native of Durham, North Carolina, David began his musical journey studying Percussion and Cello at Durham School of the Arts and North Carolina Central University. David has toured with The African American Dance Ensemble and Urban Bush Women and has been a musician for many companies including Ballet Hispanico and The Ailey School. He has traveled to Hong Kong/Macau China, Tokyo, Japan, and Toronto, Canada, and has performed at Lincoln Center Outdoors. David has been a teaching artist with Bronx Children's Museum, Ethical Culture Fieldston, and has received awards for his original compositions.

Lenny Asharku Amoo (Drummer) is a Ghanaian dancer, drummer, performer and a dance-drum instructor. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A) and a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) from the University of Ghana, Legon, in Accra-Ghana; graduating in 2011 and 2017 respectively. He is well vested in teaching indigenous traditional dance and drumming forms amongst the diverse ethnicities of his country. Currently, he is a Ph.D. student at the Department of Dance Studies of the Ohio State University with a focal research interest in Unearthing the Relationality between Indigenous Ghanaian Dance and Drumming for purposes of Enhanced Pedagogy. In this research, he aims to apply existent audio-visual, kinesthetic and technological modules for dance curricular development specifically for pedagogy.

Eboné Camille Amos is a choreographer, performer, and Associate Professor of African American Studies in the Theatre and Dance Department at Austin Peay State University. She holds an MFA in Performance and Choreography from Florida State University and is a 2022 Tennessee Arts Commission Individual Artist Fellowship recipient in Dance: Choreography. Her interdisciplinary work bridges dance technique, African American history and culture, and contemporary performance. Her recent projects include *cabins in the kky*, *Girl*, *Gurrl*, *GWORL: iterations of freedom, and piece/peace*, which premiered at the 2024 Kindling Arts Festival. Her work has been presented nationally and internationally, including at the COCO Festival (Trinidad), Frist Museum (Nashville), and Rhythmically Speaking Dance (Minneapolis).

Angel Anderson is a black female-identifying movement artist, daughter, and aspiring archivist hailing from the south suburbs of Chicago. Her movement archive encompasses street and club dance forms alongside contemporary Africanist expressions, with her work containing intersectionalities of poetry, fashion, and Black-American methods of storytelling. A principal dancer in Rennie Harris' Puremovement, Anderson has assisted Harris in setting works on Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, students at The Juilliard School, and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. Her debut work, *Our Mama's Mamas: A Remembrance of*, has been presented at the American College Dance Association conference where it was further selected for the gala and named an alternate for the National Festival taking place this May in D.C. Anderson is currently a second-year MFA candidate at the University of Colorado and a 2025-2026 CAAAS Fellow, where she is investigating the functions of black hair, matrilineality, and delving into archival work for the preservation of our matriarchs.

Kayla R. Anderson is the founder of ViKTorious Mama, a maternal wellness organization dedicated to helping mothers reclaim their power and peace through holistic practices. She holds a BA in Psychology from Hampton University, a Master's in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Maryland, College Park, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Women's Spirituality at the California Institute of Integral Studies. She is a Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT 200), Registered Prenatal Yoga Teacher (RPYT 200), Certified Sound Healer, Certified Bellydance Fitness Instructor, Yoni Steam Practitioner, and Pre/Postnatal Doula. Her work integrates psychology, birth work, and spiritual wellness to make healing practices accessible within her community.

Tracy Armah is an MFA candidate in Modern Dance at the University of Utah and a practitioner-scholar specializing in Ghanaian traditional and contemporary dance fusion. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Performing Arts with a focus on Dance Studies from the University of Ghana. Born and raised in Ghana, she has performed, taught, and choreographed Adowa, Kpanlogo, Bamaya, and other Ghanaian traditional forms, translating embodied lineage into contemporary pedagogy. She has taught across Ghana, Northern Ireland, and the United States. Her teaching centers rhythmic integrity, cultural lineage, and creative transformation.

Quilan "Cue" Arnold is a movement artist, educator, and founder of The onCUE Company based in Union City, NJ. He holds an MFA and creates kinetic storytelling systems rooted in Afro-diasporic and Biblical narratives, including *Lowelyfe*, *Club KINGDOM*, and *Searching for a True Move*. He has performed with The Metropolitan Opera, Rennie Harris Puremovement, and Camille A. Brown & Dancers. A 2023–25 CUNY Dance Initiative Artist and former Ailey New Directions Lab resident, he teaches at Rutgers University and UT Austin. His work centers spiritual liberation, ancestral mythology, and community reclamation.

Deirdre Jonese Austin is a writer, womanist minister, and Black feminist anthropologist. She is currently a PhD candidate in Cultural Anthropology at Duke University, pursuing certificates in Feminist Studies and African and African American Studies. Her research examines how Black women liturgical dancers and pole dancers in the U.S. South cultivate sacred relationships with their bodies, the divine, and one another. Drawing on over twenty years in dance ministry and advanced pole dance practice, her work blends ethnography and autoethnography at the intersections of religion, race, gender, and sexuality.

Jacqueline Bennett is a clinical social worker and dance artist. She holds an MFA in Dance from Hollins University and an MSW from UNC Chapel Hill. She has presented choreographic works including *Creating Space* and *Uprooted* and has performed with North Carolina-based choreographers. Her practice integrates dance and social work as mutually informing disciplines.

Celia Benvenuto is an Afro-Puerto Rican dance artist, Howard University alumna, and certified Dunham Technique teacher from Detroit. She holds a BFA from Howard University and is currently an MFA candidate in Dance at The Ohio State University. A former principal dancer with Taurus Broadhurst Dance, she received the 2020 Gilda Snowden Emerging Artist Award. Her research examines circular symbology in non-secular ritual dances from Cuba to Brazil, with a focus on Orisha dances. She has taught at Wayne State University and performed internationally.

Tyrone Bevans (he/him) is dancer, choreographer, Illustrator and printmaker. He is currently dancing for The Fabulous Waack Dancers and Joya Powell's Movement of the People. In the past Tyrone has performed and collaborated with artists such as Christal Brown, Chafin Seymour, Maya Orchin, Vessels, FunkanometryNY, and Karla Garcia. As a mover Tyrone investigates space, risk, and play with one's physical vernacular in order to access personal freedom.

Catron Booker is a filmmaker and theatre artist and currently serves as Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts at the University of Louisville. Her interdisciplinary practice bridges film and performance, centering narrative and embodied storytelling.

j. bouey is a Bessie Award-winning performer, interdisciplinary artist, and founder of The Dance Union Podcast. They are a recipient of the 2023 Bessie Award for Outstanding Performer and have served on the DanceNYC Taskforce and DanceUSA Board. j. currently serves as Assistant Director, Lighting Director, and Research Assistant for Flow State under Professor LaTasha Barnes. They have performed with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company, nia love's UNDERcurrents, The Fabulous Waack Dancers, and other notable companies. Their work centers collective action, advocacy, and the liberatory philosophies of street and club dance communities.

Aleta Brown (they/he/she) is a movement-based artist, educator, and researcher. They explore lineages of embodied knowledge, healing, and imagination. Drawing guidance from queer & trans theory, Indigenous methodologies, and Black feminist theory, Brown considers the formal and informal ways we use our bodies to store and transmit our stories about living. They have performed at the Bronx Academy of Art and Dance, Court Square Theater, BronxArtSpace, Dixon Place, and Greenspace. Aleta has also produced shows at Lincoln Center, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cathedral St. John the Divine, and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Beyond the stage, Aleta's work as an educator and researcher includes presentations at Stanford University, Women United Against Genocide, the NYC Department of Education, and ongoing publications and research as a Ph.D. student at UNC-Chapel Hill. Brown holds a M.S. in TESOL, an M.A. in Arts Entrepreneurship, and a B.A. from Hamilton College. aletabrown.org

Liv Bryant is an interdisciplinary artist from Atlanta, Georgia. Liv holds a B.A. in Dance and French from Kennesaw State University. Before graduate school, she was a company member with ImmerseATL, staib dance, and Via Uni while managing CARC, a center for BIPOC students at KSU, where she intertwined arts and social justice education. Liv also worked with artists including Andrea Knowlton, Charles O. Anderson, James Graham, Melecio Estrella, Ronald K. Brown, and Sean Nguyen-Hilton. She presented work at the American College Dance Association, Fulton County Arts Week, the High Museum of Art's Dance Lab, Opine Dance Student Film Festival, Radnocular, with Fly on a Wall, and the KSU Dance Company. Her work explores intersections of her identity rooted in layers of liberation through healing—balancing grief, joy, and self-discovery. Liv is currently an MFA candidate at The Ohio State University, where her research explores futurity, memory, recipe, and technology.

Tanniqua-Kay Buchanan, MUPP (She/Her) is a First Generation Jamaican-American dancer, choreographer, maker, and urban planner/Urbanist whose work bridges art, movement, and spatial practices. Her practice explores how social movements shape cities, how dancers interact with space, and how dance and design share a language of rhythm, form, and place.

She holds a BS in Theater (Dance focus) with a minor in Community Planning from Kansas State University and a Master's in Urban Planning and Policy from the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she developed Movement and Urban Form, an improvisational dance/design technique. Through her work, Tanniqua-Kay seeks to inspire collective introspection, inviting people to shed layers of socially ascribed identity, participate in the deep listening, and return home: to their culture, to their body, and to themselves. Her life's work is to focus on movement informed performance-based planning that examines & affirms Black landscapes.

She is currently a Community Streets Program Administrator for the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure and pursuing an MFA in Dance at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Laura Casteel is an Emmy-nominated "shreditor" (video shooter/producer/editor) based in Durham, North Carolina. She primarily makes videos for the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, but also works freelance, and is a former Associate Producer for the PBS station UNC-TV. Her crowdfunding videos have contributed to successful

campaigns on Kickstarter and Barnraiser, and her work with musicians has been featured in The Root, American Songwriter, NPR Live Sessions, and Rolling Stone. Laura's approach to storytelling is not just about telling, but "serving the story"—the story should dictate all aesthetic decisions and production methods. This results in authentic, emotionally resonant content that honors the subject's integrity and elevates their voice. Her philosophy pulls from her training in both film studies and creative writing, which taught the importance of drawing a reader, or viewer, into a scene and keeping them there.

Tawanda Chabikwa is an interdisciplinary artist-scholar whose work revolves around Black Africana dance practices, artificial intelligence, African conceptual systems, practice-based research, and creative collaboration. His work seeks to facilitate contemplation, transformation, and healing at the individual, communal, and historical-political levels by re-centering Afrikan cosmologies and indigenous ways of knowing, and advocating for the understanding of art-making as research methodology. Tawanda investigates concepts of personhood, rituals of selfcraft, and the possibilities of an ethical AI in the global embodiments of Africa-rooted knowing systems. Current research and creative practice engages with African Philosophy, embodied research methodologies, Black Performance Theory, Critical Race and Ethnicity Studies, Artificial Intelligence in Africa, and theories of the body.

Michelle Cole (she/her) is an educator, choreographer, dancer, scholar, and mother. She is a second-year PhD student in Critical Dance Studies at UC Riverside and a second-year Gluck Fellow. Michelle holds a Master's degree in Dance Education from New York University, Steinhardt and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Florida International University's Honors College. She is the owner and managing director of Dance Culture LLC—a NYC-based dance education and professional development company. From 2015 to 2024, Michelle was adjunct faculty at NYU, where she taught Afro-Caribbean dance, Anthropology of Dance, and Hip-Hop Dance & Culture. She co-developed and co-advised NYU Steinhardt's Master's concentration in Teaching Dances of the African Diaspora. As a choreographer and performer, Michelle has presented and performed both nationally and internationally. She is interested in researching ways to decolonize the dance education space, revolutionize pedagogy, and both center and honor practices within dances of the African Diaspora.

shani collins (SNIC) is crowned "Contemporary Revolutionary" by Thomas Lax in The Studio Museum Harlem Summer Magazine and featured in Dance Magazine as "Warrior Woman" by Eva Yaa Assentawa who says: "It's a sure bet that when she takes the stage, she will deliver not only the movement but the core, the bedrock, the very meaning and spirit of a dance." A recipient of a "Bessie" New York Dance and Performance Award, her company, SNIC eternalworks DANCE fosters women's healing em(power)ment through performance, artist residencies, and intercultural engagement. Phakiso Collins and Shani Collins (sisters) co-founded Africa Embodied www.africaembodied.com. They offer cultural immersion dance intensive programs and multi-sensory freedom retreats to Ghana. SNIC's work has been commissioned throughout the US and abroad at Performatica' Dance Festival (Cholula, Mexico), Kaay Fecc Dance Festival (Dakar, Senegal), with special teaching / performance workshops in Seoul, Korea, Dakar, Senegal, and throughout Ghana.

Dr. RAS Mikey Courtney is an Emmy awarded cultural conduit using edutainment to spread universal understanding to global communities. Dr. RAS is co-founder and CEO of Fore I'm a Versatile Entertainer (F.I.V.E.) LLC. He holds a B.F.A. in Dance from UARTS Philadelphia, an MA in Ethnochoreology and a PhD in Arts Practice Research from the University of Limerick in Ireland. His research and doctoral thesis, entitled Bridging Horizons: Embodied Cultural Understanding through the Development and Presentation of Ethio-Modern Dance, explores 'movement as cultural knowledge' and artistic practice as a main methodology of his investigation. Some recent productions Thin Line Project (USA 2023) Common Threads (Ethiopia 2016) and YeBuna Alem/A Coffee World (Ireland 2015). Dr. RAS is currently an Assistant Professor of Dance at Wayne State University and as a part-time faculty advisor for the MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts at Goddard College. 'Movement is life and I am a Lifist...'

Antoinette M. Coward-Gilmore is a Philadelphia native, artistically raised by New Freedom Theatre/Patricia Scott Hobbs & Master Horton Teacher, Faye B. Snow, the Founder, CEO and Artistic Director of performing arts organization/professional dance company DANSE4NIA/ Phoenix Dance. A doctoral candidate pursuing her PhD in Dance Philosophy, Antoinette holds a BFA and MA in Dance Education and Performance. Antoinette benefited from opportunities from the training/2nd company of Philadanco, LEJA Dance Theatre, as founding company member of Eleone Dance Theatre, artist in New Freedom Repertory Theatre, toured with Forces of Nature Dance Theater Company, guest artist with Rod Rodgers Dance Company, Ballethnic's Leopard Tales, Melissa Vaughn's Shaka Zula and on-screen appearances in independent films, commercials and motion pictures. As adjunct dance faculty at Drexel, Antoinette is a life member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Actor's Equity, DSA, IABD, CADD, and she serves as a board member of the Pennsylvania Dance Educators Organization (PaDEO)."

Dani Criss, The Artist; a multidisciplinary artist, cultural arts educator, and community organizer hailing from Durham, North Carolina, now based in Brooklyn, NY. Living and uplifting the principles of the African Diaspora; inspiring an appreciation, acceptance, and historical experience in each interaction. Channeling movement and knowledge as the source to obtain liberation while discovering ancestral connections within the liberative practices. A cultural arts educator in multigenerational communities in New York, NY and surrounding areas including NYC Public Schools, Nassau Community College, Urban Bush Women-BOLD, Mark Morris Dance Center, and several arts organizations around the city. The current director of the Africana Performance Ensemble at Nassau Community College and the coordinator for the annual New York City Arts in Education Roundtable's Black Women's Wellness Retreat. Check out www.danicrisstheartist.com for more information.

Rhianna Cranston is an interdisciplinary artist and educator based in Denver. She holds a BFA in dance from the University of Kansas and is pursuing a master's in dance with a secondary emphasis in sound engineering at CU Boulder. Trained in a wide range of movement practices, she has danced professionally with Cleo Parker Robinson Dance (Cleo II), Davis Contemporary Dance, and the Boulder Jazz Dance Collective. As a biracial Black woman raised in Kansas, Cranston's identity deeply informs her artistry. Existing as an "in-between"—a blend of cultures, disciplines and histories—she explores hybridity to expand the definition of "contemporary" through embodied and interdisciplinary practices. Exchanging knowledge is central to Cranston's practice. Certified through the Wolf Trap Institute and the National Dance Institute, she teaches across Kansas and Colorado, offering instruction, mentorship, choreography and teacher training.

Joshua Culbreath is a choreographer, educator, and cultural ambassador specializing in hip-hop and street dance. A former Assistant Artistic Director of Rennie Harris Puremovement and co-founder of Snack Break Movement Arts, he has performed and taught internationally, including as a U.S. Hip Hop cultural envoy to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Named one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" in 2018, Culbreath holds an MFA in Dance from the University of Iowa, where his research explored hip-hop as an embodied archive and tool for community transformation. His work bridges choreography, pedagogy, and social justice, centering embodied storytelling, racial memory, and improvisation as critical methodologies. With deep roots in Breakin', House, and Hip Hop social dance, Culbreath advocates for the recognition of artists as cultural practitioners and educators. He designs movement-centered curricula, curates interdisciplinary residencies, and crafts performances that challenge institutional boundaries while honoring the radical traditions of Black dance.

Emily (Lady Em) Culbreath (MFA) is an award-winning street and club dance choreographer, educator, writer, and practitioner. She is best known for her work as a core member and rehearsal director with Rennie Harris Puremovement, and as the co-founder and director of Snack Break Movement Arts, a Hip Hop Theater and education organization presenting works nationally and internationally, including at The San Francisco International Hip Hop Dance Festival and Summer Dance Forever (Amsterdam).

Her research investigates the intersections of critical race theory, gender studies, autoethnography, Hip Hop theater and pedagogy, and collaborative performance. Emily has served as a guest artist-in-residence at institutions across the U.S. and recently presented her work at the American College Dance Association National Festival (Washington, D.C., 2025). She has taught and lectured in a range of academic and community settings and contributes writing to the dance journalism platform thINKingDANCE (Philadelphia).

Shaela is a dance artist, educator, and researcher whose work bridges the stage, classroom, and community. She earned her BFA in Dance Performance with a K-12 Teaching Certification from Towson University and is a 2nd-year MFA dance candidate at The Ohio State University. As a performer, Shaela has worked with Abby Z and the New Utility, Christopher K. Morgan & Artists, Company E, and Full Circle Dance Company. Her choreography has been featured in the Baltimore Black Choreographers Festival, Peabody Dance! Festival, and Chesapeake Shakespeare Company's "The Merry Wives of Windsor." Shaela is researching social dance practices rooted in her identity as a Jamaican American Black Woman, to explore fusion work within contemporary practice.

Careitha Davis attended SUNY Purchase College receiving a BA in Media, Society & the Arts and earned an MA in Dance Education K-12 Track from New York University. She has performed the works of George Faison, Dianne McIntyre, Ronald K. Brown, Mouminatou Camara, Joya Powell/Movement of the People, Jemal Gaines, Michael Manswell and Pearl Primus. Careitha began teaching Soca at Cumbe: Center for African and Diaspora Dance in 2018 and established BodyRa Movement in 2020. Careitha has taught workshops in Basel, Uganda, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Martin and the United States. Her works have been performed at Spoke The Hub, PBS-Travel BareFeet, Alvin Ailey Citigroup, Apollo Theatre and Jamaica Arts Center. Careitha has been awarded a Jacob's Pillow College Partnership Program Faculty Research Fellowship. She is currently an adjunct at New York University- School of Steinhardt, a professor for OPDI-NDEO online Afro-Caribbean course, serving as a NYC Department of Education Dance Educator and a Teacher's College, Columbia EdD student.

Crystal U. Davis, MFA, CLMA is a dancer, movement analyst, and critical race theorist with experience teaching in P-12 education and supervising dance educators. Her research explores implicit bias in dance and how privilege manifests in the body. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Dance Education*, *Palgrave Handbook of Race and the Arts in Education*, and in her book, *Dance and Belonging: Implicit Bias and Inclusion in Dance Education*. As an artist, her performances span from Rajasthani folk dance to West African dance performances to postmodern choreography examining incongruities between what we say, what we believe, and what we do. She is an Associate Professor and the Head of Dance Performance and Scholarship at the University of Maryland, College Park, where she teaches anti-racist pedagogy for dance and theater, movement technique, somatics, and movement analysis.

Kurt A. Douglas is a Professor of Dance at Boston Conservatory at Berklee and a celebrated performer, choreographer, and educator whose career bridges concert and commercial dance worlds. A graduate of the Boston Conservatory (BFA) Hollins University (MFA), Douglas has performed with leading companies including the Limón Dance Company, Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, Azure Barton & Artist, and Ballet Hispanico, as well as on international stages across Europe, Australia, and the Americas. He is a Princess Grace Award recipient and a 2023 Berklee College, distinguished faculty of the year award winner. He is a certified Limón Master Teacher and sits on the board of directors. Douglas is known for his dynamic teaching style and commitment to preserving the expressive and humanistic principles of José Limón while integrating Africanist and contemporary influences. Through performance, pedagogy, and mentorship, he continues to inspire the next generation of artists to approach technique as a living, evolving dialogue between tradition and innovation.

Dr. Patricia Dye, Ed.D., a native of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, raised in Brownsville, Brooklyn, is a veteran NYC public school dance educator with over 25 years of experience. She is currently an adjunct professor in the NYU Steinhardt Dance Education Program and teaches for the NY Public School Middle School Summer Audition Boot Camp, now in her 11th year. Dr. Dye has taught, choreographed, and performed nationally and internationally with renowned companies including Forces of Nature Theater Dance Company, Ballet Schulz Beckman, and P.A.K.A. Theater Dance Foundation™. Featured in the NYS Emmy-nominated documentary *PS Dance!*, she earned her Doctorate in Dance Education and Research from Teachers College, Columbia University, with additional degrees from NYU Steinhardt and Adelphi University. A recipient of Dance Teacher Magazine's 2020 "Dance Teacher of the Year" and NYSDEA's 2022 "Outstanding Dance Educator" awards, Dr. Dye continues the legacy of Dr. Charles "Baba Chuck" Davis and Katherine Dunham.

Ninoska M'bewe Escobar is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of New Mexico. Her work investigates how bodies carry history and memory and how cultural heritage and social experiences shape identities and artistic practices. Her book project examines the work and legacy of the Caribbean-American choreographer-anthropologist-social activist Pearl Primus (1919-1994).

Brianna Forbes (MFA) is an Assistant Teaching Professor in the Department of Performing Arts & Technology at NC State University. She is passionate about Dance, Restorative Justice, and Community enrichment. Forbes serves on the executive board for Dance Project in Greensboro, NC, and is a proud member of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management. Currently, through her Restorative Justice Project, Forbes20Tour, She mentors collegiate dancers across the United States and produces and facilitates community performances and workshops for a positive change. She has performed in various Street Dance festivals such as "We Are Hip Hop" in Charlotte, NC, and has choreographed and performed various House Dance based pieces during her Dance Project Artist Residency in Greensboro, NC. She enjoys teaching and choreographing for students of all ages, and hopes to continue building and restoring communities through arts activism.

Corali Francisco-Zelkine is a first year graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania pursuing an M.S.Ed in Education, Culture, and Society and M.S in Nonprofit Leadership. She graduated from Duke University in 2024 with a B.A in Cultural Anthropology and Global Health. Corali spent 10 months on Itaparica working at an NGO that works with local youth and women through capoeira Angola and other traditional Afro-Brazilian cultural practices. She is interested in using ethnography to explore the intersection of education, arts, and culture as it relates to empowerment.

Fana Fraser is an artist and director whose work is rooted in expressions of eroticism, power, and compassion. Fana is a first-year PhD student in Critical Dance Studies at University of California, Riverside. She is interested in the study of behavior and being within and of dance, its performance; embodied / and astro-phenomenal creative performance of sound, and singing movement. Fana's performance work has been presented at venues across New York, Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco and Trinidad & Tobago. As an educator, Fana has taught at Harvard TDM as a Visiting Lecturer in Dance; led workshops in the MFA Dance Program at Sarah Lawrence; and at NYU Tisch and Adelphi University, led workshops in BFA Dance Programs. She has offered courses as an Adjunct Associate Professor of Dance at University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Fana served as Rehearsal Director for Ailey II from 2016-20. fanafraser.com

Keshia Gee earned BA from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro in Dance and African American Studies and completed the Master of Fine Arts in Dance degree program at Hollins University in collaboration with Künstlerhaus Mousonturm and The Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts, with support from The Dresden Frankfurt Dance Company. Gee is currently an Assistant Professor at Elon University. She has presented her scholarship at the International Association of Blacks in Dance and the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance. In 2023, Gee was named a Woman of Color Leadership Project Fellow by the National Women's Studies Association. Her research focus is rooted in the presence of West African dance in higher education and how this dance form can be engaged as a valued and valid epistemological and ontological domain in scholarship. Gee is also the author of *Roots of Rhythm: An Introduction to West African Dance*.

Jonathan González is a choreographer, artist, and writer whose interdisciplinary practice engages site, sensation, memory, and embodiment as core materials of performance. Working across choreography, installation, sound, image, and text, González explores how embodied practices shape spatial, cultural, and perceptual experience. Their work will be featured in both the 2026 Carnegie International and the 2026 Whitney Biennial, reflecting their continued investigation into the possibilities of site-responsive and durational performance within contemporary Black performance. González is the author of the recent book *Ways to Move: Black Insurgent Grammars* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2025), which extends their choreographic thinking into prose and poetic form. Major awards, including the Pew Fellowship, the Herb Alpert Award in Dance, and the MAP Fund, have supported their creative practice. Through interdisciplinary experimentation and collaborative methodologies, González seeks to advance performance as a vital mode of aesthetic research, critical inquiry, and embodied knowledge.

Angie Melissa González Chaverra is an Afro-Colombian dancer, educator and Fulbright scholar recognized as the first Afro-Colombian artist to receive the Fulbright Award in the Arts category. Co-founder of Nzingha Akanforá, a collective empowering Black women and girls in Bogotá, Angie's work bridges performance, education, and social justice. Recent M.A. graduate in Africana Studies at Georgia State University. Her research "My Black Body Speaks: African Diaspora Dance for Social Justice and Resistance" was awarded first place at GSU's Annual Graduate Research Conference in Spring 2025. Her practice centers Critical Art Pedagogy, Black feminist theory, and embodied methodologies that celebrate the radical power of joy and movement. Angie is also a former student of the Martin Luther King Jr. program and a mentor at the A.D King Foundation. "A gravity-defying performing artist scholar and Elliot Norton Award-winning choreographer whose Black girl movement vocabulary is an array of life experiences. She is an Assistant Professor at Marymount Manhattan College, Steering Committee member of Coalition of Diasporan Scholars Moving, and Embodied (Hip Hop) Scholars Crew, Founder, Board of Trustee Ladies of Hip Hop, guest artist for SLMDances.

Jazelynn Goudy is a Dancer, Educator, Veteran Artist, and Homie from Milwaukee, WI. A budding interdisciplinary performing artist scholar, Jazelynn focuses on black women and girls' social and contemporary dance in concerts, the internet, and social spaces. She utilizes interactive media, light, and loop pedal sound to convey black Midwestern social and contemporary dance with a deep relationship to social change. She received her MFA in Dance from The Ohio State University.

Michelle Grant-Murray, choreographer, educator, author, scholar, performer and Artistic Director of Olujimi Dance Theatre, Associate Professor Sr. and Coordinator of Dance at Miami Dade College, Artistic Director of Jubilation Dance Ensemble. She is the founder and host of The Black Artist Talk, Founder and Executive Director of the Artistry In Rhythm (A.I.R.) Dance Conference, Co-Founder of Florida Black Dance Artists Organization and author of *Beyond the Surface: An Inclusive American Dance History*, She is a Knights Arts Champion. Currently, Michelle is researching the performative intersections of Eco-feminism, Ecology, and Sustainability of the Black Female Body.

Dr. Geneva Greene is a globally published scholar-activist. In 2025, she successfully defended her doctoral dissertation in Howard University's Department of Communication, Culture and Media Studies on "Bridging and Elevating Community through Dance Communication: Analysis of an African Diaspora dance studio."

Davianna Griffin is a dancer, educator, and collaborator. She received her MFA in Dance from The Ohio State University and her research centers on the voices, bodies, and ideas of the Black experience. As a queer creative she questions how embodied practices can serve as a voice for those who are silenced. Her movement vocabulary is rooted in Africanist Aesthetics that inform her autoethnographic-embodied-ancestral memory practices.

Tristian Griffin, a native of Kansas City, MO graduated from Texas Christian University in Ballet and a minor in English. Following graduation, Tristian began his professional career and danced with Garth Fagan Dance Company, Wylliams-Henry Contemporary Dance Company, the Metropolitan Opera House (NYC), and Springboard Danse Montreal. In 2019,

Tristian began his endeavor as a choreographer by starting his dance company, Tristian Griffin Dance Company. As a choreographer, he has been commissioned by over 15 different institutions or companies. To name a few, Kennesaw State University, Newport Contemporary Ballet, Peabody Institute of The John Hopkins University, and Malashock Dance Company. In 2023, Tristian was selected as a recipient of Jacob's Pillow Residency, the Ann & Weston Hicks Choreography Fellowship. He is pursuing his MFA at Duke University, studying Choreography with a certificate in African and African-American Studies.

Lia Haynes is performer and choreographer from Plainfield, New Jersey. She holds her MFA in Dance and her BFA degree in Dance and Africology and African American Studies from Temple University. She is also M'Singha Wuti certified in Umfundalai. Over the years, she began training in various western styles of dance as well as street styles. With her love of dance, she began to teach and create her own choreography through an Afrocentric perspective in order to create socially challenging narratives both on and off stage.

"Tyreana "Ty" Handley is a dancer, choreographer, and dance educator whose artistry fuses innovation, discipline, and storytelling. Born and raised in Dallas, she discovered her passion for dance at an early age, drawn to its power to express emotion and build community. A self-taught mover at 11, Handley began by recreating choreography from social media before training formally in school programs and serving as lieutenant of the Lancaster High School Tigerette Drill Team. She later earned a Bachelor of Business Administration from Prairie View A&M University, where she danced with the celebrated Black Foxes, performing on major stages such as the Houston Rockets halftime show and alongside Paul Wall at the Houston Texans halftime performance. Now pursuing her MFA in Dance at Texas Woman's University, Handley continues to refine her craft and advocate for the majorette dance tradition through teaching, choreography, and community engagement.

Giltrecia Head-Guzman is a PhD student at the University of Miami's History Department who holds an M.A. in American Dance Studies from Florida State University and a B.S. in Architectural Science from Florida A&M University. Her research interests include bridging African, African Diaspora, and transnational histories, emphasizing the narratives of historically marginalized communities.

Marguerite Hemmings specializes in emergent, improvisational and social movement styles and technologies. They research the subversive role of dance and music throughout the African Diaspora and channel this research through performance, body, text, social/public media, and moving image. Hemmings' work is also embedded in alternative pedagogy and social practice/research and they have worked at University of the Arts in the School of Dance, Arizona State University, Princeton University, and many afterschool programs and community centers. Marguerite has received grants and fellowships from the Jerome Foundation, Brooklyn Arts Council, Harlem Stage, University Settlement, Dancing While Black, Urban Bush Women's Choreographic Center Initiative, Arizona State University's Projecting All Voices Fellowship, Abrons Arts Center, Headlong Performance Institute, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Mural Arts, Black Spatial Relics, and Independence Public Media Foundation to further their research.

Cami Holman is a Black, queer dancer from Dallas, Texas. Cami is a dance educator and embodied researcher in cultivating identity, agency, and voice via storytelling through movement. They work in higher education, public education, and community centers offering somatic-based approaches to dance technique and theory. They are a proud Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts graduate and hold an MFA in Dance from Texas Woman's University. They founded CamiCollabs LLC in 2022 to collaborate with organizations in these efforts. They take pride in collaborating with grassroots organizations and arts-based non-profits such as Agora Artists and Arts Mission Oakcliff in Dallas in performer, choreographer, and self-producing artist roles. Cami loves serving as faculty for the Bailando International Dance Festival for the third year. They present their work and research in somatic-based social-emotional learning at annual and special topic conferences like the National Dance Educators Organization and International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy.

Natalie Hopkinson, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Media Democracy and Society at American University and the author of *Go-Go Live: The Musical Life and Death of a Chocolate City*.

Truth Hunter is from Oakland, California and studied West African dance with Marilyn and Sekou Sylla of Bamidele Dancers and Drummers at Mount Holyoke College. As an undergraduate college student, Truth created a multimedia African Dance concert to fundraise for asylum seekers impacted by genocide in Darfur. It was through this experience, that she realized that the performing arts can be used as a tool for activism and a powerful way to bring healing into the world. Later, as the Director of Race and Ethnicity programs at Connecticut College, she collaborated with Shani Collins in the Dance Department to design an interdisciplinary course that used West African dance to tell stories of resistance of African diaspora people during the transatlantic slave trade. Currently, Truth is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Connecticut. Her research focuses on how West African dance transforms the lives of college students.

Abdiel (they/them) is a Hustle dance champion, educator, and community organizer dedicated to the cultural preservation and creative expansion of the New York Latin Hustle partner dance style. As co-founder of "Dance is Life"--a communitarian free public dance party event--Abdiel creates space to facilitate human connection, communal healing, and celebration, while revitalizing cultural historical sites where Latin Hustle has been traditionally danced. Abdiel has taught their gender-neutral approach to partner dance at the Juilliard School, Harvard University, Stanford University, University of Washington, University of California Irvine, and currently as an Assistant Professor at Scripps College. They are also a former: Mellon Foundation Humanities in Place grant recipient; Fulbright Specialist with the US Dept. of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs; Principal dancer of the Martha Graham Dance Company.

Asili Johnson is a choreographer and manifestor working at the intersections of performance, authenticity, and business. Originally from Brooklyn, New York, she began training at age three in Black-owned dance conservatories, studying ballet, jazz, tap, hip-hop, modern, contemporary, lyrical, and Traditional West African dance and drum. She earned her B.A. in Economics and Dance Performance & Choreography from Spelman College in 2024 and is currently pursuing her M.F.A. in Dance at Duke University, along with a certification in Innovation & Entrepreneurship at Duke Fuqua's School of Business. Johnson has toured nationally and internationally, blending Traditional West African dance with contemporary styles. Her choreography and research explore movement and storytelling as tools for cultural connection, critical inquiry, and creative leadership. Beyond performance, she has led arts-focused student organizations and worked with A.I.M. by Kyle Abraham, Harlem Stage, the Alliance Theatre, and the Bates Dance Festival.

Bianca Johnson (she/her) began her dance training at the Joffrey Ballet School, Steps on Broadway, and National Dance Institute (NDI). A graduate of LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, she holds a BFA from NYU Tisch, and a MA from NYU Steinhardt with a concentration in Dances of the African Diaspora. A longtime NDI Teaching Artist (2001-2023), Bianca served as NDI's Rehearsal Director from 2018 to 2023. Her work has been presented at Symphony Space, The Kitchen, Jacob's Pillow, the Apollo Theater, and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. As founding Artistic Director of Bianca Johnson & Dancers (BJ&D), she leads a company dedicated to inclusive artistic exploration. Bianca is currently pursuing a PhD in Dance Studies at The Ohio State University, with a focus on Black women's liberation through dance education reform.

Adanna Kai Jones (she/her) is an Assistant Professor of Dance and Dance Studies in the Department of Theater and Dance at Bowdoin College. She received her Ph.D. in Critical Dance Studies at the University of California, Riverside, and her BFA in Dance from Mason Gross School of the Arts—Rutgers University. As a scholar, her research generally focuses on Caribbean dance and identity politics within the Diaspora, paying particular focus to Trini-styled Carnivals and the rolling hip dance known as winin'. Nicknamed the "Doctor of Winin'," her artistic and scholarly work remains rooted in the many dances of the Caribbean, paying particular attention to the multiple ways we roll our sweet waistlines! Lastly, as an educator and member of the Un/Commoning Pedagogies Collective, she remains committed to anti-racist pedagogic praxes and works to tackle, endure, unravel, and combat the pangs of white supremacy within academia and beyond.

Enya-Kalia Jordan is a choreographer, dance studies scholar, and culture curator from Brooklyn, New York. She received a BA in Arts & Letters Dance from Buffalo State University and an MFA from Temple University in Dance Choreography and Performance. She is a doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University (TWU), contributing to the field the theory of Ebonic Bodies in Motion. During her time at a TWU, she has been awarded several prestigious honors for her work, including the Phi Kappa Phi Dissertation Fellowship and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Spouses Education Scholarship, to name a few. Enya-Kalia is also the proud founder and artistic director of Enya Kalia Creations (EKC), a movement-based artistic collective established in 2016. Enya-Kalia is also the co-executive director of Bashi Arts and has been dance faculty at various cultural institutions across NYC.

Chanon Judson is an investigative-innovator. In the tradition of a litany of makers that have used the arts to unmask history, mend, learn and access liberation, Chanon collages multiple modalities of performance practice to craft solutions. Largely, Chanon makes by way of dance-theatre, performance, visual design, and the curation of art-based communal practices that encourage play, self reflection and engagement with jazz as an organizing aesthetic. Chanon is an Associate Professor at the University at Buffalo. She served as Co-Artistic Director and ensemble performer with Urban Bush Women. Choreographic credits include "Haint Blu," "Hair and Other Stories" (UBW), "The Priestess of Twerk" (Nia Witherspoon), "The Hang" (Taylor Mac, Niegel Smith), "Cannabis! A Viper Vaudeville" (Talvin Wilks) "The Invention of Tragedy" (Meghan Finn). Performance-Collaborator Credits include, Dancing with Glass - The Piano Etudes, Snake Hips in our DNA, A 24-Decade History of Popular Music, God's Trombone, and the Tony award winning musical Fela!

Jisun Kim is a doctoral candidate in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism at the School of Drama at Yale University. Their research explores queer of color performances as contemporary rituals that propose alternative ways of understanding queerness. They have worked as a dramaturg for productions at Yale Repertory Theatre and a playwrights' workshop at

the Kennedy Center, and have served as Co-Artistic Director of the Yale Cabaret. They were also Managing Editor of Theater magazine and an Artistic Fellow at Yale Rep.

Ishmael Konney is an interdisciplinary Ghanaian artist hailing from La, a prominent town in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. Ishmael has an undergraduate degree in Theatre Arts from the University of Education, Winneba. He was recruited to the United States, where he earned an M.A. in International Studies from Ohio University, as well as an MFA in Dance with an Interdisciplinary Specialization in Fine Arts from The Ohio State University. Currently, Ishmael holds the position of Assistant Professor of Dance at University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Additionally, he contributes his expertise as a Dance Faculty member for the prestigious Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts. Before moving to the United States, Ishmael honed his craft with the National Dance Company of Ghana at the National Theatre of Ghana. His research interests center on the promotion of Ghanaian cultural values, with a keen focus on exploring the intricate relationship and intersectionality between performance and traditional Ghanaian cultural practices.

Gerson Lanza, hailing from La Ceiba, Honduras, discovered his passion for tap dance after migrating to New York City in 2001. He refined his skills at the Harlem School of the Arts, quickly immersing himself in the dance scene. His successful career has taken him to national and international stages as both a performer and educator. Notably, Gerson has received recognition for his choreographic work at Artist at the Center under Ayodele Casel, earning two features in The New York Times in 2024. He has headlined the Millennium Stage at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and was part of the OneBeat Program, supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. His esteemed residencies include The Joyce Theater, Lincoln Center, Jacob's Pillow, and the Fall for Dance Festival at New York City Center with Music From the Sole, led by Leonardo Sandoval and Gregory Richardson. Gerson currently serves as an assistant professor of dance at The Ohio State University.

Mika Lillit Lior, interdisciplinary dance artist-scholar, is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance and Dance Program Head at Sweet Briar College, Virginia. Lior's research and artistic work coalesce around the themes of ritual embodiment, feminist and queer cultural iconography and repressed sexualities. Lior holds a PhD in Culture and Performance from the World Arts & Cultures/Dance department at the University of California, Los Angeles. Lior's creative practices include samba, capoeira, contact improvisation and dance film. Her forthcoming monograph, *Dancing Candomblé: Circling Spirits and Embodied Politics in Bahia, Brazil*, is under advance contract with McGill-Queens University Press.

Fatima Logan-Alston is an interdisciplinary artist who engages intergenerational communities in historically themed experiences connecting dance, live music, and visual arts. Logan-Alston has performed nationally and internationally at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Curtain Up Broadway Festival, Lincoln Center Outdoors, and the International African Diaspora Dance Traditions Conference (Salvador, Brazil). Her collaborators have included Bobby Sanabria, Ntozake Shange, and Valerie Capers. She was a company member of the African-American Dance Ensemble and Forces of Nature Dance Theater. In 2011, she founded Threads of Truth, with a mission to transform, empower, and educate through innovations in African Diaspora traditions. Logan-Alston received the Dance and Social Justice Fellowship from the Ford Foundation, and support from the Mertz Gilmore and Howard Gilman Foundation. Logan-Alston earned her BFA in Dance and Choreography from Virginia Commonwealth University and her MALS from SUNY Old Westbury, where she is currently an Adjunct Professor in American Studies.

Dr. Andrea Markus is a dance artist and educator who received her Doctor of Education degree in dance education from Teachers College, Columbia University. She has studied dance at Ballet School New York, Ithaca College, Dance New Amsterdam, and The Limon Institute. She has traveled to Guinea, West Africa, to study dance and drumming with members of the national companies Les Ballets Africains de Guinea and Ballet Djoliba. She has taught dance to students in grades PK-12 as a teaching artist for ArtsConnection, New York City Ballet, The Alvin Ailey Arts in Education and Community Programs, Misty Copeland Foundation's BEBOLD Program, and Dancewave. She is currently a faculty member at New York University, Marymount Manhattan College, and CUNY Bronx Community College. With an ethos of care, Andrea believes in the transformative power of dance education to engage, educate, uplift, and bring #JOY to students.

Kyle Marshall is a choreographer, performer, teacher and artistic director of Kyle Marshall Choreography (KMC). Since 2014, KMC has performed at The Joyce Theater, Chelsea Factory, BAM Next Wave Festival, The Shed, PS21, and Roulette. Kyle has received choreographic and dance film commissions from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Baryshnikov Arts Center, "Dance on the Lawn" Montclair's Dance Festival, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Boston). Touring has included: Barbican Centre (London), Jacob's Pillow Inside/Out (Beckett, MA), FringeArts, (Philadelphia), and New World Center (Miami). Recognitions have included two NY Dance and Performance Bessie Awards, and a 2020 Dance Magazine Harkness Promise Award. Kyle is currently a Grant Wood Fellow and visiting assistant professor at the University of Iowa. Kyle was a member of the Trisha Brown Dance Company, doug elkins choreography etc., and Tiffany Mills Company. He is a graduate of Rutgers University with a BFA in Dance. www.kmchoreo.com

Dr. Nyama McCarthy-Brown is a nationally recognized, culturally sustaining pedagogue. She is an Associate Professor of Dance Pedagogy through Community Engagement on faculty at The Ohio State University and was the university's first Artist Laureate. In 2021 she was the recipient of national teaching awards, from Dance Teacher Magazine and National Dance Education Organization respectively. In 2017, her book, *Dance Pedagogy for a Diverse World: Culturally Relevant Teaching in Research, Theory, and Practice* was published and quickly became an anchoring text in dance education internationally. Her second book, *Skin Colored Pointes: Interviews with Women of Color in Ballet*, received the Harry Shaw and Katrina Hazzard-Donald Contribution to African American Popular Culture book award in 2025. Dr. McCarthy-Brown is a facilitator for diversifying dance curriculum for organizations such as: San Francisco Ballet School; BalletMet, San Francisco Unified School District, Columbus City Schools; Rutgers University Dance Department; University of Buffalo; and National Dance Institute.

Kevin McEwen is a cultural folklorist, educator, and choreographer whose work bridges academia and community practice through the lens of African Diasporic dance. He serves as Executive Director of the Kofago Institute, Founder of the Kofago Dance Ensemble, and Lecturer in the Theatre, Dance, and Multimedia Program at Lehman College (CUNY). McEwen's creative and academic work focuses on the preservation, performance, and pedagogy of traditional West African and Diasporic dance forms. His initiatives—including the Culture Rising Dance Initiative, the Teranga Conference, and the Kofago Taraji youth ensemble—embody his commitment to building sustainable infrastructures for Black artistic excellence. Rooted in community engagement and ancestral continuity, McEwen's practice asserts dance as both an archive and a tool of liberation.

Tiffany Merritt-Brown is a choreographer, performer, scholar, and educator whose creative research activates the body as an archive, memory, and site of transformation. Rooted in Black feminist thought, radical imagination, and cultural tradition, her work explores how identity, history, and memory shape BIPOC communities while envisioning new futures through movement. She is an Assistant Professor of Dance at Hunter College (CUNY) and Administrative Director of AileyCamp Miami. A 2024 Dancing While Black Fellow and alumna of the Jacob's Pillow Ann & Weston Hicks Choreographers Fellowship, Tiffany's work has been presented nationally and internationally at Jacob's Pillow, BAAD!, Arts on Site NYC, The Woodshed Platform, the Dougherty Arts Center, the Detroit Dance City Festival, and the World Dance Alliance—Americas Conference. Across projects such as *Ethereal Bodies*, *Tender is the Night*, and *Thérapie au Chocolat*, she creates choreographies that function as prayer, testimony, and visionary invitation toward restoration, reimagination, and collective freedom.

Greer E. Mendy is a scholar, artist, and legal professional whose life's work bridges the worlds of culture, movement, and justice. A native of New Orleans' historic Lower 9th Ward—where she proudly says she was "'capably educated'"—Mendy is deeply rooted in the rhythms and stories of African, Caribbean, and New Orleans traditions. A practicing attorney since 1989 and a choreographer with over five decades of experience, Mendy seamlessly merges the intellectual with the expressive. She has studied and performed traditional dance genres across Louisiana, Africa, and the Caribbean, bringing to life the histories, struggles, and spirit embedded in each movement. In 2000, Mendy founded the Tekrema Center for Art and Culture, an institution dedicated to creating a legacy of artistic excellence, intellectual development, scholarly achievement, and community responsibility. The Center is committed to the study, maintenance, development, and perseverance of African, African American, and African Diaspora art and culture in service to the community—a mission that reflects Mendy's own deeply held values and lifelong dedication to cultural empowerment. She is the author of *Black Dance in Louisiana – Guardian of a Culture*, a compelling exposé that explores the political and social landscapes surrounding Black dance traditions. Her second work, *Naked Appearances*, is a powerful collection of essays, poems, and short stories that interrogates themes of art and identity through a deeply personal and cultural lens. Describing her work as biomythography, Mendy weaves lived experience with ancestral memory, scholarship with storytelling—always in pursuit of truth, beauty, and cultural preservation.

Heather Mitchell is a somatic movement artist, youth development leader, and social justice advocate whose work centers the wisdom of the body as a pathway to healing, liberation, and transformation. With a deep commitment to community care and cultural restoration, Heather creates spaces where young people and adults alike can reconnect with their bodies, process trauma, and build collective power. Drawing from Afro-diasporic traditions, trauma-informed practice, and movement-based healing, Heather's work bridges the arts, education, and justice to cultivate resilient, liberated futures.

Nicole is a storyteller. Currently a writer, artist, and dramaturg, Nicole Morris Johnson is assistant professor at the University at Buffalo. Morris Johnson specializes in the study of 20th-21st century African American and Caribbean writing, performance, and archives. She is author of *The Souths in Her: Black Women Writers and Choreographers* and the *Poetics of Transmutation*, a book published in January of 2026 with Columbia University Press. A second monograph

is underway that examines Black women's experimental archival methods. Morris Johnson is also co-editor of The Cambridge History of Black American Women's Literature, a book in progress with Cambridge University Press. Morris Johnson's writing has appeared in Meridians, The Routledge Companion to African American Theatre and Performance, and MELUS among other platforms.

Montë Murphy. A Black affirming Healing Artist and Afrocentric Cultural Alchemist leading my work with ancestral memories to produce integral change. I am the Artistic Director and Founder of A Brotha's Luv in Motion: A Dance Project, inc where the values are Embrace, Embody, Empower, or E cubed. Embrace who you are, Embody your dreams, and Empower change. I am an archivist and preserver of various Africanist Cultural & Spiritual traditions and use them to develop community engagement, cultural diplomacy, and healing spaces for the Afro-diasporic mind, body, and spirit. Currently pursuing a dual MSW/MA in Social Work & Latin American Studies at The Ohio State University, my research explores Afro-American & Afro-Brazilian communities, asking how healing justice and spiritual activism manifest within masquerade traditions and how ethnographic and social work methodologies inform culturally rooted arts education and community programming for psychosocial wellness. Shea-Ra Nichi is a dynamic dancer/choreographer, actor, and concept creator celebrating African diasporic heritage through vibrant performances. Inspired by personal legacy and cultural roots, Shea-Ra Nichi crafts poignant pieces akin to the piece proposed.

Christa Oliver is an Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Performing Arts and Technology at NC State University and the Director of the Panoramic Dance Project. Prior to joining NC State, she taught for eleven years at Texas State University. She holds a Master of Arts in Dance Performance and a Professional Diploma in Dance Studies from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London. She is also a Mellon Fellow in the School of Theater and Performance Research at Harvard University. Christa has worked with renowned choreographers, including Donald McKayle, Valerie Preston-Dunlop, Rafael Bonachela, Donald Byrd, Rennie Harris, Lula Washington, Victor Quijada, Christopher Huggins, Willi Dorner, Miguel Pereira, Robin Lewis, and Dominique Kelly. She served as Dance Captain on the national tour of The Color Purple, has performed internationally in eight countries, and appeared in Hollywood films, including Avatar and Crazy on the Outside."

Trebiën Pollard is a graduate of Florida A&M University, BS in Mathematics Education and NYU Tisch School of the Arts, MFA in Dance. He received training at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, Florida A & M University, Florida State University, Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance, and from a number of gifted teachers and choreographers. Trebiën has performed with many dance companies, including RIOULT, the MET (Metropolitan Opera Ballet), Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, Bebe Miller Company, Urban Bush Women and Pilobolus. He has been on faculty at the American Dance Festival, Queens College, Adelphi University, the University of Southern Mississippi, Goucher College, Middlebury College, Marymount Manhattan College, Montclair State University, the University at Buffalo and Dartmouth College. Currently, Trebiën is an Associate Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, as well as a licensed certified GYROTONIC® and GYROKINESIS® trainer.

Dr. Susan Pope's professional journey in dance education spans over 30 years. Her teaching experience includes positions at the Newark Board of Education and the New York City Department of Education, where she also directed the SUMA/Children's Aid Society Dance Company. At Montclair State University, she is coordinator for the Dance Education BA program, and a member of the Transformative Education Network (TEN) University Mentor Team. Susan has performed with the Rod Rogers Dance Company and the Hudson City Repertory Dance Company. Susan received her doctorate in Dance Education from Teachers College, Columbia Univ. Her research focuses on embodied pedagogy, arts-based research, portraiture methodology, and multimodal forms of representation. She has taught creative movement in Accra, Ghana, and Panama City, Panama. She is a certified trauma-informed yoga and meditation instructor, as well as the curator of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) 's Elder Stories exhibit and intergenerational performance piece.

Joya Powell (she/her) is a Bessie Award winning dance maker passionate about community and dances of the African Diaspora. In 2005 Joya founded Movement of the People Dance Company, dedicated to addressing sociocultural injustices through multidisciplinary immersive dance. Her work has appeared in venues including: BAM, Lincoln Center, Harlem Stage, SummerStage, La Mama, The Dance Complex, BAAD!. Joya has choreographed Off-Broadway and regional plays; most recently Black Water Opera by Jeremy Beck at The Sheen Center for Thought and Culture. Her chapter "How do you hold when you need to be held?: Dance and the embodied practice of grieving," is featured in Pandemic Performance: Resilience, Liveness, and Protest in Quarantine Times – Routledge. Recognition includes: Dancing While Black Fellow, CUNY Dance Initiative, The Unsettling Dramaturgy Award, LMCC/UMEZ Grant. Joya is a co-leader of Angela's Pulse's Dancing While Black, and is also an Assistant Professor of the Practice of Dance and African American Studies at Wesleyan University.

Professor Stephanie Marie Powell is a California native and a tenured full Professor in Dance at Long Beach City College. Throughout her academic teaching career she has taught courses in Dance Appreciation, Choreography, Composition, Classical Ballet, Contemporary Ballet, Pointe, Modern Dance, Jazz, Turns, Zumba, Dance Conditioning, Stretch and Relaxation, Dance History, Hip Hop Dance History, Performance Workshop, Yoga and Pilates. Professor Powell is a certified instructor of the New York City Ballet Workout, Zumba, Qigong and Body Arts and Science International Pilates with a Dance Specialization. Ms. Powell has taught as a part-time instructor at the University of California, Irvine in Ballet, Modern Dance and the Etude Ensemble. She is the principal interpreter of the choreographic works for the legendary choreographer Donald McKayle and stages his work around the world.

Karen Prall, Associate Professor-Dance at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI. Year 2000 to the present. Currently instructing Contemporary, African (Congolese) dance at W.S.U. Artistic director of the 1st African Dance company to the WSU Theatre and Dance dept. "To Sangana". August 2025 Southwest Fest Performed and director of group Dancing Out loud with Karen Prall. July 2025 Monrovia, Liberia west Africa organized a partnership with newly appointed Arts and Culture Ambassador, Kekura Kamara, participated in Liberia's National Healing, Reconciliation and Unity program. 2025 Master African dance instructor at the African World Festival in Detroit, sponsors Heritage Works. 2025 Director, choreographer, organizer of candle bearers, and spoken word honoring Portia Fields and Harriet Berg WSU Spring concert. 2023-2025 U of M African dance instructor for IMPULSE Dance conference. 2025 adjudicator for Detroit Public Schools All City Youth Themed Dance Concert. 2025 WSU Faculty Facilitator of Balletethnic and companies "From bare feet to Pointe shoes" chore. Waverly Lucus, and Nena Gilreath. The late 80's founder and director of The Art of Motion dance theatre. 2016-2023 Consultant and movement collaborator for Ballet Zoe Banjay a cultural drum and dance company in Monrovia, Liberia. Dance studies and research from the Alvin Ailey school, Graham studio, member of Tanawa Congolese dance company N.Y. study in Brazzaville and Kinshasa, Cuba, Paris, Montreal, and on!

Talawa Prestø is a pioneering dance artist and scholar, internationally recognized for developing the Talawa Technique, a movement methodology rooted in African, Caribbean, and Afropean dance traditions. Taught worldwide by over 40 certified instructors, this technique refines polycentric movement, drawing from the intelligence embedded in multigenerational ancestral dance practices. As the founder of Tabanka Dance Ensemble toured 44 countries, Prestø has dedicated decades to researching, embodying, and innovating within African and African Diaspora movement traditions. His work acknowledges the depth of ancestral knowledge in dance and performance, harnessing its principles to benefit both current and future generations of artists and audiences. Holding a Master's degree in Choreography and a Ph.D. in Artistic Research and Production, Prestø is regarded as one of the foremost technicians in polycentric movement, shaping new possibilities for diasporic dance education, research, and performance.

Noel Price-Bracey is an artist-educator whose attention to social change has led her to create, collaborate, and perform across the U.S., including Kalamazoo, MI, Detroit, MI, Chicago, IL, Seattle, WA, Spokane, WA, Bellingham, WA, Missoula, MT, and Portland, OR as well as internationally, Canada and Italy. In 2014, she established PRICEarts LLC, a multidisciplinary arts organization with a mission to empower communities to find freedom through creative expression. In 2019, she received the SeattleDances, Dance Crush award for her work with PRICEarts and her commitment to advocating for mental wellness through dance. Noel earned her MFA in Dance from the University of Washington, Seattle, in 2024, where her research addressed the perceived absence of dance within Black arts historiographies engaging embodied performance, and protest, of The Black Arts and Black Power Movement. Noel Price-Bracey is currently an Assistant Professor of Jazz dance at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA.

Dr. shady Radical is an archivist, performance artist, memory worker and founder of The Radical Archive Project (T.R.A.P.), a digital and community-based initiative dedicated to preserving and activating Black performance memory. Her work bridges archival science, dance studies, and Black feminist praxis, positioning the archive as a living, embodied site of resistance. Through T.R.A.P., she collaborates with artists, institutions, and communities to document performance legacies and build radical infrastructures for sustainable cultural preservation. Dr. Radical's practice has been featured in academic, artistic, and public settings, including projects with Balletethnic Dance Company, Auburn Avenue Research Library, and Spelman College. She holds a Ph.D. in Film, Media, and Theatre and is committed to creating accessible, inclusive platforms that honor intergenerational memory, movement, and meaning-making. Her research and creative work invite audiences to reimagine the archive as embodied within us—an act of self-preservation, resistance, and liberation.

Gwen Rakotovo is a choreographer, dancer, and researcher whose work spans performance, pedagogy, and cultural inquiry. Currently a PhD candidate at Stockholm University of the Arts, she investigates cultural memory and diaspora, with a focus on the Malagasy funeral ritual Famadihana as a site for choreographic thinking and embodied knowledge. Founder of the Gwen Rakotovo Company (2011, New York), she has created solo and group works—including Fitiavana (2016), Initiation (2013), and the upcoming Mitsangana (2025)—presented on four continents at festivals and venues such as TPAM (Japan), Biennale de la Danse en Afrique (Morocco), and Fringe Manila (Philippines). Her choreographic

language blends movement, ritual, and poetic resistance, exploring the body as archive and site of possibility. Rakotovoao has performed internationally with artists including Qudus Onikeku and yaTande Whitney V. Hunter, led educational and community programs in Madagascar and abroad, and received numerous residencies and awards, including the 2024 Trophée de l'Originalité at Théâtre de Chaillot.

Rachel S. Russell is a dancer, interdisciplinary dance scholar, and educator from Baltimore, MD. Presently, she serves as a Lecturer in the Theater and Performance Studies program at the University of Chicago. She recently graduated with her PhD in Interdisciplinary Theatre & Drama from Northwestern University in June 2025, and is a 2022-2024 Northwestern University Presidential Fellow. Her research includes understanding, documenting, and conceptualizing the present-day history of Black women dancers, choreographers, and their predecessors. She continues to dance professionally, using her dance practice to inform her theorizing. Rachel received her MA in Performance Studies from New York University, and her BFA in Dance Pedagogy from Columbia College Chicago.

Aguibou Bougobali SANOU is a Burkinabè artist and Assistant Professor at Grinnell College, USA. He is a dancer, choreographer, musician, storyteller, and founder of the In-Out Dance and World Arts Festival and Ko-Don-So Bougobali SANOU, an eco-arts research center in Burkina Faso. A 2018–2019 Fulbright Scholar and 2025 Dance/USA Artist Fellow, Sanou's research explores embodied archives, African mask traditions, and dance as a healing tool. His work, presented globally, includes projects like Mask Utopia and Why Not: Creative Cells. Sanou's teaching focuses on intercultural dialogue and collective creation, collaborating with experts from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Benin. He aims to connect communities and nurture Black radical infrastructures of dance and ecology. Sanou holds an MFA from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

KIERON DWAYNE SARGEANT, from Trinidad and Tobago, is an Assistant Professor of Dance at Skidmore College and an expert in African-Caribbean diaspora dance traditions. With an MFA in Dance from Florida State University and an MA in Community Dance from Ohio University, he has over two decades of international teaching and performance experience. Founder of the Kieron Sargeant Dance and Dance Education Foundation, his travels and research span the United States, Canada, Cuba, Grenada, Barbados, Togo, and Nigeria, delving into the morphology of African diaspora dances in the US. Kieron remains actively engaged in collaborative projects affiliated with Hofstra University and Rutgers University. His collaborations with international scholars and artists further underscore his commitment to understanding and enhancing the global impact of African influences on dance traditions

Elvie Schooley LMSW is the founder of The Jewels Inside platform and Executive Director of DRUM The Program, a cultural arts organization rooted in West African traditions. As a transformational coach, wellness educator, and speaker, she empowers women and men over 25 to move beyond limitations and embrace their passion and purpose. Drawing from her background as a licensed massage therapist, registered yoga instructor, and social worker, Elvie weaves storytelling, mindfulness, and self-care practices into her teaching. Her book, *The Jewels Inside*, serves as a guide to healing, growth, and thriving through self-acceptance and intentional living. When she's not writing or teaching, Elvie can be found leading drum and dance interactives, curating wellness retreats, and inspiring others to uncover the jewels within.

Hailed in reviews as "a perfect example of his generation of male dancers... Technically superb and artistically infallible," **Dr. Iquail Shaheed** is a Philadelphia-based artist, activist, and the executive artistic director of DANCE IQUAIL! through which he creates new works and programs that centers on Blackness, Justice, and Joy. Dr. Shaheed has worked with internationally acclaimed companies such as Philadanco, Compagnie Thor (Brussels), Sean Curran Company, Ronald K Brown/ Evidence, and the Fred Benjamin Dance Company. He has also appeared in various Broadway productions including *The Lion King*, *Hot Feet*, and *Super Fly*. As an educator, Iquail preserves the Horton Technique by serving on faculty at The Ailey School, NAISDA Dance College in Australia, and is the second Black man to receive tenure and promotion to associate professor at Goucher College in their inception in 1889.

Among his many honors are grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, MAP Fund, national performance network, the Philadelphia Dance Award – "The Rocky," and the Marion D. Cuyjet Award. Dr. Shaheed received his training as a scholarship student at many prestigious schools including the Philadelphia Dance Company – Philadanco, Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, The Martha Graham Center for Contemporary Dance, Paul Taylor School, The Juilliard School and Pennsylvania Ballet, among many others. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in ballet performance from the University of the Arts, and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Choreography from Purchase College. Dr. Shaheed is also the first Black Male to earn a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Texas Woman's University."

Jaki Shelton Green, ninth Poet Laureate of North Carolina is the first African American and third woman to be appointed as the North Carolina Poet Laureate. She is a 2019 Academy of American Poet Laureate Fellow, 2014 NC Literary Hall of Fame Inductee, 2009 NC Piedmont Laureate appointment, 2003 recipient of the North Carolina Award for Literature. Her publications include: *Dead on Arrival*, *Masks*, *Dead on Arrival and New Poems*, *Conjure Blues*, *singing a tree into dance*, *breath of the song*, published by Blair Publishers. *Feeding the Light*, *i want to undie you* published by Jacar Press, *i want to undie you English /Italian bilingual edition* published by Lebeg Publishers. On Juneteenth 2020, she released her first LP, poetry album, *The River Speaks of Thirst*, produced by Soul City Sounds and Clearly Records. Jaki Shelton Green is the owner of SistaWRITE providing writing retreats for women writers in Sedona Arizona, Martha's Vineyard, Ocracoke North Carolina, Northern Morocco, and Tullamore Ireland.

Quianna Simpson began her dance studies of traditional West African dance, music, and culture at a young age with Thiossane Institute (formerly ABCDE), directed by Suzan Bradford Kounta and Abdou Kounta. College represented a time of branching out and investing in forms like modern, jazz, hip-hop, and lyrical technique while performing with both the dance company and auxiliary band at NSU. After graduation from NSU, she rejoined Thiossane Institute, and in 2022 she was named Assistant Artistic Director of the company. Quianna's research interest developed in the intersectionality of traditional African dance, the African American experience, and the social development of youth. during her MFA journey at OSU. Her passion for the traditions of Africa and the African American experience adds to her artistic values that she hopes to make more visible within the company. Since Graduating in 2023, she has remained a lecturer in the dance department and the advisor of Black Dance Association which is dedicated to providing a safe haven for Black dancers and resources to artistic freedom for undergraduates. Quianna is widely known as a "community dancer," participating in many local events and educational and mentoring programs and collaborating with many Columbus based artists. Quianna's experience in a myriad of dance forms has informed her teaching, and her technique is firmly rooted in the methods taught to her in her youth. Her work in these areas allowed her to become the inaugural recipient of the Artist Elevated award created by GCAC in 2021. She has presented work or research in NYC at Dixon Place, Ohio University, OhioDance Festival, and CADD at Duke University. Her favorite work is being a mother of two fun-loving teens and enjoys cultivating a nurturing and cultured environment for them to learn and grow.

A powerhouse of rhythm and grace, **Keishonda** discovered the transformative power of dance during college. Her journey includes intensive training in Ghana and Jamaica, study and work with Brazilian Master Dill Costa and Alfred Baker of the West Indian Folk Dance Company. She also performed with I'Naru, Chicago's first all-female Bomba company. As the founder of MANIFEST!, Keishonda empowers youth through dance and performance. She has taught for the Joffrey Ballet's Middle School Dance Program, Columbia College's Center for Community Arts Partnerships, the Beverly Arts Center, and served as Dance Director at Evanston Escola de Samba. A 2020–2021 Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching fellow, she researched the intersection of math and dance within ethnomathematics in Salvador, Bahia. She has danced as a musa with samba schools UPM and Tradição and was named Madrinha da Bateria with Vila Kennedy in 2025. A certified Zumba instructor, she continues to inspire through movement."

Augusto Soledade, a 2008 Guggenheim Fellow, is a Professor of Dance at the University of Florida. A native of Bahia, Brazil, Soledade began his dance training at the Federal University of Bahia and later trained with Garth Fagan and Clyde Morgan. He holds an MFA in Dance from SUNY Brockport and a degree in Journalism from the Federal University of Bahia. Since 2022, he has collaborated with Compagnie La Mangrove in Guadeloupe and is currently touring *Corpos*. His international engagements include serving as the mentor for the Black Creators in Dance International Residency at the Rio de Janeiro Choreographic Center (2019) and participating in the Vila Sul International Residency at the Goethe Institute in Bahia (2018). Soledade has received numerous honors, including multiple Miami-Dade Choreographer's Fellowships, the Knight Arts Challenge Grant, and awards from the State of Florida Division of Cultural Affairs.

Danny Long (professionally known as dani tirrell, dani as pronoun) is a Black, Trans Spectrum, Queer choreographer, dancer, curator, and educator whose work centers Black identity, ritual, and storytelling rooted in the African Diaspora. Founder and Artistic Director of The Congregation, dani creates movement works that honor Black life, history, and future possibilities. Their choreography includes *Black Bois*, *Leviticus or Love* and *to walk amongst HUMANS*, and most recently *Elysium: Leviticus or Love Book II* at Kubota Garden in Seattle. On October 11, 2025, dani's solo *Sin(k)in* was presented at the Baltimore Black Choreographers Festival at Creative Alliance. dani's work has been commissioned by Seattle Theatre Group, *On the Boards*, and *Velocity Dance Center*, and supported by NEFA, NPN, 4Culture, and Artist Trust. They have held leadership roles at Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas (Seattle) and *Dance Place* (Washington, D.C.).

Afaliah Tribune is a second-year MFA candidate in The Ohio State University's Dance Department. She holds a BFA in Dance from OSU and an MA in Dance in the Professions from NYU Steinhardt. A seasoned performer, she has toured with Rennie Harris Puremovement and appeared with artists such as Joe and 50 Cent, as well as on the MTV Music Awards and in Philip Hamilton's *VOICES*. Afaliah is the former faculty and Co-Advisor for the *Dances of the African Diaspora* track at

NYU Steinhardt's Dance Education Program. Her choreography has been presented at The Kennedy Center, DanceAfrica, Middlebury College, and The Wexner Center For The Arts. As Artistic Director of Afaliah Tribune Dance, she merges movement and music, drawing from her experience as a dancer, rapper, and singer to create work that connects deeply with audiences across communities and experiences.

Gabrielle Tull is an Associate Professor of dance, CVPA director of arts education, and dance education at Winthrop University in South Carolina. She is a MFA dance graduate from UNC Greensboro and received a M.Ed. in Divergent Learning Columbia College, SC. Artistically, Gabrielle has performed and collaborated with The Power Company, Terrance Henderson Inc. and BJ Sullivan. Her recent scholarship in the Afro Diaspora foundations in jazz technique was awarded the Artist Express Grant, funded by the VCA and the NEA in 2021. Additionally, she was a lead presenter for the 2022 CADD conference. Presently, she is one of the founding members and grant facilitators of the South Carolina Dance Educators Network, a professional organization that provides equitable access to quality professional resources in the state. As an artist, her work *Fight or Flight: Maternal Prowess* was adjudicated and selected for the 2025 ACDA SE Conference Gala performance.

Aysha Upchurch, the Dancing Diplomat, is an artist and educator who creates, facilitates, and designs for radical change. She is an embodied storyteller who leans on African diasporic movement to create works of joy, connection, and liberation. Named one of the nine women who shaped Hip Hop education by Upscale magazine, Aysha is committed to creating spaces to champion Hip Hop as an essential force in transformative education. She has been a John F. Kennedy Center commissioned artist, a Schonberg Dance Fellow at The Yard, and most recently a 2025 United States Artist Fellow. Aysha has been on faculty at George Mason University, Salem University, Harvard University, and UT Austin, where she is currently pursuing a PhD in Performance Studies to continue expanding the boundaries of scholarship so that it embraces the knowledge and power of the cypher, Hip Hop culture, and rituals of Black girl embodied play.

José Velasquez (he/him) is a hip hop dance educator, choreographer, and entrepreneur based in Durham, NC, with over 20 years of experience. As founder of Soul Struck, he blends cultural preservation, movement education, and community engagement to spotlight the social, artistic, and historical impact of Black and Latino street dance forms. His work bridges studio, stage, and street—centering authenticity, accessibility, and transformation through dance.

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Erika Villeroy da Costa is a dancer, scholar and a second-year Ph.D. student in Critical Dance Studies at University of California - Riverside. Her work is based in archival, historical, and embodied research around the black diaspora's transits through movement, and the intersections between Brazilian and U.S. dance histories from a transversal perspective. As a performer, teacher, and assistant choreographer, she has collaborated with Rio de Janeiro and Salvador-based companies and is currently a third-year candidate at the Institute for Dunham Technique Certification involved in the integration of Afro-Brazilian contemporary dances in her home country's college-level dance education curricula.

Kristi Vincent Johnson, a Louisiana native, is an artist-educator, choreographer, filmmaker, scholar, and author of the children's book *ABC Dance and Move With Me*. Her acclaimed dance films *I Want To Ask The Trees* and *The Communion of White Dresses*, inspired by the poetry of NC Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green, have been featured in the San Francisco Dance Film Festival, San Francisco Arthouse Film Festival, and Tryon International Film Festival. She was named the 2021 NC Campus Compact Engaged Faculty Scholar, a 2024 Trillium Arts Choreographic Fellow, and the 2025 Artist-in-Residence at the NC Museum of Art. Kristi holds a Master of Fine Arts in Dance from Texas Christian University and a Doctorate of Education from UNC Greensboro. She currently serves as Assistant Professor and Director of Dance at North Carolina Central University.

Sheila A. Ward is a tenured Professor at Norfolk State University and Director of the NSU Dance Theatre, Co-Director of and professional dancer with Eleone Dance Theatre of Philadelphia, PA, a licensed PreK-12 Virginia Educator with endorsements in Dance Arts, Health and Physical Education, and Health and Medical Sciences, and a Registered Kinesiotherapist. Integration of her degrees in exercise physiology, epidemiology/public health, and dance, has served as the foundation to promote 'Health Empowerment through Cultural Awareness,' the guiding principle from which she conducts scholarly activities related to chronic disease prevention and management. She has successfully received state, federal, and private funding for research and program implementation including authoring and implementing twelve (19) dance-related grants. Her presentations and publications on the international, national, state, and local levels are extensive and varied. She is a Fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine and Certified Instructors for Kariamu Welsh's Umfundalai African Dance Technique and the Katherine Dunham Technique (IDTC).

Alexandra Joye Warren is a Director/Choreographer, an Assistant Professor at Elon University's Music Theatre Program, and the Founding Artistic Director of JOYEMOEMENT. Alexandra is the 2025 recipient of the Jan Van Dyke Legacy Award, which honors an individual who makes NC a great place to dance. Alexandra's choreographic work has been commissioned by and/or presented at the Microsoft Corporation, American Dance Festival, Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and beyond. She is a contributing author of *Dance in Musical Theatre: A History of the Body in Movement*, edited by Phoebe Rumsey and Dustyn Martincin, published by Methuen Drama. She has completed post-graduate study and training at the Uprooted Jazz Dance Educators Workshop, the Summer Directing Intensive at Yale University and at L'École De Sables in Toubab Dialaw, Senegal. She is a graduate of Spelman College (BA) and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (MFA). @alexandrajoyewarren <https://www.alexandrajoye.com/>
<https://www.joyemovement.com>"

Charmaine Patricia Warren Jamaican born, performer, historian, consultant, and dance writer, is the founder/artistic director for "Black Dance Stories" and "Dance on the Lawn: Montclair's Dance Festival," Producer of DanceAfrica, Artistic Associate and Programming Director at BAM. She was the Director of dance at The Wassaic Project, curated E-Moves at Harlem Stage and danced with david roussève/REALITY. Charmaine was on faculty at Ailey/Fordham, Sarah Lawrence College, Hunter College and Kean University. She writes for Amsterdam News and Dance Magazine, and has written for the New York Times and has served as a panelist for various funding organizations. Charmaine holds a Ph.D. in History/Howard University, a Master's in Dance Research/City College, and Bachelor Degrees (Dance/English)/Montclair State College. She received the 2020 Bessie "Angel" Award and a 2017 Bessie for "Outstanding Performance" as a member of Skeleton Architecture Collective.

Camille Weanquoi is a freelance, interdisciplinary dance artist, cultural worker, and Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator of Dance at Coppin State University. She holds a B.A. in Dance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, a B.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies from Winston-Salem State University, and an M.F.A. in Choreography from Wilson College. Camille is the founder of Camille W. Dance, a culturally immersive consulting firm and performance company, the Executive Director and co-founder of the Baltimore Black Dance Collective, and co-founder/co-director of the Baltimore Black Choreographers Festival. Her work centers on African diasporic dance traditions and liberatory pedagogy. Additionally, she is a Dunham Technique-Certified Teacher. She is passionate about using dance to build community, honor ancestral memory, and empower the next generation of artists. Beyond her professional accolades, Camille is a devoted wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, and unwavering advocate for the arts.

As an anthropologist and dancer, **Katya Wesolowski** is interested in the possibilities that embodied practices open up for empathetic ways of being together, constructing and transmitting knowledge, and creating alternative futures. Her research and scholarship move through the African Diaspora, from Brazil to Angola, exploring the ways bodies in movement together can create spaces of radical openness and transformative belonging. Her first book, *Capoeira Connections: a Memoir in Motion* (UPF 2023), is a multi-sited ethnography that weaves together the local and global histories and flows of this Afro-Brazilian combat game with her own thirty-year trajectory as a practitioner, researcher and instructor. Her current research is on Afro-Brazilian activism on the Ilha de Itaparica in Bahia, Brazil where she also directs a two month volunteer and cultural immersion program for undergraduates at Duke University where she a Lecturing Fellow in Cultural Anthropology.

Taylor West is a Black dancer, choreographer, and teacher originally from Chitina (New Orleans). She holds a BFA in dance from Florida State University and has performed works by Millicent Johnnie, Christopher Huggins, and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar. Taylor's own work is rooted in explorations of identities and embodied histories, with Blackness at the core. She has presented her work at the Center for Performance Research in Brooklyn New York, and at MODArts Dance Collective's Collective Thread Festival, at Mixed Blood Theatre as part of Leslie Parker Dance Project's Black Dane Improvisation Festival, and at Red Eye Theatre's 2025 New Works 4 Weeks (NW4W) Festival. Taylor is also an artistic and administrative collaborator with Brownbody.

Ruka Hatua-Saar White is an Associate Professor of Dance at Boston Conservatory at Berklee and the Artistic Director of RUKADANCE LLC. A graduate of Florida State University (BFA) and Hollins University (MFA), his performance credits include the Limón Dance Company, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, PHILADANCO!, and Armitage Gone! Dance. Ruka's creative research investigates the intersections of Africanist aesthetics, commercial forms, and theatrical performance, crafting immersive works that blend jazz-funk, house, and storytelling through movement. His choreography has been featured at the Boston Center for the Arts, Jacob's Pillow, Agganis Arena. A 2025 BCA Dance Grant recipient and Elliott Norton Award nominee, Ruka continues to explore how rhythm, embodiment, and cultural memory shape the future of Black performance practice.

"A. Raheim White, Head of Movement in the Department of Theater at the University of Utah, stands at the forefront of wellness and mindfulness, seamlessly integrating their expertise as a specialist, keynote speaker, dancer-choreographer, and author. Raheim earned their MFA from New York University Tisch School of the Arts, BFA from the University of

Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, both in Dance, along with a formative semester at the Taipei National University of the Arts.

With dual certifications as a 200-hr yoga instructor and social-emotional learning facilitator, alongside credentials as a Reiki Master-Teacher and Akashic Record Reader, **Raheim White** embodies a holistic approach to personal and collective liberation. Their impactful work within Chicago's LGBTQ community has earned them a coveted Windy City Times' 30 Under 30 Award. Raheim is on a profound mission to illuminate a path toward visionary leadership, integrating deeply rooted wellness within education. More at TheTransformationWizard.com. Ruka Hatua-Saar White is an Associate Professor of Dance at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee and the Artistic Director of RUKADANCE LLC, a multidisciplinary company known for its bold fusion of Africanist aesthetics, cabaret, immersive theatre, and contemporary dance. A choreographer, director, educator, and cultural strategist, White creates work that interrogates identity, embodiment, and queer Black narratives through rigor, humor, and theatricality. His recent projects—including Lil-Red Velvet, Sugar Shack, Jook, and the interdisciplinary Drag Lab—reflect his commitment to storytelling that is as intellectually incisive as it is sensorially rich. White has taught and performed nationally and internationally, and his work has been supported by institutions such as Jacob's Pillow, Boston Center for the Arts, and the New England Foundation for the Arts. He is dedicated to cultivating artists who move with courage, criticality, and unapologetic imagination.

yaTande Whitney V. Hunter, Ph.D. (Philosophy, Art Theory and Aesthetics, Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts, 2013 David Driskell Fellow), MFA (New Media Arts and Performance, Long Island University), and BFA (Theatre Arts/Dance, Howard University). With his co-created, Denizen Arts Project, his work centers around cultivating individual and communal spirit through dance performance, education, and curation. yaTande's work has been supported and presented by such organizations and institutions as National Endowment for the Arts, Independence Fellowship, Temple University Vice Provost Arts Grant, Brown University Department of Africana Studies-Rites and Reason Theatre, Providence Arts, Culture and Tourism; New York State Council for the Arts; and others. He is a Barrymore nominated artist-scholar serving as a Temple University assistant professor of dance and coordinator of the African Diaspora Dance Series researching the convergences of sacred and secular ritual through Afro-spiritualit(ies) and Africanist principles as Afroist aesthetic in contemporary dance-performance.

Tamara Williams is a choreographer, scholar, and educator dedicated to preserving and elevating Black dance traditions. She has a BFA from Florida State University and MFA from Hollins University in partnership with The American Dance Festival/The Forsythe Company/Frankfurt University. As founder of Moving Spirits, Inc., her choreography has been presented internationally in Brazil, Jamaica, Benin, Germany, Switzerland, Mexico, Trinidad, Serbia, and more. Her publications include *Giving Life to Movement* and *The African Diaspora and Civic Engagement* (forthcoming). Williams has received awards and residencies including support from Dance/USA, the Alternate Roots, NCCAkrón and Kaatsbaan. She created Charlotte's annual LAVAGEM Festival. In 2024, she launched the International African Diaspora Dance Traditions Conference in Salvador, Bahia. She also co-directs the Benin Movement Research and Exchange. Tamara serves on the Dance/USA Board and advises the National Dance Project.

Aniya Wingate is a rising artist from Houston, TX, with a sharp focus on social/environmental justice storytelling through choreography. Currently a Senior Dance major at Sam Houston State University, her training started with Urban Souls Dance Company's Urban GIRLS project. Collaborating with Mentor, Walter Hull, and filmmaker, John Fiege, Aniya expressed her Hurricane Harvey experiences within the award-winning short film, *Shoulders Deep*. She is also the subject matter of the upcoming documentary film, *Raising Aniya*, "a coming of age film of a young girl searching for the truth in environmental justice issues in the Gulf Coast region." She has been featured at the Climate Story Lab, the Original Thinkers Film Festival, the Climate Woke Convention, the National Mentoring Summit, and the Black Youth Town Hall by Mentor.

Ahtoy Juliana WonPat-Borja, PhD (she/her) is a performer and educator in the Afro-Latinx social dance community (where she is known as Ahtoy Juliana). She grew up on Guam and has indigenous CHamoru and Cuban ancestry. She is the Artistic Director of BAILA Society in New York City, a dance and theater company that celebrates Afro-Latinx dance and music heritage through its international repertory company, live classes, community events, and cultural preservation efforts. Ahtoy is also a Latin Hustle world champion and produces and adjudicates Afro-Latinx dance competitions worldwide.

S. Ama Wray, Ph.D. is a TEDx Speaker and Dance Professor at UC Irvine. A multidisciplinary artist from the UK, she began her career with London Contemporary Dance Theatre and Ballet Rambert before founding JazzXchange Music and Dance Company. As a choreographer and director, she has collaborated with renowned artists like Wynton Marsalis, Bobby McFerrin, Nicole Mitchell, and Mojisola Adebayo. Receiving her Ph.D. from the University of Surrey, Dr. Wray created Embodiology®, a systems thinking approach to creativity, structured by indigenous knowledge, redefining practices for human flourishing. She has received Fellowships from the Mind and Life Institute, The Newkirk Center for Science and

Society, and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts. Her innovations extend through AI 4 Afrika, an initiative she co-founded with scholars and data scientists. Inspired by Embodiology®, she has developed professional programs for NYC public schools, Los Angeles Unified School District, and medical schools like UC Irvine's School of Medicine.

Thick Like Me (TLM) is a national nonprofit dance collective championing body liberation and holistic health. Through scholarship, performance, and creative collaboration, we elevate the labor, artistry, and unique knowledge of thick Black women in dance and beyond. We aim to uproot intersectional systemic oppressions while fostering spaces of justice and holistic wellness.

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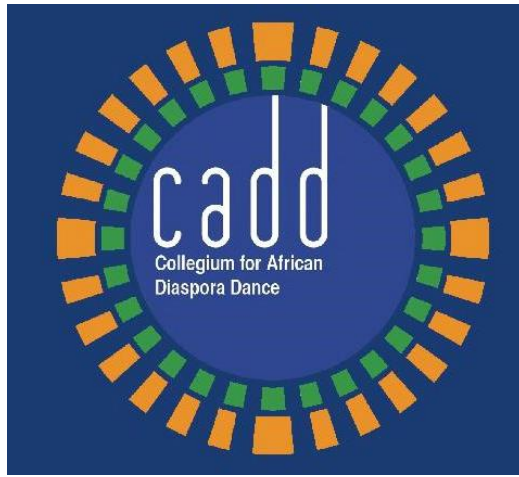
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