

**DANCING THE AFRICAN DIASPORA**

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**EMBODYING THE  
AFROFUTURE**



**2ND BI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
FEBRUARY 19-21, 2016  
DUKE UNIVERSITY  
[www.cadd-online.org](http://www.cadd-online.org)**

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND FEATURED GUESTS

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**VALERIE ASHBY**  
Dean, Trinity College  
of Arts & Sciences,  
Duke University  
Friday, 1:30 PM



**KYLE ABRAHAM**  
**ABRAHAM IN MOTION**  
Performance: Friday, 8 PM  
Panel: Sunday, 1 PM



**JOHN PERPENER III**  
Plenary: Eleo Pomare:  
Artist and Activist  
Friday, 2 PM



**NIV ACOSTA**  
Performance: Friday, 10:30 PM



**MARK ANTHONY NEAL**  
Professor, African & African American  
Studies, and Founding Director, Center for  
Arts, Digital Culture and Entrepreneurship  
Duke University  
Sunday, 11:30 AM



**NADINE GEORGE**  
Closing Plenary: Reflections in the  
Academic (Afro)Future  
Sunday, Noon



FEBRUARY 19-21, 2016  
**DUKE UNIVERSITY**



**African & African  
American Studies**  
Duke University

## WELCOME TO DANCING THE AFRICAN DIASPORA: EMBODYING THE AFROFUTURE!

Thanks be to you, as you have chosen to take time from your busy lives to share your research, energy, and expertise here at Duke University this weekend. We gather to explore the many ways that Dance shapes and enlivens Black lives, locally, regionally, and globally. We meet to construct and engage discourse to imagine capacities for Black Dance in global and transhistorical assemblage. We are a diverse group: scholars, practitioners, educators, students, parents, parishioners, partners, and other stakeholders for three days of intellectual and artistic inspiration. We encourage your active engagement and participation throughout the conference weekend.

And we wonder at the possibilities of the AfroFuture.

**AFROFUTURISM IS A 20TH CENTURY AESTHETIC THAT COMBINES ELEMENTS OF SCIENCE FICTION, HISTORICAL FICTION, FANTASY, AND MAGICAL REALISM, USED BY ARTISTS TO EXPLORE BLACK FUTURES THAT STEM FROM AFRODIASPORIC EXPERIENCES.**

The AfroFuture insists that Black lives will persevere, and that the Arts will have an important role in sustaining our shared ideals of how we can live and prosper alongside each other.

We propose that Black Dance in the AfroFuture will be unexpected and entirely dynamic. This conference will offer us all a glimpse on how Black Dance might help us understand our humanity through embodied creative philosophies and practices.

We are grateful for your presence at our second conference, and hope you will join us again for a future gathering in 2018. Thank you for your support of CADD and your commitment to exploring the possibilities of an Embodied AfroFuture with us!

*Thomas F. DeFrantz and Takiyah Nur Amin*

## THE COLLEGIUM FOR AFRICAN DIASPORA DANCE

In April 2012, the founding members of CADD (then the African Dance Research Group) convened in Durham to discuss current research projects and share ambitions for developing a group of scholars working in the areas of African diaspora dance. Our work in corporeality studies, Black Dance, sexualities and dance, dance historiography, dance and healing, dance and pedagogy, the businesses of dance, and an array of other topics seemed a fruitful space for considering how we might use our collective energies to foster ongoing dialogue around these areas of interest. By the end of that weekend, we established ourselves as the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance.

An intentionally diverse group of dance scholars and community members, the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance (CADD) is an egalitarian community committed to exploring, promoting, and engaging African diaspora dance as a resource and method of aesthetic identity. Through conferences, roundtables, publications and public events we aim to facilitate interdisciplinary inquiry that captures the variety of topics, approaches, and methods that might constitute Black Dance Studies.

### CADD FOUNDING MEMBERS

Takiyah Nur Amin

Thomas F. DeFrantz

Shireen Dickson

Nadine George Graves

Jasmine Johnson

Raquel Monroe

C. Kemal Nance

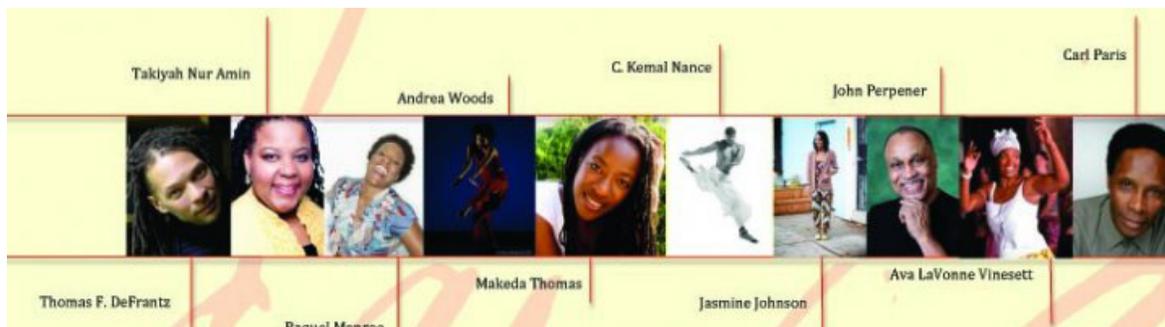
Carl Paris

John Perpener

Makeda Thomas

Andrea E. Woods Valdes

Ava LaVonne Vinesett



**NOON-7 PM**

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**REGISTRATION**

**EAST DUKE 209**

**1:00 PM**

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**PROCESSIONAL**

**DANCING THE AFRICAN DIASPORA: EMBODYING THE AFROFUTURE!** opens with an invocation from **Dr. Charles “Baba Chuck” Davis** to all who have cleared the path, offers guidance and inspires us in our ability to dance the African Diaspora. **Musician Richard J. Vinesett** and members of the **Duke African Repertory Ensemble** will join Baba Chuck as he leads the opening processional.

**EAST DUKE 209**



**1:15-1:30 PM**

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**WELCOME**

*Valerie Sheares Ashby*

*Dean, Trinity College of Arts & Sciences, Duke University*

**WHITE LECTURE HALL**



**1:30-2:00 PM**

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**OPENING REMARKS**

*Takiyah Nur Amin*

*Assistant Professor of Dance, UNC Charlotte*

*Co-Founding Director, Collegium for African Diaspora Dance*

**WHITE LECTURE HALL**





## DANCING THE AFRO-FUTURE

*thomas f. defrantz*

the afrofuture.

the afrofuture is unafraid.

the afrofuture knows that it is complex and unapologetic.

the afrofuture admires collective action.

the afrofuture is physical sensation, bound up with emotion and spiritual possibility.

the afrofuture is yesterday and tomorrow... and tomorrow and more of tomorrow and tomorrow.

we dance to demonstrate our protest of the assumption of a unified subject.

we are not one thing, we who are invested in black and african diaspora dance, and this conference confirms this. We are ballet and orisha dances, senegal and brazil, urban moves and postmodern stages. We imagine forward together. Knowing how different we are from each other, and how aligned we are in this pursuit of an African diasporic understanding of social possibility and art, we imagine forward together.

2:00-3:00 PM

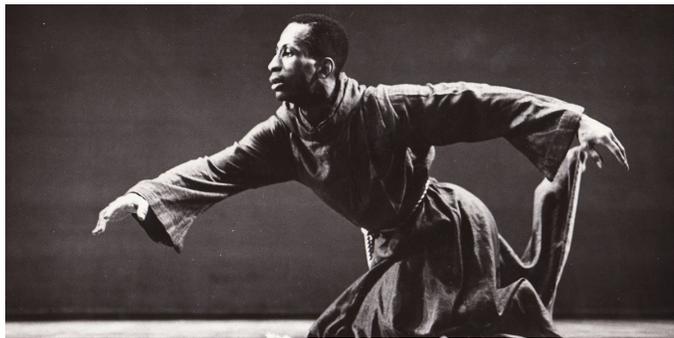
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**PLENARY: ELEO POMARE: ARTIST AND ACTIVIST**

*John Perpener, III*

Born in Colombia, **Eleo Pomare (1933 - 2008)** was an African-American dancer/choreographer whose artistry played a pivotal role in establishing a black aesthetic in theatrical concert dance in America and abroad. This presentation will serve as an overview of some of the major influences that shaped his artistic trajectory, including his early years in Europe, his initial efforts to establish a company in the United States, and his role as an artistic, social, and political activist during the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

His uncompromising approach to his work distinguished him as an artist who was not afraid to confront matters of racial injustice, sexual preference, and human rights in his expansive repertoire of works. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**



*Eleo-Pomare, Cantos from a Monastery (1956). Photo: InDaily*

3:30-4:30 PM

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**LECTURE: CIRCLE OF RHYTHMS: FRENCH CARIBBEAN DANCE, RESISTANCE AND TRANSCENDENCE,** *Jacqueline Conti.*

This presentation explores how French Caribbean dance is a vehicle of resistance and transcendence for individuals who are disconnected from their culture and their past. I examine the influence of black ancestral roots on individuals who are on a quest for bourgeois ideals of propriety. I will particularly look at the main protagonist of *Macadams Dream*, a novel by the Guadeloupean author Gisele Pineau, to illustrate how through the spirituality of dance, the fragmented body and soul can become whole again. This presentation includes a historical survey of French Caribbean dance and will be followed by a mini dance workshop. **EAST DUKE 204A**

**LECTURE: THE CURATORIAL PRACTICE IN PERFORMANCE OF AFRICAN DIASPORIC ART FORMS: THE EVOLUTION OF A FUTURIST AFRICAN DIASPORIC CURATOR,** *Jo Anna Norris.*

This session seeks to explore the processes of curatorial development of work within art forms of the African Diaspora; through the demystification of the creative processes of African Diasporic Artists and the evolutionary prospective and development of a Futurist African Diasporic Curator. This session will also, address current curatorial perspectives, trends, issues and best practices within the field through the process of engaging dialogue. **NELSON MUSIC ROOM**

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**PRESENTATION: SAVING THE PAST TO ENSURE THE FUTURE: A SHORT FILM ON THE ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL AUTHENTIC KATHERINE DUNHAM TECHNIQUE SEMINAR, *Aimee Glocke.***

Katherine Dunham, an African American actress, dancer, singer, activist, scholar, and choreographer, could have chosen anywhere in the world to live, house her museum, and host her annual technique seminar; but, she but, she chose East St. Louis, Illinois because she wanted to ensure she was always entrenched in the African/Black community.

In October 2014, the **Katherine Dunham Museum** was on the verge of being sold for auction because of a lack of funding and owing over \$7,000 in back taxes. This presentation will discuss our fight to keep the Katherine Dunham Museum open and to ensure that the Annual International Authentic Katherine Dunham Technique Seminar continues to be held every summer through the creation of a short documentary film, with dance filmmaker, Ali Grossman, on the 2014 Annual International Authentic Katherine Dunham Technique Seminar.

**WHITE 106**



*Katherine Dunham Museum, East St. Louis, Illinois. Photo: Jesse*

**WORKSHOP: EMBODYING THE AFROFUTURE: A POLYCENTRIC AND POLYRHYTHMIC APPROACH, *Cristina Rosa.***

This contemporary dance workshop invites participants to re-imagine their moving/thinking bodies as polycentric structures in space capable of producing more than one rhythm at a time. Class begins with a series of exercises distilled from capoeira, samba-reggae, kuduro, reggaeton, and tango, designed to teach students the mechanics of this polycentric-and-polyrhythmic system of bodily organization and knowledge production. Next, we will depart from this particular way of organizing the body to think and act, to create structured improvisations and call-and-response dialogues. We will close with a short phrase that privileges high-affect juxtaposition, serpentine pathways, coolness, dissonance, and serious play. **HULL 1**

**WORKSHOP: DISCOVERING OUR FUTURE BODY: MOVEMENT MAKING FOR THE LIBERATION OF BLACK WOMEN, *Sydney Mosley, Rachel Russell.***

This workshop will address the questions: What is our future body? How do the freedom tools we have identified as radical ways of being and regenerating, lead us to this future body? The workshop, formatted as an interactive talk, will include a performed excerpt of Mosley's collaboratively-devised dance CAKE, which interrogates respectability politics of black women. Through the exploration of black women's physicality, the workshop will examine the appropriation of **black women's movement** practices and its impact on the generating of movement for survival, exhaustion from regeneration, and the reclaiming of bodily agency through dance as a means of resistance and rejuvenation. **HULL/SLIPPAGE**



**WORKSHOP: HOW CAN DANCE BE USED TO EXPLORE SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE CLASSROOM? *Maxine Montilus.***

In this session, participants will experience a workshop geared towards teens on how to use dance to explore the issue of police brutality. Discussion of performative gestures will help jumpstart discussions and explorations of this topic through movement and writing exercises. **BIVINS STUDIO**

4:45-6:15 PM

**PAPERS: BODY/MEMORY**

**CHOREOGRAPHING GHOSTS**, *Kemi Craig*. Dance is central to African American life in the post Emancipation era. Concurrently, this period is marked with the need to account for slavery's trauma. (As such) How do we choreograph the ghosts of our pasts and the traumas of our present to actively shape our future? This presentation investigates the ways that black bodies harness struggle and resistance to actively shape present and future possibilities of (African American) existence. Afrofuturism and performativity are central to my investigation. Through academic and experiential methodologies, I will initiate a dialogue about our bodies and the embodied possibilities of African American futures. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**

**DANCE: A CONTEMPORARY DIALOGUE OF ACTION IN THE CONTEXT OF MEMORY**, *Rhodnie Desir*.

What are the heritage of the Slave trade in the dance expression and how does it nourishes the contemporary artistic creation? If today's African diaspora heritage translates itself within the live traditions of dance singing and rhythms, and transcends time, how and for whom do we translate it, as a form of education? As a response in action, the analysis of the first phase (Martinique) of the BOW'T TRAIL, held in 40 countries that share the past history of the slave trade through the rhythmic artistic recreation of the slave resistance, this research will be revealed and demonstrated. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**

**NOW YOU SEE ME, NOW YOU DON'T: EXPLORING THE INCONGRUITY OF DANCING SKIN**, *Kamogelo Moloby*.

One cannot ignore the most potent signifier of a performer on stage: their body. The performing body brings with it, intended or not, loaded readings of a work's subject matter. Race is one such issue that is informed by the skin of a performer. Skin informs the ways in which the body is observed and written about because of the body's inherent presence on stage. The skin--the carrier of race, culture, and memories--bears imprints, not only of race, but of social location which at times informs the audiences' framing and interpretation of a work. As a young black emerging choreographer in South Africa it has become noticeable that Afrofuturism provides a significant platform for the imagining of possible futures through black cultural lenses. These afrofuturistic cultures, that will be located within black South African choreography and arts, shed light in the ways South African artists encourage experimentation, the re-imagining of identities, and opening of collaborations. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**



*Kamogelo Moloby and Mapx Gabang in Traces (2015). Photo: Mia van der Merwe*

**THE BLACK BODY ANARCHIZED: THE POTENTIALITY OF CHOREOGRAPHIC REVOLT**, *Malik*

*Nashad Sharpe*. This is a paper/presentation that critically engages the experience of Blackness amidst atrocious racial genocide in the U.S., theories and practices of anarchy, and the "Choreographic," in order to make a case for the understated, yet highly varied modes of politicality in Black choreography. Contextualizing this presentation in our culturally historic moment where the visibility of Black protest (choreography) enters new and spectacular

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view, this presentation will make a bold call to reconsider limiting definitions of the “Choreographic” in order to radically include Black protest, and cultural subversiveness. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**

## PAPERS: MASCULINITY

**CHOREOGRAPHING COUNTER-NARRATIVE: DANCE AND CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS IN THE WORK OF KYLE ABRAHAM**, *Mila Thigpen*. The Kyle Abraham and Abraham in Motion dance company’s 2014 project, *When the Wolves Came In*, offers a movement-based counter-narrative in response to the dominant master narrative about the social conditions igniting civil rights activity during the mid-twentieth century in the United States. *When the Wolves Came In* uses the tool of counter-narrative as expressed through choreography to give voice to an often-muted experience of inequality. Critical Race Theory or CRT is useful for analyzing this dance performance, and Andre Lepecki’s theories of choreopolitics and choreopolicing (Lepecki, 2013) further examine Abraham’s choreography. **EAST DUKE 204B**



*African-American Vaudeville Publicity (1914). Photo: G. Dobkin, City of Vancouver Archives #371-2165*

## **MISS BERT WHITMAN MEETS DYKE ASTAIRE: DANCED MASCULINITY AND EMBODIED RESEARCH**, *Margaret Morrison*.

*Miss Bert Whitman Meets Dyke Astaire: A Queer Vaudeville* is a dance theater dramatization of Alberta “Bert” Whitman (1887-1965), the star male impersonator of **African-American vaudeville**. Whitman did not ask to be resurrected, especially not by a white, tap dancing drag king with a passion for critical race theory. Margaret Morrison (Dyke Astaire) presents video footage of her envisioning of Whitman, portrayed by actor Ava Jenkins, and discusses the research and rehearsal process: the re-seeing, re-hearing, re-embodiment of Whitman’s danced masculinity, the inherent unequal power relationship between subject and playwright-choreographer, and the interplay between queerness and the politics of respectability. **EAST DUKE 204B**

## **THERE WERE MEN IN THAT FIRE, TOO!: MASCULINITIES IN KARIAMU WELSH’S**

**RAAAHMONAAA!** *C. Kemal Nance*. For men who have studied the Umfundalai technique of African dance and who have performed with its premier demonstration company, Kariamuu & Company: Traditions, dancing Kariamuu Welsh’s “Raaahmonaaa!” serves as a portal for maleness. Welsh choreographed “Raaahmonaaa!” as an all-female work in 1989 as an homage to the real-life, Ramona Africa, the lone adult survivor of the 1986 MOVE bombing in West Philadelphia, and to all Black women of protest. As Umfundalai’s dancing men integrate the cast from 1996 to 2013, they not only change the dance but they find power and strength as masculine expressions in their performance. **EAST DUKE 204B**

## PRESENTATIONS: SEXUAL CULTURES

**AFROFUTURISM AND BLACK SEXUAL CULTURES**, *LaMonda Horton-Stallings*. In this presentation, I will link philosophies of Afro-futurism with assessments of black sexual cultures. I discuss the importance of dance as embodied creativity and imagination, an important method for conveying futuristic knowledge about black sexuality. Using a video recording of my satirical choreo-story performance: *Funk’s Public Bliss*, I reflect on why sex toys, pleasure, and spirituality are important to Black women’s future movements. I analyze my use

of sonic technology, collaboration with a stripper, and short-story to think through future predicaments of black women's desires and feminist politics. **EAST DUKE 204A**

**FORM & FUNCTION: THE PRESENCE OF NUDITY AS COSTUME AND SOCIAL COMMENTARY,** *Melanie Greene*. With consideration to historical and political contexts surrounding race in the U.S. and the presence of the white gaze on black and brown bodies, how do we [audiences] experience and engage in dialogues surrounding the presence of nudity in the work of black contemporary dance artists? How can we experience and investigate these artistic choices with consideration to an Afro-futuristic lens. **EAST DUKE 204A**

**WORKSHOP: IMPROVISATION: EMBODIOLOGICALLY SPEAKING,** *Sheron Wray*. Rhythm communicates; it reflects spoken language; it critically observes silence and it advances through repetitions with deference toward difference. In this workshop I lead participants through an examination of Dynamic Rhythm, as the operating framework shaping creativity in African and African-derived improvisation. The significance of musicality is well appreciated by practitioners of African and Diasporan dance, yet it has been under-appreciated as one of the supreme determining forces that cognitively and somatically produce aesthetic ends. The rhythmic network, both a concept and a grounded experience is explored multi- dimensionally through Embodiology- the study of improvisation as pursued in Africanist performance. **NELSON MUSIC ROOM**

**WORKSHOP: PEPSI BETHEL: MISSING AUTHENTIC JAZZ DANCE LINK,** *Karen W. Hubbard*. Beyond swing/social-dance culture Bethel's work (performer, teacher and choreographer) is largely unrecognized. Sadly, a well-regarded NY dance writer reported information in his obituary incorrectly. Based on primary source and ethnographic research this session sheds light on the unwritten authentic jazz dance history of Pepsi Bethel; corrects misinformation; examines Pepsi's work in the context of popular and concert dance; and raises questions about the future of vernacular jazz and concert jazz dance in relation to Dance Studies. Visuals include Pepsi's Lecture/Demonstration/Performance THAT'S IT! (London 1986). Participants will also experience authentic jazz dance style and learn Pepsi's signature curtain call/finale. **ARK**



*Pepsi Bethel*  
Photo: Nathaniel Tileston

**5:00-6:00 PM**

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## **PAPERS: CONTEMPORARY WOMEN**

**ENCLOSED PASSAGE: ON THE SPACE-TIME OF TAISHA PAGGETT'S PERFORMATIVE VESTIBULARITY,** *Tara Aisha Willis*. This paper elaborates a concept of vestibular space "a geography of space/ time, body/surroundings" as it illuminates bodily negotiations of blackness and racial distinction. Examining choreographer taisha paggett's performance installation for the Whitney Museum's 2014 Biennial (highly criticized for its institutional racism), I call on Hortense J. Spillers' notion of black women as "vestibular subject[s] of culture" and consider the kinetics and corporeality of paggett's body in space and in performance as she inhabited (and most often, left only traces in) the space over the course of the week. **EAST DUKE 204D**

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**WOMEN ON THE MOVE: TRANSNATIONALISM AND THE AFRICAN CONTEMPORARY DANCE AESTHETICS OF ZAB MABOUNGOU, NORA CHIPAUMIRE AND ALESANDRA SEUTIN.** *Sabine Sorgel.*



*Nora Chipaumire, Miriam (2012). Photo: Antoine Tempe*

The paper examines the political impact of female choreographers on the aesthetics of African Contemporary Dance in the UK, Canada and the U.S. Zab Maboungou's "Incantation" (1999), **Nora Chipaumire's "Miriam" (2012)** and Alesandra Seutin's "This is Not Black (Ceci C'est Pas Noire)" (2013) will be discussed as transnational and nomadic, however, in this instance specifically focusing on a feminist Africanist perspective of deterritorialization. Whilst African diasporic experience forms the heart of their choreographic process which interweaves a distinct Africanist politics and feminist perspective, the paper questions the global dimension of African Contemporary dance as mode of public intervention. **EAST DUKE 204D**

**WORKSHOP: COLOR, MY BLACKNESS: FINDING THE MUSIC AND MOVEMENT,** *Theava Ward.* The poem, "Color, My Blackness," comes from my collection of poetry, "From The Heart Of a Sistah," (1992). uses color, movement and sound as metaphors. The workshop would be an opportunity to explore racial and cultural identity through poetry, movement and music. **HULL 1**

**WORKSHOP: THERE ARE NO PEOPLE HERE: THE DISAPPEARANCE OF BLACK BODIES IN WAKE OF POLICE KILLINGS IN THE U.S.** *Jennifer Harge.* This movement based workshop will investigate the possibilities of protest performance. The session aims to create a demonstration that memorializes the black bodies killed at the hands of police, while promoting an urgency of protesting rhetorics in contemporary performance. We will explore gestures, chants, short biographies and body positions associated with the victims to see how the performing body (both physically and verbally) can be used to heighten our current culture of resistance. **HULL/SLIPPAGE**

**WORKSHOP: AFRICAN DANCE TECHNIQUES AND SPIRIT HEALING,** *Amina Heckstall.* African dance is often seen as a rhythm based, non technical, energetic dance form. Rarely can one see that most if not all, modern dance techniques were derived from African movements. There is a technique for every style of African dance, as well as a spiritual bond that connects a dancer to the dance and the music. I want to teach these techniques and give African dance the proper respect, in a dancers repertoire, as being a worthy and necessary style of dance to have under ones belt. I also will teach its healing properties, as well. **BIVINS STUDIO**



*Katherine Dunham, Stormy Weather (1943)*

**LECTURE: DUNHAM PEDAGOGY AND ACTIVISM: A CONVERSATION WITH APRIL BERRY AND JOSHUA LEGG.** **Katherine Dunham** is credited for developing one of the most important pedagogues for teaching dance that is used throughout the world. Dunham revolutionized American dance by fusing anthropological research into the realm of dance artistry by uniquely including social and cultural rituals into public performance and

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incorporating individualistic dance movements from African, Caribbean, and American culture into one style. Dunham's influence crosses generations and genres and can be seen in the work of many contemporary dance choreographers and companies. This session will be structured in a conversational format promoting dialogue that bridges the cultural, social, artistic and academic divide. **WHITE 106**

**6:00-7:30 PM**

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**DINNER**

**EAST DUKE 209**

**8:00 PM**

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**ABRAHAM.IN.MOTION PERFORMANCE**

Post-Performance discussion hosted by Thomas F. DeFrantz

**REYNOLDS INDUSTRIES THEATRE, BRYAN CENTER, DUKE WEST CAMPUS**



*Abraham.In.Motion. Photo: Ian Douglas*

**10:30 PM**

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*Niv Acosta. Photo: The LGBT Update*

**FEATURED GUEST: NIV ACOSTA**

Hosted by Durham Independent Dance Artists (DIDA).

Open to the Public.

**HULL/SLIPPAGE**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2016



**8:00 AM-3:00 PM**

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**REGISTRATION**

**EAST DUKE 209**

**8:00-9:00 AM**

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**BREAKFAST**

**EAST DUKE 209**

**8:15-9:00 AM**

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**MEET-UP: OUR SISTERS' SHELTER: A WORKING CONVERSATION.** *Adanna Jones, A'Keitha Carey.*

This town hall meeting is designed to both understand and address the concerns of women of color in dance, particularly students in higher education. Our intention is to develop a retreat that provides healing, support, and strategies for navigating the oppressive, and at times traumatizing, systems of academe. Whether actively enrolled or recovering from past experiences, this conversation is open to all persons who would be interested in participating in this retreat, either as a patron and/or as an organizer. Our ultimate goal here is to plant the seeds necessary to build a supportive community of women of color, for women of color, and by women of color. Currently, the questions we are looking to address are: 1. Who is interested in attending and for what reasons? 2. What are your needs and what would you want to experience at this retreat? **BLUE PARLOR**

**9:00-10:00 AM**

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**PLENARY PANEL: AFRICAN DANCE IN AMERICA: KARIAMU WELSH, YVONNE DANIEL, NAOMI JOHNSON-DIOUF, ZAKARYA DIOUF, BABA CHUCK DAVIS.** *Esailama G. Artry-Diouf Moderator.*

2016 marks the 20th anniversary of Kariamuu Welsh's first volume of *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical and Philosophical Inquiry*. Since this volume, much has progressed and changed within the study, practice and performance of African-derived dance in the United States. This panel of six long time professional artists and scholars will discuss the shifts that have taken place in the field of African performing arts and offer suggestions as to how can African performing arts in the United States be sustained and supported for future generations to come. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**



*Panelists (l to r): Naomi Johnson-Diouf, Dr. Zakaryya Diouf, Dr. Kariamuu Welsh, Dr. Yvonne Daniel, and Baba Chuck Davis*

10:15-11:45 AM

**PAPERS: DANCING BODY****BLACK BODY BETWEEN THE LINES: MARY HINKSON DANCING GRAHAM AND**

**TRANSFORMING WHITE SPACES**, *Melanye White Dixon*. This paper interrogates the notion of dance and activism of Mary Hinkson (1925-2014) during her performance career with the Martha Graham Dance Company from 1951 to 1973. It situates her as an agent of change as she sought to promote a particular aesthetic during post World War II America and the direct-action phase of the Civil Rights movement. In this paper, I argue that Hinkson was performing change as a Black woman who stepped into traditionally “whites only” concert dance spaces challenging cultural hegemony in American contemporary dance. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**

**LISTENING FOR THE BREAK: THE KINETIC-SOUND BODY**, *Charmian Wells*. What ethical-political praxis is proposed by the dancing body that “listens for the break”? The structural framework in many African diaspora dance practices, a polyrhythmic regularity with irregular rhythmic breaks that signal a shift in movement for the dancer, proposes a body that is simultaneously active and receptive, in directed, intentional motion and yet capable of shifting in relation to the inevitable, but (un)anticipatable rupture of the break in the rhythm. This physical orientation negotiates between internal and external. It is a performance of the body as a simultaneously responsive and active place, a dynamic kinetic-sound body. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**

**THE BLACK DANCING BODY VERSUS THE BLACK DANCE FORM**, *Yassmin V. Foster*. This session will discuss the ability to recognise black dance form, even when, it is not being performed by a black dancing body. Questioning not what we know, but instead how we know it. We will interrogate practice through (LMA) Laban Movement Analysis, to illuminate the thick description of a black dance form, to address the question of virtuality and technologies of mediation. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**

**ZAB MABOUNGOU AND THE CREATION OF “CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN DANCE” IN MONTREAL**, *Melissa Templeton*. This paper examines the work of Montreal-based choreographer **Zab Maboungou** and the challenges her work poses to Eurocentrism in Canada. Looking at her community activism, her pedagogy, and her creation of a “Contemporary African” dance aesthetic, I argue that Maboungou creates an ontological language for philosophical contemplation that effectively counters implicit assumptions about culture (and in particular, assumptions that derive from the European Enlightenment). Based on research conducted in Montreal and Toronto from 2011-2012, this project uses movement analysis, archival research, and participant-based ethnography to demonstrate Maboungou’s counter-ontology and identify her strategies for navigating potentially racist paradigms in Canada. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**



*Zab Maboungou. Photo: Curious Montreal*

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## PAPERS: URBAN BODY

### DANCING QUEER: SIMULTANEOUS REVELATION AND CONCEALMENT IN KYLE ABRAHAM'S

"THE REALEST MC," *Clare Croft*. Kyle Abraham's "The Realest MC" ends as the work's main figure, a young black man, steps to a microphone, turns his back to the audience, and takes off his Adidas jacket to reveal a panel of shimmering gold sequins that ripple in the light as though speaking into the microphone. This paper argues that this moment, read in the context of the larger work, is one that offers up the possibility of queer dance as a social aspiration--one simultaneously invested in the revelation and concealment of gender, sexuality, and race.

**EAST DUKE 204B**

### SOUL TRAIN: BLACK DANCE AND POPULAR CULTURE APPROPRIATION IN LIVING COLOR,



*Don Cornelius' Soul Train*

*Tamara Brown*. This presentation specifically looks at **Don Cornelius's *Soul Train***, the longest-running, black nationally syndicated show. The televised dance show followed on the continuum of other popular dance shows geared toward teenagers, but the ones like Washington, D.C.'s *Teenarama* targeted a black audience. In terms of televised popular culture, Don Cornelius embodied the Black Power Movement, as part of the Black Liberation Struggle, and its cultural component that professed "Black is Beautiful!" He insisted on a black show with predominately black talent onscreen and behind the scenes. The popularity of the show threatened that of Dick Clark's *American Bandstand* and led to conflict between the two hosts/producers. *Soul Train* offered a voyeuristic look into black vernacular/popular dance for those outside of the culture and an easy avenue for cultural appropriation. **EAST DUKE 204B**

### THE URBAN PERFORMING BODY AS A SITE FOR CULTURAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DISCOURSE,

*Lutomi Kassim*. Embedded within many indigenous languages and the semantics embraced by London's vast and multi-cultures and subcultures, is an innate understanding of our cultural, political and social interconnectedness, and the reciprocal and vicarious nature of our bodies' being, thus the performing body becomes a unifying platform for cultural discourse and artistic political statements. In urban performance art, this interconnectedness is further enhanced through a polyrhythmic verbal and somatic (of movement) phrasing which emerges from its expressive forms. It has been noted that whilst there is a wealth of creative output in this area of art, there is a deficit in accredited academic writing to inform and underpin the evolving genre of performance and visual art. **EAST DUKE 204B**

### LECTURE/PANEL: DON'T SWEAT THE TECHNIQUE: VISIONS OF HIP HOP DANCE PEDAGOGY IN THE ACADEMIC SETTING,

*Natalie Marrone, Teena Marie Custer*. The purpose of this panel/presentation is to bend our minds and thoughts to the teaching of Hip Hop dance styles within the academic setting. Together we hope to create a rich platform upon which 1) discuss diverse pedagogical movement methodologies being employed in Hip Hop dance courses; 2) describe the challenges of teaching within the delicate space of Hip Hop's popularized culture to the already "learned" student; 3) reflect upon the embodied intercultural dialogue amongst diverse Hip Hop dance students stemming from the rich yet complex translations of the diaspora; and 4) question the goals of Hip Hop dance training within the academic setting. **EAST DUKE 204D**

**LECTURE/ PERFORMANCE: M\*SHAKA\*FUSION, LLC PRESENTS: SPIRIT OF A PEOPLE. THE CULTURAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLACK AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY THROUGH DANCE,** *Melanie D. Driver-Milow.* Is Hip Hop a Folk Dance? Can cultures evolve? The purpose of this session is to address and answer these two questions. During this 90 minute Lecture Demonstration participants will explore these ideas through traditional lecture and active dance methodologies. Topics covered include, The Five Definitive Traits of African Dance, The Five Building Blocks of Culture, The Nine Realms of Community, and the important role that dance has served in the cultural identity development of the Black African American Community, and its impact internationally. **ARK**

**WORKSHOP: ENTREPRENEURSHIP ELEMENTS & CAREER STRATEGIES FOR ARTISTS,** *Duane Cyrus.* Artists with strong business skills are more likely to realize successful, sustainable careers. This workshop provides an overview of tools and resources for performing artists focusing on speaking about/representing your work; vision/mission statement development; project/venture planning, and budgeting. The goal is to cultivate understanding of one's value as contributor to the creative/performing arts market. This interactive workshop offers participants fun and creative challenges exploring the elements of entrepreneurship: Vision; Investigation; Planning; Implementation; and Assessment. Participants work individually and collaboratively to support the idea that every artist is a member of a "creative class" contributing to a community's economic vitality. **EAST DUKE 204A**



*Carol Martin, Duane Cyrus*

**WORKSHOP: EXPLORING UMFUNDALAI AFRICAN DANCE TECHNIQUE,** *Jamie Shakur.* This movement workshop aims to teach Umfundalai and discuss how it identifies with African symbols, art and culture. Umfundalai is a contemporary African dance technique started by Dr. Kariamu Welsh in 1970. Umfundalai means essence or essential, and it is a codified dance technique that draws from and inspired by various styles, art and cultures from the African continent and the African Diaspora. **BIVINS STUDIO**

**WORKSHOP: KINTSUGI: THE ART OF HEALING,** *Carlos Funn.* Kintsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken ceramics with gold and lacquer. The ideas and principles behind Kintsugi are that once something has been broken when repaired it holds and has more value. This is the symbolism I use to parallel the human spirit once it has gone through suffering. Whether it be from loss, trauma or self destruction. We will use a journal to plot points that one will want to work through. Then take this journal into motion. Loving the self is the 1st step to repairing the soul after trauma. **HULL 1**

**WORKSHOP: FROM BUS LINES TO SOUP LINES: EVOLUTION OF LINE DANCING,** *Tarin Dumas Hampton.* This workshop is designed to stimulate discussion and encourage interaction among participants around the evolution of line dancing over the years, specifically focusing on the African Diaspora, and expanding beyond to other cultural folk and social dances. We observe and comprehend the origins and the times of past line-dances, then compare and contrast them to the current times and current line dances, while also acknowledging many

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uncontrollable cross-cultural influences that emerge from the internet, creating an intermingling of cross-cultural movement creations. The discussion promises to be interesting. **HULL/SLIPPAGE**

**WORKSHOP: EMBODYING HISTORY THROUGH MOVEMENT**, *Tony Johnson*. This workshop is for dancers and non-dancers that are interested in learning about history during the 1800's and 1900's during Slavery and the Civil Rights Movement. Participants will be guided through a 45 minute movement warm-up reflecting on the journey of slaves and people of the civil rights movement accompanied by spirituals and music during that period of time in history. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on and discuss their feelings and experiences and to create a two minute piece of their own experiences. **NELSON MUSIC ROOM**

**12:00-1:00 PM**

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**LUNCH**

**EAST DUKE 209**

**12:15-1:00 PM**

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**MEET-UP: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN LIBERATED BLACK WOMEN LEAD?" AN OPEN DIALOGUE OF STRATEGIES TO MAKE SPACE FOR BLACK WOMEN LEADERSHIP**

*Takiyah A. Nur Amin, Nia Austin-Edwards*

**PINK PARLOR**



**1:00-2:00 PM**

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**PLENARY PANEL:  
IMAGINING THE AFROFUTURE: WHAT MIGHT BLACK DANCE FEEL LIKE? WITH KYLE ABRAHAM AND NIV ACOSTA**

*Thomas DeFrantz*

**WHITE LECTURE HALL**



*Kyle Abraham, niv Acosta, Thomas DeFrantz*

2:30-3:30 PM

**PAPERS: AFRICA****DANCING AT THE DIASPORA CROSSROADS: CORPOREAL CREOLIZATION IN CABO VERDE,**

*Sara Stranovsky*. The archipelago of Cabo Verde is an African nation. However, many Cabo Verdeans identify as part of a DIASPORA community rather than with their neighboring mainland, because financial opportunity and physical isolation have caused more Cabo Verdeans to live abroad in world-wide networks, than “home.” Contemporary dance company Raiz di Polon addresses a stratified national identity by innovating a dance lexicon that represents the nation’s diaspora community abroad, surrounding global influences, and island-specific folk dances. I will use an example of their most recent acclaimed work, called, “Cidade Velha,” to discuss how their choreography exhibits a unique corporeal kriolu that has the power to unite and dissolve national feelings of stratification. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**

**INHERITED DREAMS #3: MAKING A NEW DANCE WORK IN ABIDJAN, PROCESS AND LOCATION,**

*Celia Weiss Bambara*. This presentation employs a practice and research to analyze work made in Abidjan over a two year period with the CCBdance Project, a bi-national African Contemporary dance company formed in 2006, in the United States. **Inherited Dreams #3** is an evening length dance work created between 2013 and 2015, and premiered at the CNAC National Theater Center in Abidjan and in collaboration with many Ivoirienne Institutions and the U.S. Embassy. The work addresses shared and differing dreams and hopes and creates an intercultural dream space. As choreographer for the project I will employ a PAR model as well as locate my positionality in the process and context. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**



*Celia Weiss Bambara, Jean-Luc Okon and Lassana Kamagate, Inherited Dreams #3, CNAC National Theater Center, Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Photo: Barnus Sevi*

**PAPERS: HAITI****DISPLACEMENT AND REMEMBERING IN THE WORK OF THREE CONTEMPORARY HAITIAN DANCERS,**

*Dasha Chapman*. This presentation explores the themes of displacement and creative survival through the dance-labor of three Haitian choreographers Lahens Louis, Yonel Charles, and **Jean Appolon** working in Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, and Boston, respectively. Discussing the work of these dancers, I will offer ways to consider Haitian dance in the 21st century as a form of practiced corporeal labor that fortifies and instructs bodies in unstable social climates. Reflecting on the relationship this work has to both contemporary Haiti and to global blackness, I explore the dance forms’ proclivity to remember diasporic histories as much as their potential to collectivity forge other worlds. **EAST DUKE 204B**



*Jean Appolon. Photo: Abernathy*

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**HAITI, MOBILITY AND INCLUSION IN "SHE WHO CARRIES THE SKY,"** *Mario LaMothe*. Regarding performing a priestess in Dianne McIntyre's *She Who Carries the Sky* (2014), Limon Company's Associate Artistic Director Roxane D'Orleans Juste expressed to me that her aging body relied on its movement intelligence. In this presentation, I unravel the meanings behind the Haitian-Canadian artist's utterance, given our shared (Haitian) dance genealogy, and as a spectator of the solo that explores the uses of memory for Haitian women. I juxtapose the conjurer D'Orleans Juste embodied against representations of Haitian Vodou lwa Ayizan, who traffics all rites and knowledge, to critically acknowledge the feminist pedagogies both D'Orleans Juste and McIntyre exercise.

**EAST DUKE 204B**

**LECTURE: TESTIFY: EXPLORATION AND TRANSFERRING OF LEGACY AND CULTURAL RETENTION THE PEDAGOGY OF DR. SHERRILL BERRYMAN JOHNSON, SCHOLAR, DANCER AND EDUCATOR,** *Lela Sewell-Williams*.

A student of the Dunham technique under Pearl Reynolds, **Dr. Sherrill Berryman Johnson (1947-2010)** was an activist, dancer, educator, choreographer, Fulbright scholar and Founding Coordinator of the Howard University Dance Major Program. Through an archival video presentation and dialogue session, Lela J. Sewell-Williams, Dance Archivist and former Faculty of the Howard University Dance Major Program, and Professor Tiffany Quinn, Co-Coordinator of the Howard University Dance Major Program and 2004 graduate of the program, will explore the pedagogical approach of Dr. Sherrill Berryman Johnson. Utilizing Dr. Berryman Johnson's choreographic work TESTIFY, Sewell-Williams and Quinn will identify aspects of Berryman Johnson's holistic approach to instilling traditional movement language into the next generation of dancers and educators. **EAST DUKE 204A**



*Dr. Sherrill Berryman Johnson. Photo: International Association of Blacks in Dance Archive*

**LECTURE: THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF RHYTHM AND BLACK VISUAL ART IMAGING THROUGH THE LENS OF AFROFUTURISM,** *Lindsay Renea*.

This presentation will explore the use and cohesive expansion of several art forms including music, dance and visual art that enhance the cyclical components of African diasporic culture and present them within an Afrofuturistic aesthetic. Historian Sterling Stuckey has stated that when people of African descent were able to practice ceremonial artistry rooted in African traditions there was no distinction between secular and sacred art. If there is a separation then it made it is easier to extract certain aspects that are pertinent to cultural retention and ingenuity of African people. Some of these elements include: images, rhythm and belief systems. **EAST DUKE 204D**

**LECTURE/ PERFORMANCE: BALLETHNIC VISAGE D' AFRIQUE,** *Waverly Lucas, Nena Gilreath*.

A lecture demonstration based on our concept of blending classical ballet with African dance styles and ultimately achieving the epitome of this collaboration by exploring the movements en pointe. We will show excerpts from various selections of choreography from our repertoire that are based on these concepts including selections from our signature ballet "The Leopard Tale" that utilizes three traditional West African rhythms and dances such as Sou nou, Marakadan, and Mandiani. These are shown in their traditional form in bare feet and sur le pointe exhibiting our unique concept of Corps de Balletnic instead of the traditional ballet version corps de ballet.

**ARK**

**LECTURE/ PERFORMANCE: FROM HAITI TO HAYTI, *Aya Sbabu.***

Durham's Hayti, a mecca of black entrepreneurship, takes its name from the black island nation of Haiti. While a conservative Washingtonian black elite presided over the Hayti community, a Haitian vodun symbol called a veve is perched atop one of the neighborhood's oldest institutions, **St. Joseph's African Methodist Episcopal Church**. Through research and performance, the embodiment of this community's history connects the storyteller to the listener, the learner to the lived, the displaced to the culture of place even as Hayti's buildings are being torn down. **NELSON MUSIC ROOM**



*St. Joseph's African Methodist Episcopal Church, Durham, North Carolina.  
Photo: Granger*

**WORKSHOP: SOCIO-POLITICAL REALITIES: DISSECTING INTERGENERATIONAL COUPLING OF RACE AND GENDER IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY, *Nyama McCarthy-Brown, Gregory King.***

This workshop, featuring embodied social realities through dance, will entail an informal showing and discussion of works. The pieces shared are in dialogue with socio-political cultural events of today and have been created as acts of social justice displaying black dancing bodies. The session will begin with an informal showing. Witnessing this performance will provide all in attendance a point of entry into the dialogue. The discussion that follows will solicit the performers and audience reaction to the realities performed. Excerpts from two pieces will be performed. **HULL 1**

**WORKSHOP: FEM-ROCK IT: EMBODIED GENDERED REFLECTIONS THROUGH MUSIC AND MOVEMENT, *Tehmekah MacPherson.***

This interactive lecture/demonstration and workshop will cover manifestations and applications of the Fem-Rock method which links influences from Hip Hop culture along with other Afro-derived dance art forms to feminist theories in order to firstly investigate gendered messages behind popularized music, video, and movement, and secondly, express alternative music-movement messages that promote empowerment and healthy relationships. This method has been employed in the College Prep D.A.N.C.E camp and other locations in order to raise awareness about gendered socialization, alternative dance and song expressions, and the balancing of feminine and masculine principles in more accurate and holistic ways.

**HULL/SLIPPAGE**

**3:45-4:45 PM**

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**PAPERS: POPULAR CULTURE**

**TRIBUTE MINTRELSY: THE NEW FACE OF BLACKFACE IN HOLLYWOOD FILMS OF THE 1930S, *Brynn Shiovitz.***

Blackface was a leading form of American entertainment from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Fred Astaire's 1936 "tribute" to Bill "Bojangles" Robinson (1878-1949) in *Swing Time's Bojangles of Harlem* was the first time a box office hit had utilized burnt cork since 1931. Eleanor Powell follows suit in the 1939 film, *Honolulu*, dancing a "Tribute to Bill Robinson." This paper examines



*Second Section, Bojangles of Harlem, Swing Time (1936)*

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a 1930s Hollywood trend in what I am calling “tribute minstrelsy,” or the practice of paying tribute to someone/ something that a performer deems intrinsically raced and thus incapable of signifying without his/her use of makeup as its primary signifier. **EAST DUKE 204A**

**USABLE PASTS FOR THE AFROFUTURE: DANCING DAHOMEY AT THE WORLD'S FAIRS, 1893-4**, *Joanna Das*. From 1893-4, dancers from Central West Africa performed as the “Dahomey Villagers” in the Chicago and San Francisco World’s Fairs. They choreographed and performed dances for a paying audience, fitting the definition of professionals. They inspired leaders in early African American vaudeville, and the memory of their performances became an integral part of the musical Show Boat. Yet they are absent from histories of black dance in America and African dance in America. In analyzing the Dahomey Village dancers, this paper reconsiders the relationship between those two categories and what we consider a usable past for the Afrofuture. **EAST DUKE 204A**

### PAPERS: BRAZIL 1

**BLACK DANCE FORUMS IN SÃO PAULO: SPACES OF FREEDOM AND POLICY LEARNING**, *Fernando Ferraz*. This work aims to cast a critical eye on the cultural policies of contemporary dance in Sao Paulo, examining how artists that recognize themselves as producers of black dance create discussion forums which replace and review dance practices in the contemporary. These forums have opened a space for questioning on social and white privilege situations, standardization of creative procedures in contemporary dance, as well as they have built political strategies to deny stereotypes about their assumed identities. **EAST DUKE 204D**

**CELEBRATING BLACKNESS/DANCING WHITENESS: NATIONALIST ANACHRONISMS IN DANCE CURRICULA IN BRAZIL**, *Ana Paula Höfling*. This session draws connections between two Brazilian nationalist dance projects that purportedly celebrate Afrodiasporic and indigenous movement practices. Eros Volússia bailado brasileiro, sponsored by the Vargas dictatorship (1930-1945), and Graziela Rodrigues’ symbolic anatomy technique, taught at the State University of Campinas (1987-present) both claim to embody a unique Brazilian corporeality based on the dance practices of Brazil’s racialized others. I shed light on the ways in which these two nationalist projects employ European and Euro-American dance techniques as legitimizing and eliticizing elements; racialized alterity is erased at the movement level, despite its prominent place in the rhetoric of both projects. **EAST DUKE204D**



*Mercedes Batista*

**WORKSHOP: IMPROVISING AFRICAN CULTURAL CONTINUUM**, *Duane Lee Holland Jr., Esther Baker-Tarpaga*. In this workshop we will be dancing the improvised body and creating collective spaces of trust. We will practice presence through gazing, listening, and connecting with the sensations of the corporeal experience in the environment. Building the heat- we dance in cypher with the trinities of the diaspora- the drum, the spirit, and the body. We prepare the body instrument to move forward- momentum of the journey- smaller communities into larger communities. Music is Djembe drum, jazz, blues, house music, trap music. Drawing from decolonizing practices and African diasporic dance, this workshop is physical and collaborative. **NELSON MUSIC ROOM**

**WORKSHOP: EXODUS: MOVEMENT OF JAH PEOPLE!** *Valerie Winborne, Tarin Hampton.* This workshop is designed to explore the connection between the physical movements of a culture, as it relates to what's happening in that culture socially, economically and socio-emotionally. At the end of the session, participants will be able to: 1. Comprehend without judgment, where and why some social dances and movements developed, giving context to its relevance in a culture; 2. Create, Develop and Perform movement phrases reflective of their experience; 3. Identify how can a person who is not of African descent really rap or understand hip-hop and its movements? **BIVINS STUDIO**

**3:45-5:15 PM**

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**PAPERS: CARIBBEAN & AFRO-LATINX**

**BROWN GIRL IN THE RING: CARIBBEAN CONSIDERATIONS OF THE AFROFUTURE,** *Makeda Thomas.* This presentation considers how Caribbean cultural forms navigate time and space, and innovate new histories, sciences and aesthetics that inform a matrix of what Conor Tomais Reed calls “Caribbean Futurisms.” As we move through what an Afrofuturist lens does for an epistemology of Caribbean performance studies, and to firmly situate this in the context of “Dancing the African Diaspora: Embodying Afrofutures,” I am further interested in how those futurisms could be embodied, choreographed and performed by contemporary Caribbean dance artists and makes for a robust Afrofuturist aesthetic, practice, and performance. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**

**DANCING BLACK DIASPORIC BELONGING: CREOLE AESTHETIC POLITICS IN NICARAGUA,** *Melanie White.* This paper is concerned with the ways in which in the face of state racism Afro-Nicaraguan Creoles are taking up an aesthetic politics in which they emphasize their historical link to the Anglophone Caribbean and establish their belonging to a larger Black diaspora. The emergence of this politics of autonomy follows a long history of state appropriation of Creole dance for nation-building and economic revenue. Today, the unmistakably Caribbean aesthetic of the traditional Creole Maypole dance and the recent introduction of Carnival marks a diasporic aesthetic politics in which the state becomes irrelevant as self-hood is imagined autonomously. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**

**PERU NEGRO AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF AFRO-PERUVIAN IDENTITY,** *Luis Paredes.* I associate the ethnicization of Peruvian blackness to **Perú Negro**'s black repertoire, body language, and appearance; to their commercialization of identity and fomentation of black tendencies attributed to rhythmic patterns and “innate” black particularities. Consequently, not only do I acknowledge the impact of cultural politics exercised through neoliberal ideals, but also the ideals seeking socio-cultural change. In an effort to further study the impact of commercialization, I refer to an Afro-Peruvian ethnicized identity to discuss the impact and valuable propagation of Afro-Peruvian artistic value in the show business industry. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**



*Perú Negro.*  
Photo: Courtesy of artist management

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## PAPERS: HIGHER EDUCATION

**BLACKADEMICS: SHAPING A FUTURE BEYOND TOKENISM**, *Rainy Demerson*. Acknowledging Black Dance as a dynamic concept, inviting our critical and productive engagement, I will propose and invite responses to the following questions: What does the term ask of us as scholars in the diaspora and practitioners of diaspora dance? How are college dance programs responding to this era of ever-increasing social mobility plagued with persistent racial violence and colored with conversations and questions around appropriation versus appreciation? How can we best honor and utilize the interdisciplinary nature of Black Dance? I will suggest and invite discussion around ways scholars and educators can thrive by building allies, and practicing mentorship and emancipatory pedagogy. **EAST DUKE 204D**

## CULTURAL ACTIVISM: TOWARDS A CULTURALLY-BASED DANCE PEDAGOGY

, *Tamara Thomas*.

How can a fully authoritative Afrikan-based, dance pedagogical system be developed such that it avails itself to a contemporary neo-colonial dance world? Can this training system be engaged psychically as well as physically, for use in Afrikan diasporic and European dance forms? How does this particular training system encourage cultural activism? **EAST DUKE 204D**



## DANCE ON HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE CAMPUSES: TRIALS, TRIBULATIONS, TRADES, AND THE TALENTED TENTH

, *Wanda Ebrigt*.

This paper takes a look at the myriad ways that dance exists on the campuses of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). It provides a glimpse of how these institutions came into being in the United States, and considers their continued existence and relevance in the present. More than that, this dissertation explores the genres of dance that exist, both inside and outside the curricula of these schools, as well as the context for each dance program within each of five HBCU campuses. This research does not seek to define one best model for dance in HBCUs, but rather to reveal to the higher education dance community that voices are missing from the conversations taking place, and that what those voices can contribute to the

community is both valid and applicable to many. **EAST DUKE 204D**

## WORKSHOP: WRITING BLACK DANCE MEMOIR: TELLING YOUR PERSONAL-PROFESSIONAL

**STORY**, *Halifu Osumare*. Hands-on workshop designed to learn to tell one's personal story in the context of the development of African diasporan dance. The focus is on building writing skills to encompass both your microcosmic individual story and the macrocosmic larger field as one has experienced it. How has your dance story shaped the dance field where you are from, and how has the dance in your location(s) shaped your dance experience? The workshop also helps the dancer-choreographer understand periodization, and how to capture the time era encompassing one's own personal dance story. Those who are already engaged in dance writing, scholarship, and/or dance storytelling will best benefit from this workshop experience. **BLUE PARLOR**



*Junious Brickhouse teaches dance class at the 28th annual Dance Flurry Flurry Festival. Photo: Patrick Dodson*

**WORKSHOP: THE INTERSECTION OF YORUBA RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS AND HOUSE DANCE CULTURE, Junious Brickhouse.**

Since its humble beginnings in Chicago's Southside, Warehouse Music or House Music has taken many identities and grown into an international norm in urban dance culture. Since the introduction of using songs of the Orisha as vocals in house music, the international dance communities have seen not only a change in the movement but an awakening of interest in Ifa. This workshop will explore, through dance and discussion, this evolution, the idea of dance as a means of cultural transmission, and its importance to the development of self-identity. **HULL 1**

**WORKSHOP: THE CELEBRATION OF THE "NEGRITO" AND OTHER INDIGENOUS TRIBES OF THE PHILIPPINES, Leonard Cruz.**

The "Negrito" are known to be pygmies that exist in the Philippines and Southeast Asia. Their origins are still not clear but their dances are very similar to the indigenous tribes of the Ifugao and Igorot of the Philippines. Most of these dances were done to insure bountiful harvests, favorable weather, and to mark milestones in the cycle of life. The recognition of the Negrito as part of the Philippines needs to be fully embraced and celebrated. In this workshop I would like to share photographs, traditional costumes, masks, wood carving of the Negrito and other related indigenous tribes of the Philippines. More importantly, I want to have participants learn some of the dance steps and movements that are common throughout the indigenous tribes, including mincing and shuffling steps, bending of the knees, graceful, jerky movements of the arms, and hands waving in time to the music. **HULL/SLIPPAGE**

**5:00-6:15 PM**

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**DINNER**

**EAST DUKE 209**

**6:30-8:00 PM**

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**PERFORMANCES @ THE ARK**

**ADESOLA AKINLEYE:** Choreographed dance piece that attempts to explore the notion of a movement biography, using dance and projected light to trace the biographical experience of an artist identifying as a 'Black Dancer'. The work questions the projection of identity and the transient nature of 'Self'.



*Adesola Akinleye. Photo: Serendipity Artists Movement Limited (UK)*

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2016

### MARIA BAUMAN, GRACE IS HIGH AND LOW 6:

This is part of a series I have embarked upon, so far at WOW Cafe Theatre, BAAD!, St Mark's Danspace, and Highways Performance Space in L.A. As I deepen my own study of our bodies' inherent value and compelling nature, this work becomes more and more rich. While the physical score of the piece remains the same, I am experimenting with different music from house beats to Roberta Flack. I will retire the grace is high and low performative research after ten iterations, and begin a new structured improvisation series with new prompts.



*Maria Bauman*

**BONGINKOSI BIYELA, BACK YARD AFFAIR (SCREENING):** I will be discussing the creation process of “backyard affair” from inception to the final product.



*Melanie Bratcher*

**MELANIE BRATCHER, MY NKISI IN MOTION:** I will dance an original choreography that plays with the idea of a living, embodied nkisi. Building off of research on new world interpretations of minkisi in visual and plastic arts, motion will be given to moments from one Black woman's story. These moments reflect her environment and its active stasis. A short paper about song lyrics to contextualize and explain some elements in the choreography will be presented. A discussion will follow.

**BROTHER(HOOD) DANCE!, BLACK JONES:** Through a ritualistic process, we intend to create and dream of a safe space for black men to activate their emotional and spiritual selves that is denied in contemporary religious dogma. Black Jones featuring Orlando Zane Hunter, Jr. and Ricarrdo Valentine is an exploration of manhood through the naked lens of two same-gender loving men. Inspired by ShiKeith's #Blackmendream project, this new work will investigate the humanistic and emotional connection that is viciously suffocated by the lack of societal images of black male intimacy. We question the notion of vulnerability when connecting with ones self and others. How does one detach from their fears and insecurities to live authentically under heteronormative standards? What does black male intimacy look like in different spaces globally and how are those bodies navigating, connecting, and/or resisting in a society with harshly strict perceptions?



*Brother(hood) Dance!, Black Jones*

**DUANE CYRUS, CHRONICLE OF THE MASKED FAGGOT:** A multi-disciplinary work using dance, spoken word, photography and video projection to create an environment for the exploration of black gay subculture. Chronicle of The Masked Faggot explores the notion of masculine behavior parameters within black gay culture. It investigates online social media platforms and the disruption between self and online profile that affects social interactions and behavior paradigms related to the body and same-sex relationships. Inspired by written works of Louis Mustafa Audrey, it explores the ways same gender loving men of color create masks of survival, denial, and control on and around their bodies.



*Jonathan Garris and Brandon Woods in Duane Cyrus' Chronicle of the Masked Faggot (2016)*



*Greer Mendy. Photo: Doug MacCash, NOLA.com*

**GREER MENDY, BLACK DON'T CRACK!** This is a paper presentation with a seven minute dance performance by a veteran/older/mature dancer and scholar addressing notions of age in dance performance. The issue is how will chronological age be negotiated in the future in regard to artistic identity, performance ability, gender, and sexuality? Stigmatized as mentally and physically impaired, even sexless/asexual, older adults, especially females, their body images and womanist perspectives are routinely removed from dance performance where beauty and sexuality are aesthetic considerations. In the future, perhaps science and as well as self-identity will remove physical limitations and self- imposed restrictions on corporeality appropriateness.



*Andrea E. Woods Valdés, Bird of Pray*

**ANDREA E. WOODS VALDÉS, BIRD OF PRAY** The title for bird of pray is a play on the words *pray* and *prey*. The video consists of images of vulnerability and spiritual strength, both of which exist in a pure dancing body. The dancing is at times nervous, restless, fearful and inhibited and it is intercut with movements of soaring, victory, pride, spiritual transformation and resistance. This particular work is personal. I performed, choreographed, videotaped and edited it. The dance was created through choreography and structured improvisation and captured at a time when the anxiety of NYC urban life was overwhelming. The resulting shoot revealed the search for a safe haven through the body and personal performance. The act of creating it was itself an act of prayer.

**9:00-Midnight**

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## RECEPTION

Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture, West Campus

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2016

8:00-9:00 AM

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**BREAKFAST**

1st FLOOR, EAST DUKE

9:00-10:00 AM

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**PLENARY PANEL: THE FUTURE OF BLACK BALLET: LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD WITH ENDALYN TAYLOR, THEARA WARD, THERESA RUTH HOWARD, DR. JOSELLI AUDAIN DEANS, NENA GILREATH.**



*Nena Gilreath*

*Moderator: Kimberleigh Jordan.*

The panel of Black ballet dancers, teachers, and choreographers - all with past relationships to the Dance Theatre of Harlem, a ballet company with a rich tradition and global acclaim - will look back at its history, and the possibilities and troubles of Black bodies dancing ballet, to understand some next steps in the evolution of Black ballet.



*Douglas, Dance Theatre of Harlem. Photo: Martha Swope*

**WHITE LECTURE HALL**

10:15-11:15 AM

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**PAPERS: SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**DANCING DOWN THE FLOOR: PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES OF 'COMMUNITY' IN A WEST AFRICAN DANCE CLASS IN PHILADELPHIA, Julie B. Johnson.**

How do experiences and understandings of 'community' connect to the study of African dance? "Dancing Down the Floor" contributes to the discourse on relationships between dance and 'community,' focusing on the perspectives of dancers and musicians within a particular 'West African' dance class in Philadelphia. Lived experience descriptions are placed in conversation with community theory literature from a range of disciplines, as well as texts that situate the class within socio-cultural, historical, and political contexts. Migrating inward and outward through personal reflection and participant narratives, this investigation lies at the intersection of the subjective, intersubjective, and cultural knowledge. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**

### FREEDOM WITHIN BARS: PRISONERS RESPONSES TO THE POLICING OF THE BLACK BODY AND BLACK CULTURE IN AN ENGLISH MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON THROUGH HIP-HOP,

*Richard Bramwell.* This paper examines prisoner's construction of identity through rap music in a maximum security prison. Whereas blacks make up roughly 3% of England's general population, they constitute 16% of the high security prisoner population. Through a combination of a six month ethnography of prison social life including a rap music workshop, lyrical analysis, and interviews with prisoners and prison service managers, this paper draws on black performance studies and prison sociology to investigate how black men come to terms with their conditions of incarceration through hip-hop. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**

### WALKING PROUDLY LIKE OUR ANCESTORS: WEST AFRICAN DANCE, YOUTH, AND THE POLITICS OF EMPOWERMENT IN CHICAGO, IL, *Queen Meccasia Zabriskie.*

In this presentation, I explore the use of West African dance to empower the youth in order to understand how practitioners in Chicago, IL use the arts to transform the corporal schema through which the youth make sense of themselves and act in the larger social world. Drawing largely on in-depth interviews and oral history research, I argue that West African dance is central to how practitioners try to challenge negative images of Africanity, cultivate a diasporic consciousness in the youth, and shift what the youth think is possible in the future. **WHITE LECTURE HALL**

### PAPERS: ORISHA

#### EMBODYING AFRO FEMINISM: "WOMEN ORISHAS," *Yesenia Fernandez.*

From their origins in West Africa to their global dispersion via the African diaspora, the Orishas are embodiments of aspects of the divine, nature, and mankind. While they represent a complex set of ideas and concepts, their spirit is expressed through rhythms and dances that use gestures and movements specifically associated with each Orisha to bring forth its energy. Taking orishas dance as a texts and the observation of several workshops I taught on orishas dance I develop "Women Orishas" a play that restore Afro Cuban and Afro diasporic women subjectivities. **EAST DUKE 204B**



#### NAVIGATING ANCESTRAL PARADIGMS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE DANCE OF DESCENDANTS OF AFRICA AND THE RICHNESS OF THE ORISHA, *Joan Valdes Francisco Santos.*

This presentation is a study of specific indicators of dances of Afro descendants and their conceptualization in contemporary academia. From diversity to commonalities, creative and intellectual descendants exemplify a commitment to navigating this ancient paradigm. The presentation discusses Afrodramaturgy and rich dancing of Orishas of the Yoruba Dance as a comprehensive example. **EAST DUKE 204B**

### PAPERS: BRAZIL 2

#### BAILE FUNK AND KUDURO: DANCING ON THE MARGINS OF RIO DE JANEIRO AND LUANDA, *Katya Wesolowski.*

This paper examines the black urban dance phenomena of baile funk ("funk parties") and kuduro ("hardass") in the peripheral neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Luanda, Angola. Both phenomena emerged



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2016

as youth movements in response to extreme conditions of violence: in Rio de Janeiro the everyday violence of poverty, racial discrimination, drug trafficking and police oppression in the favelas (shantytowns), and in Angola the lingering memory of violence of a long civil war and the continued violence of poverty and social inequality in the musseques (shantytowns). These assemblages are a mix of national and international sounds and styles. Because of the often explicitly sexual and political song lyrics, academic and popular discourses about baile funk and kuduro oscillate between utopian and liberatory or dystopian and destructive. **EAST DUKE 204D**

### THE STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL RECOGNITION FROM THE AFRO BRAZILIAN DANCE IN RIO DE JANEIRO, *Thais Rosa Pinheiro*.

This paper investigates the struggle for recognition of Afro-Brazilian dance in carioca society. Afro-Brazilian dance is manifested in Brazilian culture through capoeira, candomblé, samba, etc. However, there is still discrimination against Afro-Brazilian dance forms. While there is a law in Brazil requiring Afro-Brazilian history and culture to be taught in school, these topics are rarely parts of curricula. The objective of this paper is show how black teachers use pedagogical politics to promote Afro-Brazilian dance. I will show how dance can be a way of connecting with Afro-Brazilian heritage, sharing cultural identity, and inciting cultural change in Rio de Janeiro. **EAST DUKE 204D**

### WORKSHOP: CARIBFUNK TECHNIQUE: A NEW FEMINIST/WOMANIST FUTURISTIC TECHNOLOGY IN BLACK DANCE STUDIES, *A'Keitha Carey*.

CaribFunk technique is an emerging feminist/womanist praxis. It is also a “call to action” advocating that the body is a site for knowledge that encourages the reimagining of life experiences, allowing students to explore their authentic selves through an empowering performance of the pelvis. The movement workshop will investigate how the hip wine (specifically in Caribbean popular culture, Jamaican dancehall and Carnival in Trinidad) and dance movements associated with this movement (globally) can be viewed as empowering, evoking a sense of agency, sensuality, and ownership of one’s sexuality and body. **NELSON MUSIC ROOM**

### WORKSHOP: DIGITAL TRANSLATION THROUGH MOVEMENT, *Andre Zachery*.

Much of the content and creativity regarding the notion of Afrofuturism has existed in mediums outside of the body such as film, literature, visual art, and music. To now investigate these concepts and find relationships to these mediums through the body, we are creating alternative platforms for artists and audiences to experience dance. This workshop and paper will look at how extending an artistic idea through technological frameworks while remaining cognizant of the moving body can allow for more pathways in Black expression, ingenuity, and identity using dance and performance. **HULL/SLIPPAGE**



### WORKSHOP: FUNCTIONAL ANATOMY FOR BLACK DANCERS AND THEIR TEACHERS: REFOCUSING THE BEGUILMENT OF THE BUTTOCKS, *Sheila A. Ward*.

Inappropriate attention has been directed to the aesthetic aspect of the buttocks of Black dancers in both performance and dance class. The application of functional anatomy changes the conversation from what the buttocks look like to the important consideration of the movement produced by the buttocks. This interactive presentation will refocus the misplaced

attention given to the buttocks and also discuss other stabilizing and multifunctioning core muscles and muscle groups, such as the iliopsoas, that impact movement efficiency, alignment, and risk of injury while training and or performing freeing us to be better dance students, performers, and dance teachers of Black dancers. **EAST DUKE204A**

**WORKSHOP: HIP- HOP RELEASE**, *Zinzi Minott*. Hip -hop release is the class for the dancer of color who has felt the need to leave their culture at the door, or been asked to be (or not) tribal or exotic. Viewing the body as a space constructed by various social and technical dance trainings. Hip-hop release is a space to re-discover, and re-claim these trainings using what the dancer of color brings to the table--without being reductionist, romantic, generalising, or presumptive that we genetically have these skills. Many dancers of color reside in the space between, lets talk about it? No, lets dance about it! **BIVINS STUDIO**

**WORKSHOP: #LAUGHINGWHILEBLACK: DANCE AS PROTEST IN THE AGE OF HASHTAGS**, *Alexandra Warren*.

Culture and conversation now travel faster than ever thanks to social media. How does this impact us as artists? Social movements swell and are chronicled through new mediums such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. So how do we protest through choreography in a time where experiences are gathered through hashtags? How does the speed of information impact audiences? Are they tuned in or desensitized? Through guided improvisation and group exploration we will discuss the hashtag as the new rallying cry. To frame our talk we will view short works on hair touching, police brutality and implicit bias by **JOYEMOEMENT dance company**. **HULL 1**



*JOYEMOEMENT dance company*  
*Photo: Lurgy Atkins*

**WORKSHOP: THE BODY AS A MASK EMBODYING THE SACRED IN MOTION: GERMAINE ACOGNY'S MODERN AFRICAN DANCE TECHNIQUE**, *Omilade Davis*. In Germaine Acogny's Modern African Dance Technique, the body is simultaneously a mask embodying- the sacred in motion and a repository of kinesthetic and cultural knowledge. As one of only two codified contemporary dance techniques of African derivation, this system recalls its African roots while providing a technical foundation for contemporary dance practices of tomorrow. Participants will have an embodied experience of this technique with Omilade Davis, the first American to receive certification in Acogny and a first year PhD candidate at Temple University. After 40 minutes of contraction, undulation and tremulation (vibration), a brief research presentation will follow. **ARK**

**11:30 AM-NOON**

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**REMARKS**

*Mark Anthony Neal*

*Professor of Black Popular Culture, Department of African and African-American Studies, Duke University*

**WHITE LECTURE HALL**

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2016

NOON-1:00 PM

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*Nadine George-Graves*

**CLOSING PLENARY: REFLECTIONS ON THE ACADEMIC (AFRO)FUTURE**

*Nadine George-Graves*

*Professor of Theater and Dance, University of California, San Diego*

*President, Congress on Research in Dance*

**WHITE LECTURE HALL**

1:00 PM

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LUNCH

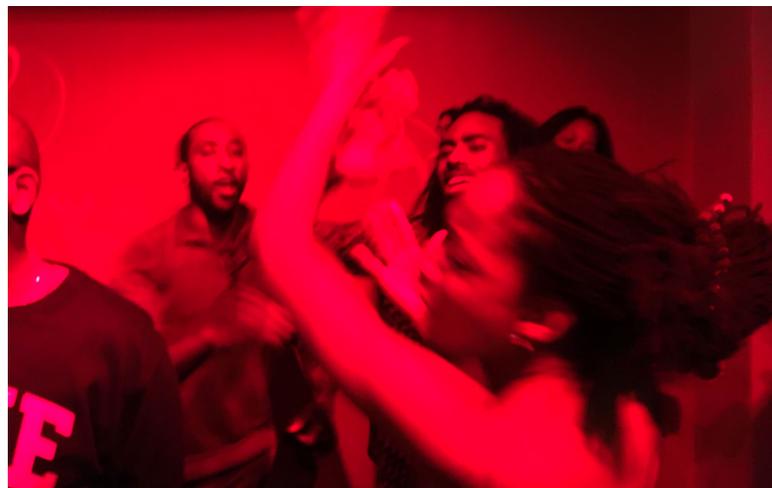
EAST DUKE 209

2:00-3:00 PM

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INFORMAL SHOWINGS

ARK



## CONFERENCE PRESENTERS



*niv Acosta*

**n**iv Acosta is a dance artist, educator, black Dominican, transsexual, queer native New Yorker. He attended CalArts (Dance BFA) and has taught at N.Y.U Steinhardt, RISD, and Cooper Union. niv has shown his work at various events/spaces including Pieter Performance Space, Human Resources in Los Angeles, The Community Education Center, Studio 34, The Kimmel Center and Vox Populi in Philadelphia, New York Live Arts, The Kitchen, Studio Museum of Harlem, MOMA PS1, Abrons Art Center, The Tank, New Museum, Danspace Project, and at Brooklyn Arts Exchange. niv has collaborated with artists Malik Gaines, Alexandro Segade, Andrea Geyer, A.K. Burns, and Ralph Lemon. niv recently presented his current project, DISCOTROPIC (a culmination of research on science fiction, Astrophysics, disco ideology and the black american experience) as part of the 2015 New Museum Triennial 'Surround Audience.'

**A**desola Akinleye, PhD, FRSA is a choreographer, dancer, researcher and teacher. She began her career as a dancer with Dance Theatre of Harlem, and later established her own company Saltare while living in New York and went on to tour work around the UK, American East Coast, Caribbean and Canada. Dr. Akinleye's most recent research project and dance work, *Untitled: Women's Work*, was commissioned by the Center for Education of Women and premiered in the United States in May 2014. She is currently editing a book, *Narratives in*

*Black British Dance: embodied practice*. Dr. Akinleye is a Fellow of the RSA. She received her PhD in sociology of the body and embodiment from Canterbury Christ Church University, UK, and a MA in Work-based learning: dance in education and the community from Middlesex University, UK. She has been a guest teacher/choreographer in a number of universities in the UK, Canada and the United States, as well as Dance Theatre of Harlem's Summer program. Dr. Akinleye is a part-time Senior Lecturer in both Work-based Learning and Media and Performing Arts Department, Dance, at Middlesex University.

**A**usettua Amor Amenkum hails from New Orleans, Louisiana. She is the Big Queen of the Washitaw Nation Black Indian Tribe, Artistic Director and founding member of Kumbuka African Drum & Dance Collective since 1981. Queen Ausettua has studied extensively in West Africa, Haiti and the United States beginning with the late Baba Ishangi, Sundiata Keita, Alyo Tolbert, Baba Olatunji, and Adbdoulaye Camara. She has received numerous awards from the City of New Orleans, including the Mayor's Art Award, and was recently inducted into the Mardi Gras Indian Hall of Fame. In addition to teaching African-derived dance at Tulane University, she coordinates an African performing arts program for incarcerated women at Louisiana Correction Institute for Women.

**E**sailama Artry-Diouf began her professional career as a performing artist with Diamano Coura West African Dance Company in 1989, based at the Malonga Center for the Arts in Oakland, California. Internationally, she has worked with director John Martin (London) and such performing companies as Le Ballet National du Senegal (Senegal), Theatre for Africa (South Africa) and Abhinaya Theatre Research Centre (India). As a teacher Esailama has lectured and conducted workshops throughout the United States and held long term residencies at major universities in Barbados, India, and Trinidad-Tobago. She is the Director of Communications for actor/activist Danny Glover, consultant for the City of Oakland

## CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

Cultural Funding Program and is very passionate about making systematic changes that support the sustainability of folk and traditional artists.

Anjali Austin is a distinguished interdisciplinary artist whose career includes thirteen years of performing with the critically acclaimed Dance Theatre of Harlem. A vocalist and movement artist, she has performed classical, neo-classical, and contemporary works by prominent choreographers and composers from the 20th century, choreographed nationally and internationally, and is a specialized



*Anjali Austin. Photo: Jon Nalon.*

Master Trainer in GYROTONIC® and GYROKINESIS®. Anjali is currently working on her first solo concert titled THREADS and serves on the Board of CORPS de Ballet International. As a member of the dance faculty at Florida State University, she teaches ballet and pointe, choreographs, and mentors undergraduate and graduate dance majors. Anjali holds an MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College.

Ania Austin-Edwards is the Founder of PURPOSE Productions, a company that supports artists and organizers in the manifestation of PURPOSE-full work that seeks to unify and develop our world community. She is also an editor and contributor to *The Dance Enthusiast* and was a John R. Munger Research Fellow for Dance/USA. Her performing career began in her mother's womb, developed in Atlanta at Total Dance/Dancical Productions, Inc., and was further formalized through Tri-Cities Visual and Performing Arts Magnet High

School and New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Since her transition from Marketing & Communications Director at Brooklyn Arts Exchange, PURPOSE Productions has supported dance artists such as Adia Tamar Whitaker and Marjani Forte, theater artists such as Melanie Jones and Latonia Phipps, organizations such as 651 ARTS and STooPS, initiatives such as Paloma McGregor's Dancing While Black and Camille A. Brown's The Gathering, among others. [PURPOSEproductions.org](http://PURPOSEproductions.org) | [anae@PURPOSEproductions.org](mailto:anae@PURPOSEproductions.org) | [@KwanzaaKid](https://www.instagram.com/KwanzaaKid)

Esther Baker-Tarpaga is a choreographer and performance artist. She is an Assistant Professor at University of the Arts, Philadelphia. She is co-artistic director of Baker & Tarpaga Dance Project, a transnational performance project founded in 2004 with Olivier Tarpaga. She performed with DAFRA West African Dance and Drum and collaborated with Center Stage artist, Hind Benali. She was a Grant Wood Visiting Artist at the University of Iowa Department of Dance and a Headlands Artist in Residence. She co-directs a dance/drum program in Burkina Faso and taught at OSU Dance, Earthdance, Action Danse Morocco, and UCLA. She curates a vlog featuring performance and interviews with African choreographers. She is published in *Live Arts Almanac* and *Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism*. She was invited through the U.S. Department of State to teach and lecture at KINANI Contemporary Dance Festival in Mozambique and Ateliers Aex-Corps in Senegal. She was a United States Department of State Cultural Envoy in Burkina Faso, South Africa, Botswana, and Guinea. She received her MFA and MA in Dance at UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures and her BA at Bowdoin College.

Celia Weiss Bambara is a dancer and a choreographer with a PhD from the University of California, Riverside. She is a dual citizenship in the United States and Burkina Faso. Currently, Celia is the acting director of the dance program at UNC Asheville. She is a practiced-based scholar and her work addresses the intersections of practice

## CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

as research in contemporary and African diasporic dance. Her dance work has been shown in the United States, Caribbean and West Africa at venues including Links Hall (Chicago), The Drucker Center (Chicago), Outerspace (Chicago), Praxis Place, Institut Francais (Abidjan), Goethe Institut (Abidjan), Alliance Francaise (Chicago), Jane Addams Hull House (Chicago), Mission Theater (San Francisco), Claremont McKenna College, Occidental College, National Theater (Abidjan), National Television (Haiti), Alice Yard (Trinidad) and at the Caribbean Studies Association (Jamaica). Most recently her solo work has toured in Jamaica, Trinidad, Abidjan, Iowa, San Francisco, Chicago and Michigan and she has completed long term dance based projects in Abidjan with her company the CCBdance Project, which she co-founded in 2006 and currently directs. Her written work is published in a variety of sources, including *Making Caribbean Dance*, *Area Magazine in Chicago*, *the Chicago Artists Resource*, *the Journal of Haitian Studies*, *Australasian Drama Studies* and *The Encyclopedia on Race and Racism*. Celia has also curated Anatomy Riot in LA, Bloom series in Chicago, and evening length performances with dialogues about contemporary dance in Chicago and Abidjan. For more information please see, <http://www.celiaweissbambara.com> and <http://www.ccbdanceproject.com>.

**M**aria Bauman, from Jacksonville, Florida, is a dance artist and community organizer. Her choreography for her company MBDance is based on her sense of physical and emotional power, desire for equity, and fascination with intimacy and relationship. Bauman brings the same tenets to organizing to undo racism in the arts and beyond with ACRE (Artists Co-creating Real Equity), the body she co-founded with Sarita Covington and Nathan Trice. Her MBDance work has been showcased across the country and in Singapore. She has been Associate Artistic Director of Urban Bush Women and danced with that company for many years, and has also danced with Paloma McGregor, jillsigman/thinkdance, Nia Love and many others. She received her BFA in Dance and English from Florida State University. [vimeo.com/mbdance](http://vimeo.com/mbdance)

**A**pril Berry, dance director, master teacher, educator, and former internationally-acclaimed dancer with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, is a native New Yorker. Berry has worked closely with many of the most celebrated choreographers and dance artists of the 20th century. April is a certified master instructor in Dunham Technique, having successfully completed all certification requirements



*April Berry. Photo: FD Magazine*

after extensive work with American modern dance pioneer, Dr. Katherine Dunham. Berry's professional dance career began in ballet and she has danced with ballet companies in the United States, Italy and Switzerland. She began her professional training in ballet at the former National Academy of Ballet and Theatre Arts in New York and on scholarship at the Dance Theatre of Harlem. Berry studied modern dance techniques and jazz dance at the Ailey School, and trained in Caribbean folkloric and popular dance forms at the Escuela Nacional des Arts (National School of the Arts) in Havana, Cuba. She is featured in several dance books including *Ailey Spirit: The Journey of an American Dance Company*, *Alvin Ailey: A Life in Dance*, and *The Black Tradition in American Dance*. Berry has written for Dance/USA's *From the Green Room* and Society of Dance History Scholars' *Conversations in Dance*. She has served on the boards of Dance Council of North Texas, Ohio Dance, the Greater Columbus Arts Council in Columbus, Ohio. Berry is the former Director of Education and Outreach for North Carolina Dance Theatre, Director of Education and Community Programs for

## CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

BalletMet Columbus, and Artistic Director of Dallas Black Dance Theatre. Berry founded and served as dance consultant for Arts 'n Community, a grass roots agency providing specialized services and resources to emerging and mid-size organizations around the United States, dedicated to the art form dance. Berry enjoys mentoring dance artists who are eager to enhance the organizations they serve and impact the communities in which they live.

**B**onginkosi Biyela started his dance training with Flatfoot Student Company in 2001 in which he performed in all their major works of the ensemble before joining Phenduka Dance Theatre's three year training program in performance in 2002. While with Phenduka Dance Theatre, Bonginkosi performed on a number of occasions with the company, appearing in 8HRS, Holes in the heart, Dankie Pitoli and "When the outside come in," a Daimler Chrysler winner for the South African choreography award in 2003. Upon completing his training Bonginkosi was offered a contract to the professional company where he later became an assistant choreographer and an outreach program teacher. In 2005, Bonginkosi was part of an international collaboration project between PDT and Le Grand Cru (Netherlands) where they created work titled, "Double U," which was premiered at the Jomba contemporary festival and Namibia's Bank Windhoek festival. While in the Netherlands Bonginkosi was in a choreographic residency for two months with Le Grand Cru. From 2011-2012 he was an outreach program project dance teacher and a choreographer for Ikapa Dance Theatre.

**R**ichard Bramwell is a Lecturer in Sociology at Kingston University and a College Research Associate at Wolfson College, University of Cambridge. His research interests are focused in the areas of black British vernacular cultures, especially literature and music. He was awarded his PhD in Sociology by the London School of Economics in 2012. Richard's book, *UK Hip-Hop, Grime and the City: The aesthetics and ethics of London's rap scenes*, was published by Routledge in 2015. His current research

is on the performance of alternative English identities through rap music and the impact of rap culture on state funded institutions.

**M**elanie Bratcher, PhD is the author of *Words and Songs of Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, and Nina Simone: Sound Motion, Blues Spirit, and African Memory* published by Routledge in 2007 as part of its Studies in African American History and Culture series. Her research focuses on Africana Aesthetics, which includes all forms of artistic production on the continent and in the African Diaspora. Dr. Bratcher's primary specialization within Africana Aesthetics is song and dance. Having coined an application of "Sound Motion," she applies Africana "Philosophy" to the study, explanation, description, and evaluation of Africana Dance and Song forms. Her uniquely encompassing aesthetic approach compels students and scholars alike to study the concepts of Africa and Africana using modes of inquiry that are more relevant to building cultural consciousness, awareness, and sensitivity. Dr. Bratcher received her PhD in African & African American Studies from Temple University in 2005.

**J**unious "House" Brickhouse is an internationally established dancer, choreographer, community leader, and cultural preservationist. As Founder and Executive Director of Urban Artistry, Inc., Junious has created and inspired a movement of artists dedicated to the authentic preservation of urban dance culture and community. As a teenager, Junious became a regular in the underground dance scene and recognized that the artists in these communities were driven by creativity and continuation of culture. Through these experiences, he mastered the Hip Hop, House Dance, B-Boying, Popping, Locking, Tap, Waacking, Vogue, and West African influences that were being celebrated by so many in these cultures. These early experiences are reflected in how Junious has structured Urban Artistry as an accepting, collaborative, and accessible community and in his lifelong commitment to share urban dance culture with underserved communities around the world.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

In 2009, Junious was honored by The Maryland State Arts Council with the Master Teacher Award. That same year, Urban Artistry was the winner of the Metro Washington DC Dance Award for Best Emerging Group. Since then, Junious has continued his global commitment as a U.S. State Department Cultural Ambassador in St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Barbados, South Africa, and Bulgaria. Earlier in 2015, Junious served in Senegal as an Artist Educator in the inaugural year of the UNC/U.S. State Department Next Level hip hop cultural diplomacy program. Junious has also served as a visiting instructor in Urban Dance at Arizona State University, Davis & Elkins College, and Georgetown University.

**T**amara Lizette Brown, PhD is an associate professor of history and director of women's studies in the Department of History & Government at Bowie State University, and a former cultural historian with the Smithsonian Institution. Dr. Brown received her PhD in history with a focus on cultural history and the African Diaspora from Howard University. Dr. Brown was the former co-editor of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History's (ASALH) *Black History Bulletin* (formerly Negro History Bulletin), an assistant editor for *A Constant Struggle: African American History 1619-1865* (Kendall/Hunt 2005), and a general editor for *The Souls of Black Folk: Centennial Reflections* (Africa World Press, 2004). Her most recent publication is "Lingering Lights from America's Black Broadway: A Synopsis of African American Concert-Theatrical Dance in Washington, D.C." in *Emerging Voices and Paradigms: Black Women's Scholarship* (Association of Black Women Historians, 2008).



*A'Keitha Carey. Photo courtesy of the artist.*

**A**'Keitha Carey is originally from the Bahamas. She received her BA in Dance from Florida International University and an MFA in Dance from Florida State University. She completed her Certificate in Women's Studies from Texas Woman's University where she is currently working to complete her PhD. A'Keitha created CaribFunk technique,

a genre fusing Afro-Caribbean, ballet, modern, and fitness principles. Within this multifaceted exploration, she is investigating theories in the areas of: Dance Studies, Feminist Thought/Womanist Thought, Critical Pedagogy, Critical Race Theory, Ethnic Studies, and Cultural Studies. Her research attempts to establish the relationship between the technique and Caribbean popular culture; establishing how it can provide a sense of citizenship and identity acting as an embodied protest against the politics of domination; addressing why it is important to students of color in academia; and reinforcing the marriage between Caribbean cultural performance and the erotic as power.



*Dasha Chapman*

**D**asha Chapman is currently the Postdoctoral Associate in Duke University's Department of African and African American Studies. Dasha received her PhD from the Department of Performance Studies at NYU. As a dancer ethnographer and scholar, she is now at work on her book manuscript based on her dissertation, *Dancing Haiti in the Break*, for which she was awarded the Deena Burton Memorial Award for Outstanding Dissertation Research. This project examines the labor of contemporary Haitian dance artists, focusing on

## CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

the political and ethical dimensions of the collectives they sustain through their teaching and performance work in both Haiti and its diasporas of New York and Boston. Her broader interests are centered in Afro-Caribbean and African diasporic aesthetics, religions, collective movement practices, historical memory, genders and sexualities. She completed her MA in NYU's Draper Program in Humanities and Social Thought, and her BA in Boston University's University Professors Program with a concentration in Latin American Studies and Cultural Studies.

Jacqueline Couti is an Assistant Professor of French and Francophone Studies in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Cultures at the University of Kentucky. She specializes in Francophone Caribbean, African, and New World literatures and cultures. She has published articles on masculine discourse, women writers, diasporic identities, memory, and exile as well as on issues of nationhood, sexuality, gender, and violence. Her recent publication includes *The Mythology of the Doudou: Sexualizing Black Female Bodies, Constructing Culture in the French Caribbean*, in *Provocations: A Transnational Reader in the History of Feminist Thought* (2015) edited by Susan Bordo, M. Cristina Alcalde, and Ellen Rosenman.

Kemi Craig is a dancer, curator and film artist in graduate studies at Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver. Her work uses materiality of analog filmmaking to investigate movement as a device for raced and gender bodies to access agency.

Clare Croft is an Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan. She is the author of *Dancers as Diplomats: American Choreography in Cultural Exchange* (Oxford 2015), and is the editor/curator of the forthcoming anthology, *Website, Meanings and Makings of Queer Dance*. Croft's writing about dance has appeared in *Dance Research Journal*, *Theatre Journal*, and *Theatre Topics*, and is forthcoming in *Dance Chronicle*. Croft holds a PhD in theatre history and criticism with an emphasis in Performance as

Public Practice from the University of Texas-Austin and an MA in performance studies from New York University. From 2010-2013, Croft was a postdoctoral scholar in the University of Michigan's Society of Fellows.

Leonard Cruz, PhD was born in Pampanga, Philippines and grew up in San Antonio, Texas. He started dancing at the age of four learning Filipino and Hawaiian Folk Dances, as well as Ballet. In 1983, he was a Finalist for Young Arts sponsored by the NFAA in Miami, Florida where he was later named Presidential Scholar in the Arts. He received his BA and MA in Dance from UCLA. He obtained his MFA in Performance/Choreography, as well as his PhD in Urban Education with a focus on the creative and performing arts from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Dr. Cruz is currently an Assistant Professor in Theater, Movement, and Dance at St. Mary's College of Maryland. He has been a Bessie Schoenberg Choreographer at The Yard in Martha's Vineyard and was nominated for the Kurt Jooss Prize in Choreography. Leonard specializes in South Pacific Dance Forms, Improvisation in performance as well as Laban/Jooss technique and sight-specific work. His homepage list his accomplishments as well as his choreographic work: [www.leonard-cruz.com](http://www.leonard-cruz.com).

Teena Marie Custer is a dance artist based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Teena Marie battles and performs internationally with her all female street dance crew, Venus Fly, as well as her local Pittsburgh crew, Get Down Gang. She has won b-girl battles such as Enter the Cypha and UnderGround Movement, and won the "House Cypher" award at Chicago's Slick City event in Oct 2012. Her hip hop dance theater work has been presented at Sadler's Wells Theater in London, The American Dance Festival, Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, Ford Amphitheater in LA, and the American College Dance Festival Gala Concert. She has also created hip hop dance theater works for over 20 university dance departments around the United States, and has appeared on BET, MTV's *MADE*, and was also

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a featured dancer and assistant choreographer to Melanie LaPatin for the feature film *Leading Ladies*. Teena Marie earned a BA in Dance from Slippery Rock University and an MFA in Dance Performance from The Ohio State University. She is on faculty at Slippery Rock University in the Department of Dance where she teaches street dance styles, contemporary dance, and dance composition, and is also on faculty at the prestigious American Dance Festival at Duke University. She performs with Bessie nominated Ephrat Asherie Dance in New York, and has also danced with Dance Alloy, Attack Theatre, and Ursula Payne. She represented CMÂ<sup>2</sup> (Columbus Movement Movement) in *Dance Magazine's* "Top 25 to Watch" in 2007, and was featured in *Dance Teacher* in 2012.

**D**uane Cyrus (New York, NY) is Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro, an independent choreographer and performance artist. He has performed with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Martha Graham Dance Company, The Lion King (original London cast), Carousel (U.S. Tour) as well as domestic and international touring with Cyrus Art Production. A graduate of the Juilliard School (BFA) and the University of Illinois (MFA), Cyrus is a recipient of the Princess Grace Foundation Award, Coleman Entrepreneurship Fellow, and the North Carolina Arts Council's Choreographer Fellowship. Cyrus choreographs, performs and teaches extensively throughout the U.S. and abroad. He was artistic director of Cyrus Art Production from 2006-2014. He has served as faculty for the Joffrey/New School BFA Program, The Hartt School Actor's Training Program, Summer intensives with; American Ballet Theatre, Aileycamp, and Charlotte Ballet and was a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Cyrus was awarded the 2009 University Dance Educator of the Year by the North Carolina Alliance for Athletics, Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. He has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (for UNCG), Arts Greensboro, Greensboro Bicentennial Commission, and Bricolage Arts Festival among others. Cyrus is the co-author and editor of

*Vital Grace--The Black Male Dancer*, a photographic celebration of black men in dance.

**Y**vonne Daniel is Professor Emerita of Dance and Afro-American Studies at Smith College. She is a specialist in dance performance and Caribbean societies and has performed and produced professionally. After earning her PhD in anthropology from UC Berkeley, she published: *Rumba* (1995), *Dancing Wisdom: Embodied Knowledge in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Babian Candomblé* (2005), and *Caribbean and Atlantic Diaspora Dance: Igniting Citizenship* (2011). She has produced four documentary videos on Caribbean dance and African Diaspora religions and is credited with more than 30 articles, encyclopedia entries, and chapters. Her book on sacred performance won the de la Torre Bueno prize from the Society of Dance History Scholars for best dance research of 2006. She is a Ford Foundation Fellow, a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow, and has been a Visiting Scholar at Mills College and the Smithsonian Institution. Dr. Daniel continues to do research, publish, and give presentations in both academic and community settings. She has four sons and 10 grandchildren.

**J**oanna Dee Das is a dancer and scholar who has taught at Barnard College, Stanford University, and Williams College. She received her PhD in history from Columbia University and in 2014-15, was the Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Dance Studies in/and the Humanities at Stanford University. She is passionate about teaching dance history from a global perspective and linking theory and practice in the classroom. Her research interests include dance in the African diaspora, musical theater dance, the politics of performance in the twentieth century, and urban cultural policy. Her book manuscript, *Katherine Dunham: Dance and the Politics of Diaspora*, is forthcoming from Oxford University Press in 2017. She has published an article on Dunham's activism in East St. Louis for the *Journal of Urban History*, and has an essay on Dunham's contributions to the decolonization movement

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forthcoming in Thomas DeFrantz's edited anthology *Dancing the African Diaspora* (Duke). She has given invited guest lectures on Dunham across the country, including at Juilliard, Harvard, Northwestern, Marymount Manhattan College, American College Dance Association, and the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. She also has an essay on the Dahomey Village dancers at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair forthcoming in *The Futures of Dances Studies* (Oxford). She has won several fellowships and awards for her research, including the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship in Ethnic/Cultural Studies and an Academic Quality Fund grant from the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race at Columbia University. Before and during graduate school, she worked as a professional dancer and choreographer in New York City, where she performed at Dance Theater Workshop (now NYLA), the Cunningham Studio, WAXWorks, and DanceNow/NYC. She is currently a Certification Candidate in Dunham Technique and enjoys teaching modern dance and jazz dance. In 2015, she co-organized the public symposium "Black Lives Matter: The Relevance of Katherine Dunham for Today's Artist-Activists" as part of the 2015 Dunham Workshop in Tampa, Florida.

Charles "Baba Chuck" Davis is one of the foremost teachers and choreographers of traditional African dance in America. He has traveled extensively to Africa to study with leading artists. Davis founded the Chuck Davis Dance Company in New York in 1968, and the African American Dance Ensemble in Durham, NC, in 1983. He has been a panelist for several programs of the National Endowment for the Arts and is a recipient of the AARP Certificate of Excellence, the North Carolina Dance Alliance Award, the 1990 North Carolina Artist Award, and the North Carolina Order of the Long Leaf Pine. He has served on the board of the North Carolina Arts Council since 1991 and in 1992 he received the North Carolina Award in Fine Arts, the state's highest honor. In 1996, Davis and the African American Dance Ensemble were awarded a \$100,000 grant from the National Dance Residency Program, a three-year initiative launched in 1994 by the New



*Asase Yaa African-American Dance Theatre performing at Dance Africa founded by Charles "Baba Chuck" Davis. Photo: Whitney Brown*

York Foundation for the Arts and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. In 1998 he received an honorary doctorate from Medgar Evers College; he has received honorary doctorates from several universities, all of which mean a great deal to him. Most recently, Chuck Davis and DanceAfrica were cited as one of "America's Irreplaceable Dance Treasures: The First 100" by the Dance Heritage Coalition.

Omilade Davis is a PhD Dance student at Temple University whose research involves contemporary dance of African origins and contexts. She is the first American to receive certification in the practice and pedagogy of Germaine Acogny's Modern Dance Technique. Omi has accomplished extensive professional dance training in West Africa in Bamako, Mali, Osogbo, Nigeria and at the Ecole des Sables Centre International de Danses Traditionnelles et Contemporaines de Afrique in Toubab Dialaw, Senegal. She received her MFA in Dance at the Arizona State University School of Dance, and her BA in African American Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University. Omi also performed and studied for seven years with Ezibu Muntu African Dance and Cultural Foundation in Richmond, Virginia. She is the creator of Movement to Meaning, a creative tool designed to facilitate somatic awareness in dance. Omi was formerly an adjunct professor of dance at Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Dance and Choreography and the University of Richmond Dance Department. Omi is

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the artistic director of Company Asesu, which brings the stories of the African diaspora to the stage.

Joselli Audain Deans trained eight years at the Dance Theatre of Harlem and subsequently joined the company. After her departure from DTH, pursuing her interest in dance ministry, she completed a BA in theology. She earned an MEd and EdD from Temple University in Dance Education. Deans has been on the faculty of artistic institutions such as Charles Moore Center for Ethnic Studies, New Freedom Theatre and Philadelphia Dance Company (Philadanco). She has also served as faculty in academic institutions such as Bryn Mawr College, Eastern University, The Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University of New Orleans, Temple University, and presently at Neumann Goretti High School where she teaches theology and is developing a dance program.



Thomas F. DeFrantz, Photo: Duke Photography

Thomas F. DeFrantz is Professor and Chair of African and African American Studies at Duke University and director of SLIPPAGE: Performance, Culture, Technology in residence at Duke, a research group that explores emerging technology in live performance applications. He is a founding member of the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance and convenes the working group Black Performance Theory. DeFrantz is a past-president of the Society of Dance History Scholars, an international organization that advances the field of dance studies through

research, publication, performance, and outreach. DeFrantz received his BA from Yale College, MA from City College of New York, and PhD in Performance Studies from NYU. His books include *Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance* (2002), *Dancing Revelations Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture* (2004), *Black Performance Theory*, co-edited with Anita Gonzalez (2014), and *Choreography and Corporeality - Relay in Motion* (2016), co-edited with Philipa Rothfield.

Rainy Demerson is a first year PhD student in Critical Dance Studies at the University of California, Riverside where she researches African Contemporary Dance as a vehicle for social change. She is honored to be supported by a Eugene Cota Robles Award and Gluck Fellowship. This year she will complete her low-residence MFA in Dance with Hollins University. In 2012, Demerson received an MA in Dance Education from New York University and she holds a BA in World Arts and Cultures/ Dance from UCLA. Demerson taught Dance and Yoga throughout New York City public schools and as an Adjunct at Lindenwood University and Assistant Professor at El Paso Community College. She has articles published in the *Journal of Dance Education* and the *Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship*. Dedicated to gaining a first-hand understanding of culture in context, Rainy has studied dance in Indonesia, Cuba, Brazil, Belize, and Germany, and produced her choreography in New York and Senegal. [www.vimeo.com/rainydemerson](http://www.vimeo.com/rainydemerson)

Rhodnie Désir is a Communications and Marketing graduate of the University of Montreal and HEC Montreal. She has a certificate from SAJE Montreal Metro in starting a business and has completed The Professional and Artistic Training Program in Dance (Zab Maboungou/ Compagnie Danse Nyata Nyata). Over the years, she has attended professional workshops with such masters as Koffi KoÏ, Seydou Boro, Salia Sanou, Lena Blou, Peniel Guerrier, Zelma Badu-Younge, Bakari Lindsay and Sully Cally. Désir, who is the only artist

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from North America to have participated in the Ouagadougou International Dance Festival (Burkina Faso, 2014) and has remained very involved in her home community. She was member of the Board of Directors and President of the Diversity Committee of the Regroupement Québécois de la danse, between 2012 and 2014. In 2015, she is the only Canadian and dance artist to be invited as an expert panelist at the seminar “Artists and the Memory of Slavery: Resistance, creative freedom and legacies” (UNESCO). She displayed her innate skills as a businesswoman in 2008 by establishing DEZAM, an artistic and cultural resource enterprise that sought to popularize various practices and cultures among young people.

**M**elanye White Dixon, EdD is an Associate Professor of Dance and African American and African Studies at The Ohio State University. She began her professional dance studies at Dance Theatre of Harlem and as a merit scholarship recipient at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. Published in SAGE, Dance Research Journal, Black Women in America, African American Dance in History and Art, and in Harvard’s University’s African American Lives. Author of Marion Cuyjet and Her Judimar School of Dance: Training Ballerinas in Black Philadelphia. Dr. Dixon received her BA from Spelman College, MA from Columbia University, and EdD from Temple University.

**M**elanie Driver-Milow began dancing in her home city of Flint, Michigan. In 1993, she attended the University of Rochester, where through her vision and dedication she received a BA in Psychology and the first BA in Dance Studies with an emphasis in Mind/Body Connection ever awarded in the University’s history. In 2003 her performance ensemble M\*SHAKA\*FUSION, LLC debuted their first original work- The United Rhythm Alliance Presents: Mama Griot. Since its creation the group has presented work at the New York International Dance Festival, and as a finalist for Gus Giordano’s World Jazz Congress. Dr. Milow most recently made

her New York City debut in November of 2009, as part of the WAXworks Phase II showcase, at the Triskelion Arts Theater in Brooklyn, NY. She currently serves as the Artistic CEO and founder of M\*SHAKA\*FUSION, LLC, a dance centered production, and will be releasing her book, *Spirit of a People: The Cultural Identity Development of the Black African American Community Through Dance*.

**T**arin T. Dumas Hampton, EdD is an Associate Professor at Norfolk State University (NSU) in the Department of HPE-EXS. She earned a BS degree in HPE from DePaul University, MA degree in Dance from Butler University, and a EdD degree in Educational Leadership from Clark Atlanta University. Her teaching career spans teaching all grade levels across the United States and internationally. She was invited on Sabbatical to the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, West Africa, where she assisted colleagues in the Music Department by developing the curriculum for the BA Dance Major, now housed in the former Department of Music which was renamed the Department Music and Dance. Her primary areas of teaching are Dance (African, Jazz, Modern, Folk and Rhythm, etc) and Health and Physical Education Teacher Education, also maintaining her IT status with the American Red Cross for Swimming, Lifeguarding and CPR. Dr. Hampton is a two-time Fulbright-Hayes Scholarship recipient, career-span member of AAHPERD, (Now renamed SHAPE America); past National Dance Association Promotions Director; Illinois-AHPERD and GAHPERD member/Delegate, NASPE Standards Assessment Tester, current ICHPER.SD International Dance Commissioner; current Vice President Elect for Dance/VAHPERD; Charter Member (Morehouse College) Chapter of Phi Epsilon Kappa Honor Society, Secretary and 3-time Conference Organizer for the Black College Dance Exchange, former Secretary of her chapter of Phi Delta Kappa Education Honor Society, and member of the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education. She is currently working towards certification in Umfundalai Dance Technique.

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**W**anda K. W. Ebright holds an MFA in Dance Performance and Choreography from Florida State University, and is a candidate for the PhD in Dance from Texas Woman's University. She is currently Coordinator of the Dance Program and the Visual & Performing Arts major at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, NC, where she teaches all levels of classical ballet, pointe, Graham-based modern, and jazz dance. She is also Artistic Director of the Smith Repertory Dance Company, a student company, and of The Wanda Project, a contemporary dance company now serving as Johnson C. Smith University's dance company-in-residence. She is a former President of the South Carolina Dance Association and has helped to revise state K-12 dance curriculum standards in both Georgia and South Carolina. Her choreography has been performed in Charlotte's Festival in the Park, the Piccolo Spoleto Festival (SC), Arts Alive! Festival (SC), Panoply Choreography Festival (AL), and the Denver Independent Choreographers Project (CO), and was featured this past spring in the Atlanta Fringe Festival

**Y**esenia Fernandez Selier is a Cuban born performer and researcher and currently a Media, Culture and Communication PhD student at New York University. Yesenia is the recipient of fellowships from CLACSO, CUNY Caribbean Exchange Program, Cuban Heritage Collection and the organization Save Latin America. Her work on Afro Cuban culture, encompassing dance, music and race identity has been published in Cuba, United States and Brazil. She produced the theater play "Women Orishas" for Miami Cuban Museum (2013) and the show "Cuba en Clave" for the New York Cuban Cultural Center (2014) and Dia de Reyes (2015), performance-procession created to interact with the sculptures of Latina sculptor Teresita Fernandez in Madison Square Park in NYC. She has worked alongside artists like Wynton Marsalis, Chucho Valdes, Pedrito Martinez, Roman Diaz, Coco Fusco, Ivan Acosta, Septeto Nacional de Cuba, Jane Bunnet, Melvis Santa and Venissa Santi.

**F**ernando Ferraz is a Brazilian performer, choreographer, dance teacher, and his work investigates African-Brazilian and diasporic patterns of dance. Since 2010, he has been teaching Afro-Brazilian dance technique at the Arts Institute of São Paulo State University (UNESP), where he received his MFA in Performing Arts and is currently working on his PhD in Afro-Brazilian dance history. His research in dance fuses Brazilian dance, modern and contemporary dance, and dance theater. As a choreographer he received awards at dance festivals in São Paulo and Minas Gerais, Brazil. His most recent project is "The body of contemporary Black dance: Diaspora and scenic pluralities between Brazil and the United States."

**Y**assmin V. Foster is a creative producer, international dance artist and scholar, based in London. She has worked progressively in the arts and culture sector since 1992: her passion, skill and experience have taken her from urban London to South America, Asia and Europe, on cultural exchange, artist development projects and research. Yassmin advocates for movement and dance as intangible cultural heritage and champions cross cultural and multi art- form collaborative journeys. She holds a BA (Hons) Anthropology and Media, and in 2015 graduated from the two-year international masters programme MA Choreomundus, which investigates dance and other movement systems within the broader contexts of Ethnochoreology, the Anthropology of Dance, Dance Studies, and Heritage Studies. Her research investigates black dance within the wider dance ecology of the UK, in particular the application of movement and contextual analysis to current practice, to explore ways that will support and enhance pedagogical methods and mediation. Website: [www.yassminv.com](http://www.yassminv.com)

**C**arlos Funn, a.k.a GRACE, is a dancer, drummer, photographer and film artist from Richmond, VA. He received his BFA in dance and choreography from Virginia Commonwealth University. His background in dance includes inner-city dance styles

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(hip-hop), House, African, Capoeira, and Tiger & Crane Kung Fu, in addition to training in modern dance and ballet. Funn has twice received scholarships to attend the American Dance Festival (ADF) in Durham, North Carolina. Funn studied with Ron Brown/Evidence at ADF and at VCU, and he studied and performed with Earl Mosley and the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater. Additionally, Funn performed with Maia Claire Garrison and choreographed for her company, MZawa Dance. Funn worked with Ralph Lemon to develop *Geography*, which he performed at Yale Repertory Theater, Walker Arts Center, the State Theater of Minnesota, Duke University, University of Texas at Austin, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. As part of the *Geography* cast, Funn also participated in numerous community activities and traveled with Lemon to Japan in conjunction with the Atlantic Center for the Arts. While there, he participated as an associate artist in the Japan/US Exchange Program at the Akiyoshidia Art Village. Upon returning, Funn rejoined Lemon for Part Two of *Geography* (*Geography: Tree*). Funn also presented his own creative work at Dance Space in Washington, D.C.

Nadine George-Graves, PhD is Professor of Theater and Dance at the University of California, San Diego and president of the Congress on Research in Dance (CORD). Her work is situated at the intersections of African American studies, gender studies, performance studies, theatre history, and dance history. She is the author of *The Royalty of Negro Vaudeville: The Whitman Sisters and the Negotiation of Race, Gender, and Class in African American Theater, 1900-1940* and *Urban Bush Women: Twenty Years of Dance Theater, Community Engagement and Working It Out* as well as numerous articles on African American theater and dance. She is the editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Theater*. She has also written on primitivity, ragtime dance, tap dance legend Jeni LeGon, identity politics and performance, early African American theater and the future of field. She has given talks, led community engagement projects, and has served on boards and committees in the field.

Nena Gilreath is a graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts where she received a BFA in Dance. She began her career by moving to Atlanta and joining the Ruth Mitchell Dance Theatre. She later joined the Dance Theatre of Harlem, touring nationally and internationally. In 1988, Gilreath returned to Atlanta to dance with the Atlanta Ballet. Finally, on January 15, 1990, along with husband and choreographer Waverly T. Lucas, II they created Ballethnic Dance Company. She has implemented numerous outreach programs including the BUDDY Project through the Atlanta Project, which served as a model for the existing Danseur Development Project. Gilreath currently serves as co-founder and co-artistic director of Ballethnic Dance Company and Ballethnic Academy of Dance. She continues her original role as a dance artist and mentor for many young dancers as well as assisting Lucas in creating Ballethnic's unique style. She, along with Lucas, received the 2002 Global Diversity Business Exchange Atlanta Entrepreneur Award. In addition, Gilreath is a recipient of the 2003 Pinnacle Leadership Award. Nena and Waverly were selected as the December 2006 Lexus Leaders of the Arts by Georgia Public Broadcasting. Nena was also recognized in *Atlanta Magazine's* December 2006 issue as one of the Top Twenty Women in Business. She also received the 2008 Atlanta NAACP President's Award for their positive influence on today's youth.

Aimee Glocke earned her MA in Afro-American Studies at UCLA; her PhD in African American Studies at Temple; and was the Visiting Scholar in African American and Diaspora Studies at the University of Wyoming from 2009-2012. As a professionally trained dancer, she is trained in ballet, tap, jazz, modern, pointe, hip hop, and African dance, and continues to dance and perform throughout the Los Angeles area.

Melanie Greene is a dance artist taking on the world through a curious lens. She is no stranger to swirling along the edges of the impossible and swimming among the sea of the minority. Her

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work weaves a tapestry of seduction, reflection, and obsession. She has presented work at Dixon Place, Movement Research's Open Performance, Brooklyn Arts Exchange Upstart Festival, and Gibney's Show Down. She has performed for sheros Sydnie L. Mosley and Paloma McGregor, participated in 2014 EmergeNYC cohort at the Hemispheric Institute for art and activism, and danced with Arthur Aviles Typical Theater. In her most recent passion project, Greene worked with a collective of artists to produce a show titled, Subject To Change. Greene is a 2015 recipient of the Gibney boo-koo Space Grant, as well as a contributing writer for *The Dance Enthusiast*. Greene holds a MFA in Choreography from UNC-Greensboro, a BA in Journalism and Mass Communication from UNC-Chapel Hill, and a North Carolina teaching license in dance.

Jennifer Harge is a dance artist based in Detroit, Michigan. Her work explores choreographies of protest, contemporary black culture, and personal narrative. She holds an MFA from the University of Iowa where she was a Dean's Graduate Fellow and a BFA from the University of Michigan. She has held choreographic residencies at Pro Danza Italia (Castiglioncello, Italy), Illinois State University, Trinity University, University of Michigan, and Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy. In 2014, she founded the dance company Harge Dance Stories, and the company is currently in residence at The Carr Center in Detroit for the 2015-2016 season. Harge serves on the dance faculty at Oakland University.

Amina Olushola Heckstall, Cultural Performing Arts Specialist and Choreographer for Ballet International Africans, is a dancer with 31 years of dance training, performance, and choreography experience. Local companies, since her beginnings at the age of three, have sought after Amina as a dancer and choreographer. She is a Young Master of Guinea dance, called, "Ballet International African" by some of Guinea's local company directors in 2005. Amina was asked to teach a class in traditional West African djembe dance while in Senegal for the

first time on Babacar & Cheick M'Baye's "Going Home" Trip in 1999 and again in 2001, and awarded The Sam and May Rudin Foundation Community Service Fellowship in Arts Education in 2001. She is a four time recipient of The Citizens For New York's Building Blocks and New Neighbors Grant, consecutively - there's no doubt that she has found her path and persevered. Amina has been a freelance dance instructor and a guest artist with the all-Guinean "Tokounou All-Abilities Dance Company" (a company with able bodied and disabled African dancers and drummers) with whom she has done a six-week residency in Florida teaching dance to at-risk/ foster care children and performing June, July, and August 2002. In March of 2007, Amina Heckstall's Contemporary African dance branch of B.I.A. debuted, "Remember Me, Africa" at New Dance Group Theater, (NYC) and recently at The City Park Foundations Summer Concerts Outdoors July 2008. The group of versatile dancers are called, "AMINAIZM/ Emotions Danced".

Ana Paula Höfling is a dancer, capoeirista, and dance scholar. She is assistant professor of dance studies at the UNC-Greensboro. Prior to coming to UNCG, Höfling taught at Wesleyan University, where she was an Andrew Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, at the University of Wyoming, and at the Academia Superior de Artes de Bogotá in Colombia, where she was an IIE Fulbright scholar. Höfling contributed a chapter to the volume *Performing Brazil: essays in culture, identity, and the performing arts* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), and her forthcoming book, *Staging Capoeira/Dancing Brazil* (Wesleyan University Press), analyzes the role of capoeira and capoeiristas in the process of staging Brazilian "national culture" between the 1920s and the 1970s, focusing on issues of race, class, and authorship. Höfling holds a PhD in Culture and Performance Studies and an MA in Dance from UCLA, an MFA in Dance from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, and a BA in Linguistics from University of California, Berkeley.

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**D**uane Holland began his professional dance career at the age of 17, dancing for the first Hip-Hop theater dance company, Rennie Harris Puremovement. While performing with RHPM, he also taught at MIT, Stanford University, Jacobs Pillow, University of Utah, UCLA, Monte Carlo Ballet Company, Pennsylvania Ballet Company, Philadanco, Alvin Ailey Dance Theater and Broadway Dance Center. Duane was a gymnast on the United States Junior National Team and competed in the 1991 Jr. Pan-American Games, 1993 and 1994 Portugal Invitational, and USA vs. Mexico. He is currently on faculty at University of Iowa Dance Department. Duane worked with choreographers Ronald K. Brown Evidence, Garth Fagan "The Lion King," and Jeff Masted "A Few Good Men." He was assistant choreographer of Maurice Hines' Broadway production of "Hot Feet." He was featured in Jerry Mitchell's 2006 "Broadway Bares AIDS Benefit New York Strip.



*Theresa Ruth Howard*

**T**heresa Ruth Howard is a former member of The Dance Theatre of Harlem, and founding member of Armitage Gone! Dance. She has taught internationally and has been on the ballet faculty of the Ailey. She has written for *Dance*, *Pointe*, and *Tanz*. She has recently founded MoBBallet.org which will document the contributions of Blacks in Ballet.

**K**aren Hubbard received her MA in Dance, The Ohio State University; BA in Sociology, Kent State University. Certificate in African and Kenyan Studies - University of Nairobi as a Fulbright - Hays Scholar. Associate Professor, UNC Charlotte: Teaches Jazz Dance, Modern Dance, Writing for Dance, The Arts and Society: Dance. Evolved innovations in

teaching Vintage Jazz Dance. Teaches master classes nationally and internationally. Curriculum Consultant for interdisciplinary course: The Jazz Century (Temple University); ADF/NEH Black Tradition in American Modern Dance Humanities Scholar Team; Free to Dance Consultant. Performed with Cleveland based Karamu Concert Dancers. Artistic Director/Dancer - Dance-By-Two. NY professional credits: musicals, daytime serials, commercials, films, including NBC Hullabaloo Dancers; Hello Dolly! (Broadway and tour), and Paper Doll Munchkin proto-type/dancer in The Wiz! film.

**O**rlando Hunter is a choreographer who researches, illustrates, heals, and creates from an intersected African-American male perspective. In his work he tackles issues resulting from a white supremacist system. Hunter grew up dancing hip-hop and graduated with a BFA in Dance from Univ. of Minnesota, where he performed works by Donald Byrd, Bill T. Jones, Carl Flink, Louis Falco, Colleen Thomas, Uri Sands, Stephen Petronio and Nora Chipaumire. His solo "Mutiny" was selected to represent the University of Minnesota at the 2011 AC DFA gala in Madison, Wisconsin. Orlando studied GLBT activism and history in Amsterdam and Berlin. He has performed with Christal Brown/INspirit Dance Company, Contempo Physical Dance, Forces of Nature, Makeda Thomas, Threads Dance Project, TU Dance and Ananya Chatterjea, an all women's company where he was the first male member and toured with them to Trinidad & Tobago and Zimbabwe. Hunter is a co-founder of the collective Brother(hood) Dance!

**T**ony C. Johnson, a freelance dancer and choreographer, has performed in and choreographed over 100 dances in which 25 were focused on spirituality and movement. He has danced in works with world renowned choreographers Clay Taliaferro, Chuck Davis, Anna Halprin, and others. He has been a frequent participant at the American Dance Festival for over 30 years and is employed there part-time. He has been a friend of the Duke Dance

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Program for over 30 years where he set work on students for Ark Dances. He was a featured guest artist at the Triangle Dance Festival for AIDS. He has been featured in many newspaper articles and interviews focusing on his work as an activist, choreographer, and dancer creating works reflecting his own journey and faith, spirituality and community. In the Spring of 2014 he was selected as one of the presenters for the Dancing the African Diaspora Conference held at Duke University where he shared his research and presented a dance titled "Sisters." His recent performance at Duke explored the faith journey of African Americans over the past 150 years.

**J**ulie B. Johnson is a dance artist and doctoral candidate working in intersections of creative practice, community interaction, and social justice. She teaches dance classes, presents choreographic work, and develops and implements artistic programming and residencies locally and internationally. Julie immensely enjoys collaborating with various artists, cultural and social organizations and educational institutions to explore how dance can address their communities' unique interests, needs, and goals. Julie is a collaborating artist with Evolve Dance Inc., a nonprofit dance organization with bases in New York and Arizona, and served as an artistic director from 2006-2013. She is an editor of *The Dancer-Citizen*, an online peer-reviewed open-access scholarly dance journal exploring the work of socially engaged dance artists; and a member of the organizing committee for Dancing for Justice Philadelphia. Julie earned a BA in dance with a concentration in pedagogy from Marymount Manhattan College, and an MS in nonprofit management from Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy. Julie is currently pursuing a PhD in dance at Boyer College of Music and Dance at Temple University, focusing on relationships between dance and 'community,' specifically within West African dance practice in Philadelphia.

**N**aomi Johnson-Diouf, M.A.O.M., is the Artistic Director of Diamano Coura West African

Dance Company, a company which began in 1975 by Emmy Award winning musician Dr. Zakaraya Diouf. As an expert in West African dance and culture, she has done extensive research and comparative analysis of dance forms from around the world- and has consulted and choreographed for numerous performing companies throughout the United States, Netherlands, Singapore, South Africa and several others. She has a Master Degree in Organization Management with emphasis on change management. She is a strong advocate of Arts-in-Education, and has conducted and organized various projects that introduced the arts to youth and in a presentation that merges academics, music, and dance. For more than 20 years, she has worked with Arts-in-Education programs in school districts throughout California to promote cultural literacy and currently she teaches African dance and heads the African American Studies department at Berkeley High School. She has worked with the Cal Performances - Oakland/Berkeley Alvin Ailey Dance Camp, a camp for under privileged middle school students for the past nine years. She is coordinator of Collage, an annual international festival in Oakland for 20 years.

**A**danna Kai Jones is currently in her final year of the Critical Dance Studies PhD program at the University of California, Riverside (UCR). She received her BFA in Dance from Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University and has since performed in professional dance companies based in NJ and NYC, including Julia Ritter Performance Group and Soulworks with Andrea E. Woods. Currently, she is completing her dissertation on the contentious ways winin' (a rolling hip dance) mediates Trinidadian and Caribbean identities within the United States Diaspora.

**P**. Kimberleigh Jordan is an interdisciplinary scholar working at the intersection of religion, dance, and Black Studies. She is currently a Ford Postdoctoral Fellow at Union Theological Seminary. She also serves as a member of the faculty at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center in Dance History. Her

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research and teaching interests include: religion, performance theory, ritual and worship, dance studies, women and gender, performing the African Diaspora, ethnography, and womanist/feminist theory. A native of North Carolina, she holds the PhD in Performance Studies from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, as well as degrees from Union Theological Seminary (MDiv) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (AB). Formerly a professional dancer, Jordan has danced with various dance companies in North Carolina and New York and studied in the Dance Theatre of Harlem's Professional Training Program. Ordained in the United Church of Christ to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, Jordan's ecclesial service has focused on liturgical dance, the arts, and spiritual formation. Occasionally a blogger and contributor to the *Huffington Post*, Jordan is author of "The Body as Reader: African Americans, Freedom, and the American Myth" in *The Bible and the American Myth* (Mercer University Press, 1999).

**L**utomi Kassim is a Performing Artist, Choreographer and recent Visiting lecturer at the University of East London and pursuing a PhD at the institution in September 2015 in the cultural, political and social constructs of urban identity and affectation, in dance and theatre performance. Kassim works with with PX Radio (Croydon, London) as a presenter, and alongside the discussions on the relevant cultural, political, economic historical issues, will initiate discussions aligned to practical and theoretical PhD enquiry: "What is this unifying affectation within urban performance; and is it a common feature within all forms of performance expression emerging from the African diaspora? And what exactly are we channelling through this codified behaviour? Can it be replicated by people of other cultural backgrounds? Why has it become a commodity? . . . "

**A**ssane Konte, a national of Senegal, West Africa, is the co-founder and Artistic Director, Choreographer, Costume Designer for KanKouran West African Dance Company. Konte began his



*Assane Konte. Photo: KanKouran West African Dance Company*

dance training at age 12, and in 1978, following a performance tour in Cote d'Ivoire, Konte came to the United States to pursue a career as an independent performer. In 1983, he founded Kankouran with Senegalese drummer Abdou Kounta. Since then Kankouran has toured internationally and performed with symphony orchestras, church based dance groups, tap dance and ballet companies, theatrical productions and other professional performing companies from around the world. Konte is the recipient of several prestigious awards which include the Immigrant Lawyers Association's "Immigrant of the Year" award (along with other recipients including Madeleine Albright, Placido Domingo, and Abe Polin), and an award for "Outstanding Community Service" presented by WGMS, one of the most popular classical music radio stations in Washington, D.C. Konte has held faculty positions in the dance department at several prestigious universities in the Washington, D.C. area, including American and George Mason Universities, and presently serves on the faculty at Howard University.

**M**ario LaMothe is a Postdoctoral Associate in Interdisciplinary Sexuality Studies at Duke University's Women's Studies Program. He received a doctorate in Performance Studies from Northwestern University. Mario began dance studies in Haiti. He holds a BA in Theater Arts and French from Boston College, and a certificate of dance from the

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Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. Mario also earned a Masters of Fine Arts degree in Performing Arts Management from Brooklyn College, and subsequently oversaw productions for the Jose Limon Dance Foundation, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Additionally, he has worked as a MSM (Men who Have Sex with Men) health educator and rights advocate in Haiti since 2011. Mario's book project, *Giving Haiti Body: Dance, Memory, and Imagined Masculinities in Haiti*, employs Haitian, dance, queer theories and African diasporic thought, as well as critical ethnography, to question what is at stake when Haitian dance artists engage with local scripts about masculinity and sexuality to critically recognize or reject queer Haitian subjects' activist struggles. The project offers insights into populations where machismo and homophobia are cultivated as regulatory mechanisms of de facto or existing sodomy laws.

Joshua Legg is a performer, choreographer, director and writer who currently runs the dance program at Lake Superior State University. His past teaching credits include Harvard University (where he received a Certificate of Distinction in Teaching), Suffolk University, Northwestern State University of Louisiana and Shenandoah Conservatory (where he received an MFA). The 83 works he has choreographed span site-specific works, concert and dance theatre, musical theatre, opera, and performance art. He has taught students from 3 to 70 years old, and has served as a master teacher and guest lecturer/speaker for ACDA conferences, ADF's Paul Taylor Project, the Dance Teacher Summit, and various universities, pre-professional and private studios, community arts programs, and high schools. Legg also recently served as an adjudicator for Baltimore's AKIMBO site-specific dance festival. His book, *Introduction to Modern Dance Techniques*, grew out of his writing for *Dance Teacher* and *Dance Spirit*. (The book is available in English and French, and has been reviewed in the *Journal of Dance Education* and *Dance Teacher*.) Recent guest lectures, master classes, and residencies include Tennessee Tech

University, Washington and Lee University, Wilson College, Davis & Elkins College, and Shenandoah Conservatory. Joshua is an associate member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

Waverly Lucas attended Marygrove College in Detroit, Michigan, where he conceived the concept and name for Ballethnic Dance Company. He is the creator of Ballethnicize, an evolving dance/fitness discipline that combines African dance styles with classical ballet. Lucas' choreography has performed at the 1996 Olympic Arts Festival, the 1997 Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors Concert Series, the National Black Arts Festival, and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Outreach Program. Lucas choreographed *Aida* for the Atlanta Opera and *Once on this Island* and *Memphis* for the Aurora Theatre and Theatrical Outfit. Internationally, Lucas has studied West African dance and drumming in Senegal and Brazil and taught at the International Association of Blacks in Dance Conference. Lucas has received numerous awards and honors including the Princess Grace Scholarship, National Choreographers Award, and the McPheeter's Medallion Award for Community Service by the Auburn Avenue Research Library.

Tehmekah MacPherson, PhD develops and teaches college and high school level courses on dance in relation to cultural studies, feminism, performance, health, and the environment. She applies a contextualized approach to Pan-African movement styles such as Modern, Jazz, and Hip Hop dance and currently teaches for the Dance Technique Studies Minor at Syracuse University. Dr. MacPherson is the founder and director of Dance Dimension Institute, a non-profit cultural arts organization dedicated to offering performances and programming that inspire cultural and creative connections to, empowerment through, and experiences with dance.

Natalie Marrone-MFA, is a fusion choreographer blending Italian folk traditions and contemporary dance forms. Her work has been seen in film, national commercials, live television events,

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*Dance Magazine* and presented throughout the USA, Europe and Asia. Her research has been presented internationally by National Dance Education Organization, Congress On Research in Dance and the American Italian Historical Association. She has worked as a rehearsal assistant to Hubbard Street Dance founding director Lou Conte, and enjoyed dancing in work by Ronald K. Brown, Jose Grecco, Stuart Pimsler Dance Theater, Alan Himeline, Susan Hadley and Tim Glenn. For her concert dance work, Marrone was the 2012 recipient of the NC Dance Alliance Choreographic Fellowship and was invited to perform at the American Dance Festival in 2013. Most recently Marrone's choreography was featured in the film *ALTO* starring Annabella Sciorra, Diana DeGarmo and Natalie Knepp. *ALTO* won the audience choice award at Tribeca' VisionFest 2015, and has been shown at the Downtown Los Angeles Film Festival, San Francisco Frameline 39 Film Festival, New Filmmakers Film Festival New York, The Miami Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, Hoboken International Film Festival, Barcelona Film Festival



Natalie Marrone. Photo: Elon University

and Durham L&G Film Festival. Marrone currently resides in Chapel Hill with her family. She enjoys teaching at both Duke and Elon Universities and has been the initiator of the Hip Hop dance courses and curriculum at Elon University, Duke University and The Ohio State University.

Nyama McCarthy-Brown, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Dance at Indiana University, in the Department of Theater, Drama, and Contemporary

Dance. She was awarded a competitive fellowship to attend the 2015 Mellon Summer Dance Studies Seminar at Northwestern University. In July, Nyama presented her excerpts from, "Wanted," at the Dancing While Black Performance Lab in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Also, during summer of 2015, she was selected to participate in Doug Varone's choreographic intensive, Devices, at Purchase College in New York. As an outcome of Varone's mentorship, Nyama choreographed and performed a new work, "Location: Lost," at the 92nd Street Y in August 2015. She received her BA degree in Political Science from Spelman College, completed her MFA in Performance and Choreography at the University of Michigan, completed her PhD with a focus on Dance Education and Cultural Studies at Temple University. McCarthy-Brown has published articles in *Dance Chronicle*, *The Journal of Dance Education*, and *The Journal of African American Studies*.

Greer E. Mendy was born and educated in New Orleans, Louisiana in the Lower 9th Ward. She trained in dance extensively at The Ailey School, Steps on Broadway, Djoniba African Dance Center, Dance Place and with the Kankoran West African Dance Company. She has studied traditional and contemporary dance in Cote d' Ivore, The Gambia, Rwanda, Senegal, Haiti and Guadeloupe. Ms. Mendy has appeared as a featured dancer and choreographed for movies, stage plays, music videos, and in acclaimed self-produced productions. Greer Mendy holds a Jurist Doctorate degree from Southern University Law Center in Baton Rouge, a diploma from the National Institute of Trial Advocacy, and a BA in Political Science with a minor in music (bassoonist) from Xavier University in New Orleans. Greer Mendy remains a licensed attorney. Her legal background has provided a solid background in public housing, entertainment and art law with a strong emphasis in corporate sponsorship. Her personal clients have included jazz musician Herlin Riley, photojournalists Keith Calhoun/Chandra McCormick and Christopher Porche West, The Estate of Mahalia Jackson, legendary jazz musician and composer Harold Batiste and his estate, AFO Records, Cash

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Money Records, and Cyril Neville and The Uptown All Stars. She was awarded a community grant in 2011 and 2015 from the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival Foundation to complete her body of work documenting and creating choreography based on the traditional dances of Louisiana. Currently, she is completing that work, *Guardian of a Culture: Black Dance in Louisiana*. She continues to write and lecture on her work in the United States and abroad.

**Z**inzi Minott is a graduate of Trinity Laban Conservatoire, freelance a dance artist and PhD candidate at Kings College London. She has been received choreographic commission from *Immigrants and Animals*, *Rokeya*, *Rich Mix*, and *The Iranian Arts Festival*. She has been artist in residence at *Rich Mix*, as part of *Big City/Small story*, *Yinka Shonambars Guest Projects* and *Ponderosa* in Berlin. She was a member of the *QTIPOC (Queer, Trans, Intersex People of Colour)* Arts group which she formed along with *Evan Ifekoya* and *Raju Rage* in order to consider their art practices from Queer perspective. Minott focused on dance as a political tool. She has danced for *Departing Things (Berlin)*, *Re-Introducing the Oshun (London)*, *Panic Lad-RIOT (London)*, as well as having solos in works created by *Mats Eks*, *Kerry Nichols* with *Random Dance* and *Matteo Fargion*. She most recently received the *ImpulsTanz DanceWEB Scholarship 2015* and became part of the subsequent *Rennweg Collective*.

**K**amogelo Molobye is a South African who has graduated with a BA undergraduate degree in Drama, Politics and Industrial Sociology, and continued to obtain an Honours degree specialising in Choreography and Physical Theatre. He is currently an MA 1 candidate at Rhodes University specialising in Choreography and Movement Research. His professional dance career began in 2010 when he performed at the National Arts Festival, and since then he has worked with choreographers such as *Gavin Krastin*, *Tristan Jacobs*, *Sonja Smit PhD*, *Liz Mills*, *Acty Tang*, *Gary Gordon* and the *First Physical Theatre Company*. Recently he has been working

with *Masidlale Productions* on a *Hanamich* tour throughout South Africa, and trained and performed with *Forgotten Angle Theatre Collaborative*. He presented a paper at one of the only dance conferences in South Africa held at the University of Cape Town-*Confluences 8 Conference*. He co-choreographed and performed alongside *Maipelo Gabang* during the *Detours Dance Festival 2015* in Johannesburg at *Wits University*, and co-choreographed and performed "Traces" in Botswana in November 2015.

**M**axine Montilus is a native of Brooklyn, New York and a first-generation Haitian-American. Maxine has a BFA in Modern Dance Performance from The University of the Arts, and an MA in Arts Management from City University London. She has also had the opportunity to study Afro Cuban dance and culture from 2010-2012, which took her to Havana, Matanzas and Santiago de Cuba; and has studied Afro-Haitian dance with various master teachers, such as *Adia Whitaker*, *Peniel Guerrier* and *Julio Jean*. As a dancer, Maxine has performed with *Ase Dance Theatre Collective*, *Balazole Dance Company*, *KaNu Dance Theater* and *Tamara LaDonna Moving Spirits*. Maxine was a 2014 EMERGENYC artist with New York University's Hemispheric Institute for Performance and Politics. Maxine has had a long career in arts education, and has coordinated programs for healthcare facilities, public schools and individual nonprofit arts organizations. She is currently in the *Lincoln Center Scholars* program, an alternative teaching certification program in New York City for arts educators.

**M**argaret Morrison ([www.MargaretMorrison.com](http://www.MargaretMorrison.com)) is a rhythm tap soloist, choreographer, playwright, and dance scholar, whose performance and research projects explore race, gender, sexuality, and history in tap dance. Her tap scholarship is published in *Dance Research Journal* and will appear in a forthcoming anthology edited by *Thomas F. DeFrantz*. Margaret is on the dance faculty of *Barnard College* and serves as Education Advisor of the *American Tap Dance Foundation*. She performs,

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*Margaret Morrison*

choreographs, and teaches across the US, Europe and Brazil and critics have hailed her as a “consummate artist who breaks the mold. Margaret began her career in 1986 with the American Tap Dance Orchestra, directed by Brenda Bufalino. She completed her MFA in Dance through ADF/Hollins University.

**S**ydnie L. Mosley is a NYC-based dancer, choreographer, activist, independent scholar and educator. She presents her choreography with her Harlem-based company SLMDances, an all-women, contemporary dance company that works in communities to organize for gender and racial justice through experiential dance performance. In addition to showing her work throughout New York City, she has presented her work at multiple academic institutions including Cornell University, Barnard College New York City College of Technology, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and Penn State. She presented her work “The Politics of Gender,



*Sydnie L. Mosley. Photo: The Field Blog*

Blackness and Urban Space: How The Window Sex Projects Performs Feminist Activism in Harlem” at the 2014 CADD conference. As a dance educator, Mosley was selected to develop Dance in the City, Barnard College’s first

summer dance intensive for high school students which is now going into its 5th year. She earned her MFA in Dance with an emphasis on Choreography from the University of Iowa and is an alumna of Barnard College at Columbia University where she earned her BA in Dance and Africana Studies. Current projects that she is excited about include: Her second evening length dance production *Body Business* that addresses economic sustainability for freelance artists of color in NYC (premiere November 2015), and developing a movement curriculum to accompany the study of poet Ntozake Shange’s writing for Barnard College’s course “The Worlds of Shange” developed by Professor Kim F. Hall, Professor of English and Africana Studies.

**C**. Kemal Nance is a Post Doc Researcher in the Dance and African American Studies Departments at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He holds a BA in sociology/anthropology with a concentration in Black studies from Swarthmore College where he taught African dance for 20 years. He also holds MEd and PhD degrees in dance from Temple University where he received Katherine Dunham Award for Creative Dance Research in 2013. Currently, Nance co-directs the Berry & Nance Dance Project, a dance initiative dedicated to the production of dance works about African American men. For 20 years Nance was a principal dancer in Kariam & Company: Traditions in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, while having an ongoing collaboration with Chuck Davis’ African American Dance Ensemble in Durham, North Carolina, having performed with the company in both national and international venues. Nance is the first male master teacher of the Umfundalai African dance technique and heads the Organization of Umfundalai Teachers, a consortium of artists who design and oversee professional development and training for budding Umfundalai teachers. He sits on the executive committee of the Collegium of African Diasporan Dance. Nance has shared African dance throughout the United States and abroad including Ghana, Jamaica, and London. Nance is the recurring Guest Tutor for the Edna Manley College of Visual

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and Performing Arts' Summer School program in Kingston, Jamaica, and has mounted choreography on the Kingston-based Stella Maris Dance Company.

**M**ark Anthony Neal is Professor of African & African American Studies and the founding director of the Center for Arts, Digital Culture and Entrepreneurship (CADCE) at Duke University where he offers courses on Black Masculinity, Popular Culture, and Digital Humanities, including signature courses on Michael Jackson & the Black Performance Tradition, and The History of Hip-Hop, which he co-teaches with Grammy Award Winning producer 9th Wonder (Patrick Douthit). He is the author of several books including *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture* (1999), *Soul Babies: Black Popular Culture and the Post-Soul Aesthetic* (2002) and *Looking for Leroy: Illegible Black Masculinities* (2013). The 10th Anniversary edition of Neal's *New Black Man* was published in February of 2015 by Routledge. Neal is co-editor of *That's the Joint: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader* (Routledge), now in its second edition. Additionally Neal host of the video webcast *Left of Black*, which is produced in collaboration with the John Hope Franklin Center at Duke. You can follow him on Twitter at @NewBlackMan.

**J**o Anna Hazel Norris, Founder/Director of Choreographic Sketches, is an ambitious and enterprising multidimensional dancer, choreographer, director, curator, producer, educator, and humanitarian with 15 years of specialty experience in Live African Disaporic Art Forms. She holds a BFA from The Ohio State University and is presently attending Wesleyan University's Institute for Curatorial Practice in Performance. As a choreographer her work has been presented at the American Dance Guild's 50th Anniversary Festival: Many Voices of Dance Today in New York City; BRIC Studio in Brooklyn, New York, and the Bohemian National Home in Detroit, Michigan.

**H**alifu Osumare is Professor and former Director of African American and African Studies at University of California, Davis. She has been a dancer, choreographer, arts administrator, and scholar of dance and black popular culture for over thirty-five years. She has accomplished many of these roles not only in the U.S., but also in Africa, Europe, and Brazil. Her teaching and writing spans the traditional African to the contemporary African American, and she has published two books and numerous book chapters and journal articles. Her first book was *The Africanist Aesthetic in Global Hip-Hop: Power Moves* (2007) and her current book is *The Hiplife in Ghana: West African Indigenization of Hip-Hop*. She is currently writing her autobiography, *Dancing in Blackness: A Scholarly Memoir*.



Oh! Nii and Halifu Osumare

**L**uis F. Paredes, PhD received his doctoral degree in Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies from the State University of New York at Albany. His dissertation, *Peru Negro: Choreographing and Performing Afro-Peruvian Identity, 1969 to the Present*, analyzes issues of cultural construction, identity, and artistic development in the world-renowned Afro-Peruvian music and dance company Peru Negro. His current research project examines the circulation of blackness between Afro-Chileans and Afro-Peruvians. He serves as an AP Reader for the Advanced Placement Spanish Literature and Culture examination, and he is an Academic Advisor at SUNY Albany. He is also the historian and archivist for the Cultural Association Peru Negro.

Dr. Osumare's vision of social justice, like her mentor Katherine Dunham, is the integration of the arts and the humanities to humanize all receptive souls.

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John O. Perpener III is a dance historian and independent scholar who currently lives in Washington, D.C. He received a PhD in Performance Studies from New York University and a MFA in Dance from Southern Methodist University. He has held teaching positions in the Department of Dance at Florida State University, the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and the University of Maryland, College Park, and in the Department of Theater Arts at Howard University. His book, *African-American Concert Dance: The Harlem Renaissance and Beyond*, was published by the University of Illinois Press in 2001, and he also served as a primary consultant and commentator for the PBS documentary film on the history of African-American Dance, *Free to Dance*. As a dancer and choreographer, he worked with the Hartford Ballet Company, the D.C. Black Repertory Dance Company, and the Maryland Dance Theater. In November 2011, he performed at Harlem Stage and also toured with "Visible," a work that was co-choreographed by Jawole Zollar, director of the Urban Bush Women, and Nora Chipaumire. Dance critic Gia Kourlas of the *New York Times* singled him out in the following, "Oddly, it's Mr. Perpener, a dance historian, who anchors 'Visible' with the gravity that it deserves and the lightness it needs. That he understands dance is more than evident in his scholarship, the surprise here is how he knows how to own a stage."

Thais Rosa Pinheiro graduated in Tourism and Library Science with a specialization in Tourism: Economy, and Management Culture at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and Environmental Management Analysis and Planning by ENCE/IBGE. This acts as the technical tourism course in CEFET (Federal Center of Technical Education) with the disciplines ethnic tourism and managing tourism enterprises.

Tiffany Quinn is an alum of the Howard University Dance Arts area, under the direction of the late Dr. Sherrill Berryman-Johnson. She was a member of Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, A Dance

Company for six years. Quinn has been featured in "Seven of New York City's Current Crop of Dance Innovators," *TRACE Magazine* (2007) and *Inside Black Culture Presents: Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, A Dance Company* (2009), a BET Jazz documentary for the company's 25th anniversary. She has served as assistant to choreographer with Brown on his critically acclaimed works, *Dancing Spirit* (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, 2009) and *For Truth* (PHILADANCO, 2006). Additional performance credits: Bridget L. Moore, Camille A. Brown & Dancers, and Francine E. Ott/The Walk. Most notable performance venues: The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Out of Doors, The Apollo Theater, New York City Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Joyce Theater, South Bank Centre, (London, England), Holland Dance Festival (The Netherlands), Dublin Dance Festival (Ireland), Vancouver Dance Festival (Canada), Biennale de la Danse, (Lyon, France), Grand Theatre de Quebec (Canada), Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, American Dance Festival, Dance Motion USA Tour 2010 to South Africa, Senegal, and Nigeria.

Lindsay Renea is an Ohio native who has always been addicted to movement. She attended Howard University in Washington D.C. and earned her BFA in Dance. In the middle of her senior year while earning her degree she began interning with the Tony Award winning choreographer of the Lion King, Garth Fagan. Upon graduation she joined his company Garth Fagan Dance based in Rochester, New York. During her 5 years as a company member she quickly became a principal senior dancer in the company. Some of her most memorable moments include performing with the Wynton Marsalis Septet, Jessye Norman, the Ying Quartet and choreographing for Sean Penn's Haiti relief organization JP/HRO. She is an adjunct faculty member in the Dance Major program at Youngstown State University as well as the founder and artistic director of the Lindsay Renea Dance Theatre. She is currently pursuing her Masters of Fine Arts degree in Choreography at Jacksonville University, in Jacksonville, Florida.

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**C**ristina F. Rosa is a artist-scholar native of Brazil who migrated to the United States in 1996. She is currently a full-time faculty lecturer in dance at Tufts University, where she teaches Afro-Brazilian Dances, Modern, and Creative Processes & Methods. Rosa is the author of *Brazilian Bodies and their Choreographies of Identification*, and her research interests include the intersection of embodiment, knowledge production, and processes of identification. Rosa earned her PhD from UCLA.

**R**achel Russell is a performer, dance educator, and scholar interested in the liberation of black women through understanding and bolstering the world making of black women in the arts and beyond. Rachel dances with Dance Theatre Collective and Sydnie L. Mosley Dances, two New York based dance companies. Rachel has served as an arts administrator, production/choreographer's assistant, research assistant, administrative intern, and workshop co-facilitator for choreographers such as Ni'Ja Whitson Adebajo, and organizations such as Urban Bush Women. In the spring of 2013, Rachel presented her undergraduate thesis paper, "She Called Her Laquifa!" at the American College Dance Festival Association at the Minnesota State University-Mankato.

**L**ela Johnson Sewell-Williams is a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She earned her BA in American History and Black Studies from South Carolina State University and her MA in American History with a concentration in Archives, Museums and Historical Editing from Duquesne University. Sewell-Williams resigned from her position as the Assistant Curator of Manuscripts within the Manuscript Division of Moorland- Spingarn Research Center at Howard University to found Preserve Your Story, an archival consulting firm, which identifies and fosters the preservation of historical materials with a specialized interest in the promotion of family, community, and cultural and corporate records reflecting the African Diaspora. Ms. Sewell-Williams is currently serving as an archival consultant to Moorland Spingarn Research Center.

**A**ya Shabu is an arts administrator, teaching artist, and professional dancer currently serving as Board Chair for Shabutaso Inc. An alum of The African American Dance Ensemble, Shabu has performed with local notables, Soulworks and Mike Wiley Productions. Aya's love of dance and storytelling has led her into the world of theater choreography. An Emerging Artist Grant recipient, Aya's choreography has landed her in *Indy Weekly Magazine's* Best in the Triangle 2012 for her contribution to theatrical productions: I Love My Hair and The Brother's Size. Aya is a Lincoln Center Institute trained teaching artist and uses movement and performance to both learn and teach African Diasporic history. Aya is the co-creator of the Hayti Walking Tour: Fayetteville Street.

**J**amie Shakur is a dance educator, performer and choreographer from Brooklyn, New York. Shakur started dancing over twenty years ago and is proficient in several dance styles but focuses primarily on West African, Umfundalai and Horton techniques. Shakur holds a BFA in Dance from Temple University and a MFA in Dance Education from New York University. During her tenure, Shakur received a Tony Bennett: Exploring the Arts Grant, a Capezio Grant and an Arts Achieve Grant. She has worked as a seasoned performer with Kariam & Company: Traditions and the African American Dance Ensemble traveling across the country performing and teaching dance. She was also an apprentice with the Urban Bush Women Dance Company. Her passion and experience in teaching has enabled her to train students at schools including the Dance Theatre of Harlem, The New Freedom Theater and in the Alvin Ailey Arts in Education program. Shakur has presented a scholarly project at the National Dance Education Organization Conference and taught a workshop at the Dancing Our Africa Umfundalai Conference. She has ten years of experience as a certified Dance Educator with the New York City Department of Education, and she is also certified in the Umfundalai African dance technique. Shakur is a member of the National Dance Education Organization and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

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**M**alik Nashad Sharpe is an experimental choreographer from New York City. He graduated with a BA with Highest Honors in Experimental Dance from Williams College, received a certificate in Contemporary Dance from the Trinity Laban Conservatoire for Music and Dance, and is an MFA candidate at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is primarily interested in the intersection of anarchism, cybernetics, the avant-garde, and the Black body's potential for being its own discourse. He has worked closely with Hana van der Kolk, Kota Yamazaki, Ingrid Nachstern, Joshua Bisset, and has performed his choreography domestically and internationally in a variety of venues including the Bonnie Bird Theatre in London, the 62nd Center for Theatre and Dance, Bushwick Open Studios, Otion Front Studio, ShuaSpace, and Secret Project Robot Art Experiment and his work has been supported by residencies at the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives (2013), ShuaSpace (2015), CLOUD at Danslab (2015-16). In addition to his performance work, Malik currently serves as the Center Research Associate at Gibney Dance Center, NY, where he is completing research on artist need, arts funding in the United States, the immense responsibility of the cultural non-profit, and a new, groundbreaking timeshare residency program for mid-career artists. He has published articles in the *Feminist Wire*, *BlackGirlDangerous*, *POSTURE Magazine*, *Doing Moor*, and his poetry has been published by New Bourgeois.

**B**rynn Shiovitz is a PhD Candidate in Culture and Performance at UCLA. Her dissertation, "Shades in Synch: Exposing Minstrelsy and Racial Representation Within American Tap Dance Performances of the Stage, Screen, and Sound Cartoon, 1900-1950," focuses on tap dance and its ability to narrativize diasporic identity by simultaneously attending to fields of vision, aurality, and embodied practice. As complement to her research, Brynn is the sole creator of *The Rhythm Project*, a series of eight short documentaries that explore the relationship between rhythm and race as it exists for a diverse group of New York and Los Angeles-based tap

dancers. Her writing on tap can be seen in *Dance Chronicle*, *Dance Research Journal*, and *Women and Performance* journals, as well as *Dance*, *Dance Spirit*, and *Dance Teacher* magazines. In addition to theorizing tap, Brynn has taught tap dance and other movement-based courses at Mills College, UC Berkeley, Brooklyn College, The American Musical and Dramatic Academy, and UCLA.

**S**abine Sorgel, PhD received her doctoral degree in Performance and Media Studies from Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, where she lectured in theatre and dance until 2008. Her book *Dancing Postcolonialism: The National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica* (2007) was published by Transcript Verlag. From 2008 - 2012, she was Lecturer in Drama, Theatre and Performance at Aberystwyth University and a research fellow at the Interweaving Performance Cultures Research Centre Berlin in 2011. Since 2013, she is Senior Lecturer in Dance and Theatre at University of Surrey. Other publications include *Dance and The Body in Western Theatre. 1948 to the Present* published with Palgrave September 2015. Her current research interests include contemporary theatre and dance, cross-cultural corporeality, globalization and transnationalism.

**L**.H. Stallings is a native of Durham, North Carolina. Her research and teaching interests converge at the intersections of literary studies, feminist theory, queer of color critique, sexuality studies, and cultural studies. She has published essays in *African American Review*, the *Journal of Bisexuality*, *Black Renaissance/Renaissance Noire*, *Black Camera*, *Obsidian III*, *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, *CR: The New Centennial Review*, *Western Journal of Black Studies*, *Feminist Formations*, *MELUS*, and numerous edited collections. Her first book, *Mutha is Half a Word!: Intersections of Folklore, Vernacular, Myth, and Queerness in Black Female Culture* (The Ohio State University Press, 2007), critically engages folklore and vernacular theory, black cultural studies, and queer theory to examine the representation of sexual desire in fiction, poetry, stand-up comedy, neo-soul,

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and hip-hop created by black women. She is also co-editor and contributing author to *Word Hustle: Critical Essays and Reflections on the Works of Donald Goines* (2011), which offers a critical analysis of street literature and its most prolific author. Her second book, *Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures* (University of Illinois Press, September 2015), explores how black sexual cultures produce radical ideologies about labor, community, art, and sexuality.



*Sara Stranovsky*

Sara Stranovsky received her MA and PhD in Culture and Performance Studies from UCLA's World Arts and Cultures/Dance department. She specializes in dance and performance in the Cabo Verdean Islands of West Africa. She also specializes in community building through dance, Lusophone performances, and Afro-Brazilian dances. She performed and worked with Cabo Verdean national dance Company Raiz di Polon in 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2013. Since graduating in 2013, Stranovsky has been working in the area of community engagement through the arts at Lincoln Center Education and other performing arts nonprofits in New York City. She is also a working dancer and musician, currently in the off-Broadway show, *Fuerza Bruta*.

Melissa Templeton, PhD is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Dance Department at the University of California, Riverside. Her current research examines African Diaspora dance practices in Montreal in relation to Canadian multicultural policy and Quebec nationalism. Dr. Templeton has presented

her research in Canada, the U.S., and Europe, and her work has appeared in *Dance Collection*, *Danse Magazine* and *The Dance Current*. The research for this presentation was supported by a fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Mila Thigpen, a Boston-based teaching artist, is a graduate of Kenyon College (BA), The Boston Conservatory (MFA), Harvard University (EdM), and the Emerging Leaders Program at University of Massachusetts Boston. Mila has coordinated a Fulbright exchange in the Netherlands and is an alumna of the Choreographer's Lab at Jacob's Pillow. Her faculty appointments include Boston Ballet, Cambridge Rindge & Latin School, Tufts University, and Artistic Director of AileyCamp Boston through Celebrity Series. Having been described as a lively dancer by the *Boston Globe*, Mila has performed for a variety of dance companies and choreographers including Sean Curran, Germaul Barnes, Arthur Aviles, Azure Barton, ANIKAI Dance, KAIROS Dance Theater, and MetaMovements Latin Dance Company. Currently, Mila is a doctoral student in dance studies at Texas Woman's University. Her scholarly interests include dance ethnography, dance pedagogy, and critical theory.

Makeda Thomas has been described as belonging to that new breed of contemporary artists - "the postmodern African Diasporan dancer-scholar whose work goes beyond stereotype and the market appetite for clichés regarding the black dancing body." Thomas has created several works through cross-disciplinary collaboration with artists around the world. Her choreography has been presented internationally and received numerous commissions and awards, including Creative Capital and 651 ARTS Black Dance: Tradition & Transformation. Thomas is the director of the Trinidad-based Dance & Performance Institute.

Tamara Thomas is an educator, performing artist and choreographer. After receiving

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Tamara Thomas. Photo: Neil Dent

her undergraduate degree, she joined the touring company for Chuck Davis's African American Dance Ensemble. While completing her Master in Fine Arts in Dance at Temple University, she served as a member of Kariamou and Company Traditions and Kulu Mele African American Dance Ensemble. In addition to being a performing artist, as a choreographer, she has shown her works at events and venues such as World Cafe Live, the Temple Black Alumni Arts Showcase, the Black Women's Arts Festival, the International African Arts Festival and the American College Dance Association Regional Conference. Having traveled internationally, Tamara has had the opportunity to study and give instruction in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Jamaica, West Indies. In 2004, she received an emerging artist grant from the Durham Arts Council to travel to Senegal, West Africa to study traditional music and dance. In 2008, with the Leeway Art and Social Change grant, she was able to travel to Guinea, West Africa to work with members of Les Ballet Africaines and the Hip-hop group Methodik. In the Spring of 2015, she was granted a Junior Faculty Research Award. Her artistic vision involves the integration of arts and community development. This focus has been shared with organizations such as Dreams Wilmington, Upward Bound, the Friends Neighborhood Guild and drove the creation of The Nkonsonkonson Afrikan Youth Ensemble in Kingston, Jamaica. Having taught at Temple University, Rowan University, New Media Technology Charter School, and the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts in the School of Dance, she is now Assistant Professor of Dance at the University of Georgia.

Joan Francisco Valdés Santos, PhD is equally an artist and a scholar. While his formal education is in sports/recreation, science and psychology, he is also a prolific writer, composer and journalist, with a wide range of knowledge and experience in Cuban literature, music, art, and culture. He was born in Havana, Cuba and currently lives in Durham, NC. In 2005 he received his Doctorate from the Instituto Superior de Cultura Física Manuel Fajardo in Cuba, where he was one of the 46 members of the Science Council of INDER, National Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation. He has produced works for several radio and television programs in Cuba and his poetry was published in the *Hispanic Pan-American Anthology of Ovanz* (2006). He has currently self published two series of love poems titled *Donde Reina El Amor y La Esperanza/Where Love And Hope Rein* (2012) and *Medicina del Alma/Medicine of the Soul* (2014).

Ricardo Valentine's artistic experiences is rooted in using art as a vehicle for activism. In November 2011, Ricardo performed with Christal Brown and Fred Ho in "The Sweet Science Suite: A Scientific Soul Music Honoring of Muhammad Ali" at the Guggenheim Museum. Valentine has presented his choreography at Bates Dance Festival, Brooklyn Museum, El Museo de Barro and LaGuardia Community College. He continues to collaborate and work with Christal Brown/INspirit, Edisa Weeks/Delirious Dance, Paloma McGregor, Dante Brown/Warehouse Dance, Malcolm Low/Formal Structure Jill Sigman/Thinkdance, Ni'Ja Whitson, Nadine George-Graves, Ari Krieth and Emily Berry/B3W. Most recently, he attended the Urban Bush Women's Summer Leadership Institute in New Orleans, Louisiana to further investigate how to use dance to connect to a specific community and leverage the arts as a vehicle for social activism and civic engagement. Ricardo is the co-founder of Brother(hood) Dance with Orlando Zane Hunter, Jr.

Sheila A. Ward, PhD is presently a tenured Professor in the Department of Health, Physical

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Education and Exercise Science at Norfolk State University. She is Co-Director of and performs professionally with Eleone Dance Theatre of Philadelphia, PA. 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 is a Fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and a Certified Instructor for both the Umfundalai African Dance Technique and the Katherine Dunham Technique. She was Publications Chair of the National Dance Association and served on the Editorial Board of JOPERD (2006-2009). She has conducted over 29 dance arts-in-education k-12 residencies throughout the states of Virginia and Delaware, and the City of Philadelphia, PA. She performed and trained with The Philadelphia Company (Philadanco) and Philadanco II. At Indiana University, she was a member of the African American Dance Company and the IU Dance Theater. Dr. Ward was featured in the magazines, *Dance Teacher Now* (2009), which highlighted multiple careers of dancers and *Upscale Magazine* (2009), which highlighted the use of African Dance for health. Dr. Ward is the 2014 Herman C. Hudson Alumni Award Recipient, African American Arts Institute, Indiana University for her outstanding career as a dance artist, educator and scholar.

Theara J. Ward began her professional career with the Dance Theater of Harlem at thirteen years old. Her travels have spanned the globe to places like Hong Kong, Australia, South Africa, the former U.S.S.R. and South America. Her experience in the arts and entertainment has touched many areas. She made her Broadway debut featured in the Tony Award winning revue, BLACK AND BLUE. The role of “Ghost of Christmas Future” for the Madison Square Garden version of A CHRISTMAS CAROL was created on Theara. She has appeared on television in commercials and various television specials. She also teaches in arts in education programs in the New York



*Theara Ward instructs dance students.  
Photo: Willis Ryder Arnold / St. Louis Public Radio*

metropolitan area with, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Dance Theatre of Harlem the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and Mickey D. and Friends. Theara was sent to the island of Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands to set up the first dance program for the Alvin Ailey Foundation. Theara has written her first book, a poetry collection, *From the Heart Of A Sistah*. Theara performs the poems with live music. The poems provide the script for her one-woman show. “From The Heart Of A Sistah” was one of the new works presented in the Genesis Festival for new playwrights at the Tony Award winning, Crossroads Theater in New Brunswick, NJ. “From The Heart Of A Sistah” was also presented, Off- Broadway at The Triad in New York.

Alexandra Joye Warren is the Founding Artistic Director of JOYEMOVEMENT dance company. A native of the Washington, D.C. Metro area, she received her BA from Spelman College and her MFA in Dance Performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Alexandra performed, choreographed and taught in New York from 2006-2013 performing with Christal Brown’s INSPIRIT, and served as Artistic Director for the 2012-2013 season. Alexandra has been fortunate to study with Urban Bush Women, Germaine Acogny and Jant-Bi at L’Ecole Des Sables, Bill T. Jones in development of FELA! the Musical, and perform with Maxine Montilus, Sydnie L. Mosley Dances, Maverick

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Dance Experience, Van Dyke Dance Group, and Amy Love Beasley. Now based in Greensboro, NC, JOYEMOEMENT, was launched in 2014.

Charmian Wells holds a BFA in Dance and M.A. in Performance Studies from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. She is the co-founder and artistic director of Refractions Dance Collective. Charmian has been a principal dancer with Forces of Nature Dance Theater since 2005. A dedicated educator, she currently teaches in the dance programs at Lehman College and Temple University. Charmian is currently pursuing her scholarly interests as a doctoral candidate and Presidential Fellow at Temple University in Dance Studies. She is the recipient of 2015 Edrie Ferdun Scholarly Achievement Award. Her research is focused on the concept of choreographing belonging in the African diaspora, particularly across lines of race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, etc. This interest stems from her performance background as a dancer with Forces of Nature Dance Theatre. Research interests include: black performance theory, queer theory, critical race theory, feminist theory, feminist ethnography, transnational theory and diaspora studies, sound studies, and affect theory. She works as an editorial assistant on Dance Research Journal, and she is currently the editorial assistant for a forthcoming publication on African diaspora dance edited by Thomas F. DeFrantz.

Kariamum Welsh is a choreographer and a professor at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She received the Doctor of Arts from New York University and the MA.H. from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Widely published in both scholarly journals and book length studies, she is a scholar of cultural studies including performance and culture within Africa and the African Diaspora. She is the author of *Zimbabwe Dance: Rhythmic Forces*, *Ancestral Voices: An Aesthetic Analysis*. She is the editor of *The African Aesthetic: Keeper of Traditions* (Greenwood Press, 1994) and *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical and Philosophical Inquiry* (Africa World Press, 1996). She co-edited

*African Culture: Rhythms of Unity* (Africa World Press, 1985). Dr. Welsh is the artistic director of Kariamum & Co.: Traditions. Kariamum is the recipient of numerous fellowships, grants and awards including a National Endowment for the Arts Choreography Fellowship, the Creative Public Service Award of NY, a 1997 Pew Fellowship, a 1997 Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, a 1998 Pennsylvania Council on the Arts grant, a Senior Fulbright Scholar Award and she is currently on the Fulbright Specialist Roster. She is also the recipient of the Leeway Foundation Transformation Award for 2015. She is the founding artistic director of the National Dance Company of Zimbabwe in southern Africa. Kariamum is the creator of the Umfundalai technique, a contemporary African dance technique that has been in existence for over forty years and is taught in Africa and the diaspora.

Katya Wesolowski is an anthropologist and capoeirista. She teaches in the Cultural Anthropology Department and the Dance Program at Duke University. Her research and teaching interests include expressive culture of the African Diaspora with a focus on Brazil and Angola; globalization; bodies and embodiment; the intersections of dance and sport; race, gender and social inequalities; violence and social justice; and the methodological and pedagogical challenges of researching, writing and teaching about ephemeral expressive practices and embodied knowledge such as dance. Her recent publications and book manuscript focus on the Afro-Brazilian game/dance/fight of capoeira, which she has been practicing and teaching for over twenty years.

Melanie White is a first year doctoral student in African and African Diaspora Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. Her research interests include Black cultural politics in Central America and the Caribbean, Black aesthetic production, identity construction, and Black and Third World feminist thought.

Tara Aisha Willis is a PhD candidate in Performance Studies, NYU, an editor for *TDR/*

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*The Drama Review* and *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, and a summer Thesis Writing Mentor for Hollins University's Dance MFA. She is the Diversity Initiatives Coordinator for Movement Research, an NYC artist services organization for experimental dance, and is a choreographer, dancer, and dance writer, including publication in *The Brooklyn Rail* and the *Movement Research Performance Journal*.

Valerie Winborne has had an extensive, multi-faceted career as a dancer, choreographer, repetiteur, actress, dance movement therapist and presenter. She toured extensively with the internationally renowned Urban Bush Women and supported the staging of Jawole Willa Jo Zollar's (Artistic Director of Urban Bush Women) work, "Shelter" on the Alvin Ailey American Dance Ensemble. She performed with many other choreographers including Ron Brown, David Rousseve and Johanna Boyce and presented her own choreography in New York City. In the Off-Broadway production of the Story of Josephine Baker, she was a Principal. Winborne was an Assistant Choreographer and Movement Coach/Rehearsal Director for the legendary Robert Wilson's internationally acclaimed work, *The Temptation of St. Anthony*. She also served as the Summer Program Director for Wilson's Watermill Art Center and Institute and was the Programming and Community Outreach Consultant for Harlem Stage/Aaron Davis Hall, Inc. Winborne worked closely with Dance Umbrella in Boston leading workshops for Battered Women, Teens at Risk of Suicide, Incest Survivors and Women living with Cancer, among others. Winborne founded and was Artistic Director of the dance theater company V2W Experience Dance! Theater Company.

Andrea E. Woods Valdés, dancer/choreographer/video artist/musician, is Artistic Director of SOULWORKS/Andrea E. Woods & Dancers. Woods is also an associate professor at Duke

University and a former director of Duke In Ghana summer study 2012-2014. A native of Philadelphia, Woods began her dance training with Jean Williams at Germantown Dance Theater.

After graduating magna cum laude from Adelphi University she danced with Clive Thompson, Mafata, Leni Wyllyams and Saeko Icinohé. Andrea is a former dancer and rehearsal director of Bill T.

Jones/ Arnie Zane Dance Co. (1989-1995). Woods has received grants from: The Jerome Foundation, (NEFA) The National Dance Project, National Performance Network and Arts International. Her artistic work and research have taken her to, The Cannes International Dance Festival, Taiwan, Russia, Senegal, Morocco, Korea, Poland, Singapore, Belize, The Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and throughout the United States. She has done collaborative works with musicians: Randy Weston, David Pleasant, Tiyé Giraud, Madeleine Yayodele Nelson, Tia Hanna, Philip Hamilton, Julia Price and Shana Tucker and spoken word artist, Hattie Gossett. Andrea was part of the American Dance Festival Faculty 2000 - 2007.



*Andrea E. Woods Valdés*

Sheron Wray is part of the dance faculty at UC Irvine. She performed with UK contemporary dance companies Rambert and London Contemporary Dance Theatre between 1988 and 2001. In tandem she was the artistic director of JazzXchange Music and Dance Company between 1992 and 2004, collaborating with musicians including Wynton Marsalis, Byron Wallen, Julian Joseph, Zoe Rahman and Gary Crosby. Recently the UK's National Resource Center for Dance invited her to place her archive within their permanent collection. In 2013,

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she re-launched JazzXchange in the United States ([www.jazzxchange.org](http://www.jazzxchange.org)), giving the first performance at Segerstrom Hall in Orange County, California. In 2014, she was appointed guest curator of contemporary performance for the Monuments and Museums of Ghana as she seeks to make visible the cultural axis between the United States and West Africa in part. Currently she is completing her PhD with the University of Surrey entitled: "Applying the multilogics of West African improvisation applied to contemporary performance practice." As an artist-scholar she theorizes and practices West African, more specifically Ewe principles of improvisation. It is an original conception of improvisation underpinned by her emergent theory of Embodiology, as featured within her TEDx talk. Of her scholarly writing two essays on jazz dance appear in: *Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches*, edited by Oliver and Guarino (2014); an article on her choreographic work with The Ghana Dance Ensemble appears in *The Ghana Studies Journal* (2010) an article on improvisation-as-performance is forthcoming in *Choreographic Practices*, published by Intellect (2016).

Queen Meccasia Zabriskie is an assistant professor of sociology at New College of Florida. Her research and teaching interests include: race, class, and gender; the sociology of dance; culture; performance theory and practice; social inequality; qualitative methods; and culture and performance politics in the African/Black Diaspora. Zabriskie is co-author of *Black Theater is Black Life: An Oral History of Chicago Theater and Dance, 1970-2010*, which traces the development of black theater and dance communities in Chicago. A choreographer, performer, and scholar, Zabriskie has presented her artistry and scholarship in numerous cities around the U.S. and internationally.

Andre M. Zachery (1981, Chicago, United States) is a Brooklyn-based inter-disciplinary artist who creates performances, interactive media installations, film, and sound art. He is currently a Jerome Foundation supported 2015 Movement Research Artist-in-Residence. He earned a BFA from the Ailey/

Fordham program in 2005, and MFA in Performance & Interactive Media Arts from Brooklyn College in 2014. He is a recipient of the Caroline H. Newhouse Scholarship Fund and Sono Osato Scholarship Award for Graduate Studies through Career Transitions for Dancers, and PIMA Outstanding Student Award in 2013. He is the artistic director of Renegade Performance Group (Brooklyn) and founding member of the inter-disciplinary collective, Wildcat! Zachery, was a resident media-artist at Schmiede 2014 in Hallein, Austria and received a 2015 Educational Award to the art and media center Harvestworks in New York City.



Andre M. Zachery. Photo: Brooklyn Arts Council

## REFLECTING ON THE 2ND BI-ANNUAL CADD CONFERENCE: "DANCING THE AFRICAN DIASPORA: EMBODYING THE AFRO-FUTURE"

*Carl Paris, Founding Executive Board Member*

### PREFACE: THE SPIRIT OF THE CIRCLE

In framing his black postcolonial project, Frantz Fanon wrote, "The circle of the dance is a permissive circle: it protects and permits" (The Wretched of The Earth). For Fanon, the circle of the dance spoke figuratively and literally to the psychic and existential imperative for the "community to exorcise itself, to liberate itself, to explain itself." I am reminded of the underlying spirit of Fanon's project as I reflect on the CADD conference. For me, strong in 2014 and even stronger this year, it begins with Baba Chuck Davis's invocations of "Ago!" ("Attention!"), and our responses of "Ame!" ("I am listening, I am open!"), inviting us into the circle in which scholars, teachers, dancers, musicians, and supporting practitioners can share and revitalize their spiritual, creative, and intellectual energies in the Africanist tradition of ashe (the power to make things happen and produce change). This spirit also flowed powerfully through the overall superb organization of the conference led by Shireen Dickson and Thomas DeFrantz, most notably, including a common meeting, greeting, and eating space in which conferees could interact between sessions.



*Baba Chuck Davis leads Spirit Circle at 2016 CADD (above). Participants, including Nadine George-Graves and Andrea E. Woods Valdés, exchange greetings and hugs (below).*



### EMBODYING THE AFRO-FUTURE

This year's conference theme, "Dancing The African Diaspora: Embodying the Afro-Future," drew on the notion of 21st century Afro-futurism, delineated as an Afro-aesthetics, which "combines elements of science fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, and magical realism" (from the CADD Welcome Statement, 2016). With this as a departure point, "embodying the Afro-future (or Afro-futurism) in African diaspora dance" opens ways to articulate and re-articulate the black experience, from the past to a—if not knowable—surely imaginable future. Like Fanon's circle of dance, the Afro-future exhorts and proposes a continuance of representation and resistance. It coaxes and urges us across the arcs of classical and experimental thought and performance of black pleasure, pain, enlightenment, freedom and social justice.

So, as I think along these lines in relation to the many topics and issues of the conference, several questions surface for me: What might we bring to an embodied Afro-future? What new pedagogical, performance, and theoretical discourses will serve the Afro-future? What might be the role of technology and dance: for example, in social media and archival platforms? What happens when liberated black women lead? What will dancing black masculinities reveal? How might dance artists and theorists look at representations of culture and intersectionality (race, gender, class, sexuality, ability)? How can the Afro-future work more effectively in the academy? How might past and present representations of ballet, performed about and by African Americans, link to the future? Some of these questions reflect sessions I attended. I use them as a backdrop to focus on a few issues

that resonated with me. I apologize in advance for not being able to name everyone and every session.

## ACTIVISM-- PAST, PRESENT TO FUTURE

John Perpener, III's opening plenary presentation on Friday, titled "**Eleo Pomare: Artist and Activist,**" powerfully connected (or reconnected) us, not merely to the artistic importance of this choreographer's groundbreaking work, beginning in the 1960s, but also highlighted the continued importance of activism as a key tool of black dance. (A side note: I had the privilege of introducing Perpener.) In talking about Pomare's Blues for The Jungle, Narcissus Rising, Burnt Ash, and other master works, Perpener provides a timely reanalysis of how the choreographer suffused his art with a trenchant anti-war and humanistic politics for social justice and sexual liberation in which daring and non-conformity played a prophetic role. In this, Pomare paved the way for many socio-politically minded dance artists who came after him. Indeed, as a former dancer in Eleo's company, I was heartened by many of the younger attendees' knowledge and understanding of the relevance of his work to their own projects in black **artistic activism**.



Also relevant to activism were various sessions, which reminded us of the fundamental importance of connecting African dance performance and tradition to future scholarship and pedagogy. One of these sessions was Saturday's plenary panel of elders, "**African Dance in America,**" featuring the collective passion and knowledge of Kariamu Welsh, Yvonne Daniel, Naomi Johnson-Diouf, Artry-Diouf and Chuck Davis. In addition, scholars and performers from throughout the African Diaspora also brought innovative and thought-provoking approaches to this issue. A highlight for me in this regard was Aimee Glocke's presentation, titled "**Saving The Past to Ensure the Future.**" Glocke's rigorous scholarship focused on archival issues around Katherine Dunham's artistic and pedagogical legacy, raising important concerns about where we place priorities in preserving the work of our elders and how we might adapt these priorities to changing formatting and archival resources.

## IMAGINING THE BODY AND THE FANTASTICAL

Inviting a more speculative vision, the other Saturday plenary panel, "**Imagining the Afro-future: What Might Black Dance Feel Like?**" was moderated by Thomas DeFrantz with guest artists Kyle Abraham and Niv Acosta. "What Might the Afro-future look like in ten years, or a hundred years?" and "Can you describe the Afro-future?" were among questions DeFrantz asked. Kyle Abraham's responses were reflective of his postmodern, hip-hop humanism, which centers on a mass-culture-inflected dancing body as the site of identity (especially, queer black male identity) and a concern for investigating issues around the past and present value of black lives. (Abraham's company Abraham In Motion performed at Duke University's Reynolds Industries Theater on Friday and Saturday.) My notes do not allow for direct quotes, but what I mainly took away was Abraham's vision of a deeply visceral and contemplative approach to the body's capacity to think and feel. He talked about future creative spaces to flesh out anger and frustration, while imagining a kind of [new] primitivism that would engender peace and healing as sources of inspiration in the service of justice and self-realization. This "reading" of Abraham was complemented by Claire Croft's earlier presentation of "**Dancing Queer Simultaneous Revelation and Concealment in Kyle Abraham's 'The Realist M.C.'**" Her presentation got me thinking deeply about relationships between what she called "controlling images of normativity," the imminent presence of violence against queer subjectivity, and its legibility in the black popular culture and dance context.

**Niv Acosta** came to this panel on the heels of his recent work **Discotropic**, which, among other things, is grounded in his perspective as “a queer trans-masculine identified young black person.” Through embodiment of popular culture and music, Acosta’s work envisions simultaneously fantastical and provocative spaces in which bodies can more fully and safely articulate self, gender, and sexuality in an increasingly scientific and technological world. But, it was Acosta’s somewhat wry riff on the panel’s central question that intrigued me the most. It dared to go where no one has gone before [my words]. He talked about blackness in the future as an essential life force to the Earth, or even possibly harnessing blackness to propel rocket ships. This struck me in part, because I could almost see and feel the viability, the unapologetic get-down quintessence of Acosta’s proposition as one to take into an Afro-future. But I also associated this notion with another of my favorite passages by Fanon in *Black Skins, White Masks* about his blackness, as in “fusion with the world, an intuitive understanding of the earth.” For, as Fanon’s project argues enduringly, this entails a sense that blackness is, and will persist to be, “not an apology or a lack” (ibid.), or a mere ideology, rather an underlying existential force to affirm self and undermine social constructions, which oppress the black body and seek to distort human consciousness within it.



*A Scene from Niv Acosta's Discotropic (2016).  
Photo: Maria Baranova*

## ON THE BLACK MALE

Nadine George-Graves’s closing plenary panel on Sunday also spoke to issues I have been thinking about these days: the black male dancing body and black male representation in contemporary dance and culture. In the first part of her presentation, “Reflections on the Academic (Afro) future,” Graves shared personal insights about being an academic, department head and artist, raising interesting questions about how to navigate one’s need to create within an African dance discourse and function as a leader in the academy. Then she moved to her collaboration, as a dramaturge with dancers/choreographers **Ricarrdo Valentine and Orlando Hunter, Jr.** who presented an excerpt of their choreography **Brother(hood) Dance! Afro/Solo/Man**. This duet, conceived and staged with the two men separate from each other most of the time, tells personal and cultural stories, which explore critical linkages between their individual identities and their social and political realities, and focuses forthrightly on issues, such as living with A.I.D.S, race, sexuality, and brotherhood. This session was one among several great formal and informal performances and workshops that looked at important issues of the gendered black body and its power relations through dance.



*Ricarrdo Valentine and Orlando Hunter, Jr. in Afro/Solo/Man (work-in-process), Brother(Hood) Dance! (2016)  
Photo: Jamie Dzandu*

## BACK TO THE FUTURE

Reflecting on the issues above confirms for me that African diaspora dance is always as much about the future as it is about the past and the present. In this sense, it represents a persistent dialectic in which thinking and performing blackness in dance can produce greater affirmation and consciousness, indeed, a greater explanation of the community, as Fanon urged.

To this I add that imagining an embodied Afro-future requires that we pay special attention to how the inexorable forces of mass and popular culture and technology, and also shifting socio-political systems of power interact with tradition, fantasy, and innovation. I think this is the impulse that the conference attempted to set in motion. There is always more to do and more to say.

*Carl Paris is an Assistant Adjunct Professor at John Jay College and Drexel University, where he teaches courses in African American Culture, Race and Ethnicity, and History as well as Dance History and Critical Dance Theory. Paris received his PhD from Temple University, and his MA in Dance Education from NYU. As a dancer, Paris has performed major roles with Olatunji African Dance, Eleo Pomare, Martha Graham, and Alvin Ailey. He has taught and choreographed in Europe and the United States, maintaining a dance company for several years based in Madrid, Spain. Paris currently choreographs works for Alvin Ailey Workshops, Dance showcases in NYC, and Circle of Dance, Huntington, NY. Paris has published articles on dance, and participated on panels with CORD and the American Dance Guild.*



# THE BLACK SCHOLAR

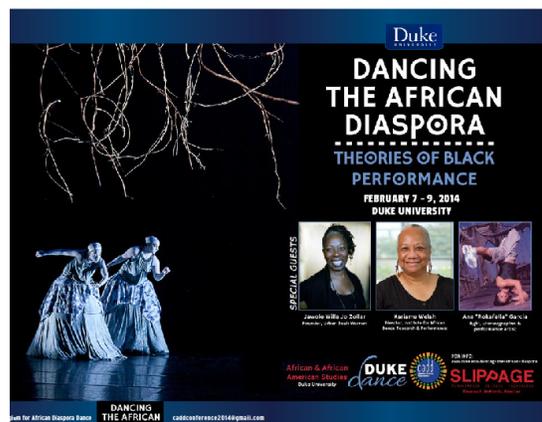
ON MAKING ISSUE 46.1  
WITH TARA A. WILLIS AND  
THOMAS F. DEFRANTZ  
FEBRUARY 10, 2016

**TARA AISHA WILLIS:** This special issue, *Black Moves: New Research in Black Dance Studies*, was your brainchild, one of a few different publication projects coming out of the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance (CADD) consortium conference in 2014. I'm interested in hearing about the significance of having these pieces come out in this format, at this moment, and in *The Black Scholar*.

**THOMAS F. DEFRANTZ:** First, let's talk about collective action. I was trained at a time, back in the 90s, when we thought carefully about minoritarian action as being resistant and collective. I still abide by those ways of thinking. So, I don't think of these projects as being initiated by me or coming from a single place. When we decided to form CADD, the idea at that moment was, "Let's see what it could be." Astonishingly, when the conference happened, it was clear that there were lots of ideas circulating that didn't have a way to reach a larger public. We realized we should think about publication. The field could use more written documents, or different kinds of histories or theorizations, that can be circulated. These publications come from that abundance of new research that was emerging. So, this feels like a collective action. You and I are doing the editorial work here, but even that's collective. We're working together because we thought it would be an interesting thing to do across generations.

"Generations" always seems funny to me because, as we mature, we start to understand that it's about differences. We start our conversations from different perspectives even though we're currently sharing a journey. Where are you in your research and how do you feel it being mobilized by age, cycle of life, or your work as an artist? How does it work in a larger frame of black dance studies as you understand it?

**TAW:** I feel so thrilled to have your mentorship while I'm in the middle of my degree. I'm finishing my prospectus this week, and preparing to teach for the first time. Through this editorial process I've come of age, in terms of figuring out what I'm doing within my doctorate. Working at *The Drama Review* and being involved with *Women & Performance* I've gotten to see the other side of making a special issue. But having your guidance in how to be a guest editor—that more curatorial role of caring for the articles in a one-on-one way with authors—has been a really unique experience amongst my peers. I think it's exemplary of the CADD community, which is at an intersection of two fields, dance studies and black studies, where we're always the one in the room representing. CADD felt like an incredibly joyful reunion of family I'd never met before—even though I didn't know many people at the conference,



my research is really different from a lot of the scholars there, and I had many debates with people over the course of the weekend. It felt overwhelmingly like we're in such a crucial position, being there in a room with the relatively small contingency of people doing the same kind of work, caring about the same ideas, people, and cultural forms.

I think that intergenerational work is exemplary of the black dance studies community. We have to stick together because so often, away from the conference, we have to stand alone in our departments. We can really support each other, bring up the next generation, and not be afraid to find mentorship where it exists.

**TFD:** For me it's also about being willing to not know and to learn. These are actually pretty terrific feminist/womynist politics to engage. Working with researchers who are still in graduate school or just out, I learn so much about how the world feels in different keys. On the other side of getting a job, or on the other side of tenure, things keep changing. The river Styx keeps taking you and showing you new landscapes. If you stay on the route of an academic career-or you don't, it doesn't matter-as I did, you stay in this space that keeps changing. By working with you I get to hear about new or different questions, or rethink questions with more care and particularity. It's an opportunity to work across differences.

Our issue is subtitled *New Research in Black Dance Studies*. This idea of "new" is something we tend to be skeptical of. What's really new or current? What's old? Maybe we don't want to think in terms of linear time. That said, many of the pieces in this issue are by folk offering up an originary research manifesto to their larger projects.

**TAW:** They're each bringing different pieces of black dance studies to the table, which is really significant because it's very new for *TBS* to publish so much dance research. It was important for us to bring together pieces that are very different from each other, that are working in different methodologies. We have archival research, historic, ethnographic, the pedagogy piece, and dance and performance theory. All are looking at "black moves" in different places, cultural contexts, and times. I think we're very conscious of creating a holistic issue that's bringing the richness of the conference and the field to bear on the larger black studies conversation.

**TFD:** We also know as artists these various methodologies that we think of as separate are all present and constantly competing; all these things are happening at the same time in bits and pieces. When I dance, the variety of methods, starting places, or ways to think about analysis or creativity are all simultaneously present. So, I'm working through being born in Indianapolis but moving to San Francisco, in an ethnographic way. I'm working through theories of representation: who do I think is in the audience, and how do I think they're seeing me, and what do I want to resist? I'm working through technique and what my teachers taught me or reminded me of, what I know about my body and what I can or can't do, or how I can maybe stretch that. I'm working through family history. I'm working through my spiritual self-Christian or not-and how it relates to spiritual practice, whether that's a memory of someone else's spirit or my own sense of ecstasy or deliverance that I can manufacture or recycle through my body. I feel our issue tries to remind us not that you can work in these different directions, but that these different ways of being are constantly implicated in our creative lives.

**TAW:** That's a beautiful way of putting it. The issue as a whole is illustrating-is performing, is dancing-what already exists in the moment of movement, of black movement in particular. My favorite word is reverence, instead of spiritual. I think of it in terms of scholarly work, this citational practice we're always engaged in: looking back to produce something in the moment, and for others to use in the future. Again, to stay out of linear

time, we can think of that in a circular way. Reverence allows us to revere things that already exist, but it refers to this present moment action. It has a physical manifestation, a spiritual manifestation, and intellectual and emotional ones as well. The conference these pieces come out of, the writing these researchers are doing, and the editorial project are all a kind of reverence for the field, the performances, and black moves.

I was just reading the “Blacking Queer Dance” piece you wrote in 2002, and you ask, “But what about dance studies and black studies? Why do these areas consistently disconnect?” (104). I think this special issue is an inroad into that question. In the introduction we wrote, “the capacities of Black Studies to accommodate nuanced, careful discussions of dance as a site and symptom of historical, contemporary, and future modes of black life.” Black dance studies has the capacity to consider dance, corporeality, and movement in a nuanced way in order to get into black life more richly. That’s what the issue is performing, dancing.

**TFD:** This idea of “symptom” is interesting. With the three publications coming from that first conference- and CADD is having its next conference in February 2016-it seems to me that there’s a wealth of material now finding its way into different publics. By the time we get through editing-and anybody who’s edited knows it’s hard work-and are able to say, “Here’s what we made. We hope you’ll be able to engage it, that something else is possible because the information is available,” the information is already circulating. It’s in the dances, in the way these seven researchers are thinking through the people they’re working with. These essays represent a distillation of information and ideology, but those ideas are already moving. There’s a ton of research happening in artistic practice and historical archival research around black people in motion, but we’re trying to say, “It’s okay to publish that, too.” Not that publishing is the most important thing-it’s just another place where the information can circulate. It’s not that this stuff isn’t around, it’s that in this moment we’re finding ways to publish it that we didn’t have fifteen years ago.

**TAW:** Framing it together in anthologies or special issues brings things together that have been bubbling for decades, centuries even, but haven’t been recognized as a coherent field.

**TFD:** But it’s also in the dancing. That’s the thing about black performance. The theory, history, and practice are so deeply implicated in each other that the translation into literary text is something we’ve been rightfully suspicious of. Reverence doesn’t want to be fixed. It’s not adulation, it’s not cult-making. Reverence is movable and needs to be. Black moves are about response, reverence, remembering, imagining forward. Writing often wants to be fixed. That’s what I love about our issue. We’re not trying to fix but to offer strategies to engage.

**TAW:** That’s a great word, “strategy.” It comes up in a lot of the articles. They try to share with readers the ways that dance works for artists, performers, or practitioners as a strategy for black life.

**TFD:** In black studies, performance and dance are always referred to, but usually with this quick, passing motion. Those of us who are working in black dance especially, understand that there’s much more in that moment. Maybe what we’re trying to do collectively is inspire all of us to engage reverence for those moments when our embodied practices line up with our identities, aspirations, wonderings, desires, and intellects. Maybe that’s something that we’re sharing with each other.

**TAW:** So often when I’m reading black scholarship I think, “Wait, but right there. If you dug into that performance or that movement moment it would give you a whole other level of nuance.”

**TFD:** I hope our issue will encourage the process of reverence. We're affirming, by digging into a moment, larger structure, or the entirety of a choreography, that any of these modes can open up and allow us to re-strategize how black lives matter-to use that urgent kind of rhetoric-and how we matter for ourselves as a group through our dances. It's such a huge part of how we understand what it is to be black. So let's keep moving.

For a limited time, read the introduction and Tara Willis' article for free. Available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00064246.2016.1119632>.

*Thomas F. DeFrantz is Professor and Chair of African and African American Studies at Duke University, a founding member of the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance, and director of SLIPPAGE: Performance, Culture, Technology, a research group in residence at Duke that explores emerging technology in live performance applications. His books include Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance (2002), Dancing Revelations Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture (2004), Black Performance Theory, co-edited with Anita Gonzalez (2014), and Choreography and Corporeality - Relay in Motion (2016), co-edited with Philipa Rothfield.*



*Tara Aisha Willis is a PhD candidate in Performance Studies, NYU, an editor for TDR/The Drama Review and Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory, and a summer Thesis Writing Mentor for Hollins University's Dance MFA. She is Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives for Movement Research, an artist services organization for NYC experimental dance, and a choreographer, dancer, and dance writer, including publication in The Brooklyn Rail and the Movement Research Performance Journal.*

## 2016 COLLEGIUM FOR AFRICAN DIASPORA DANCE PARTICIPANTS



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To learn more about CADD and our NEXT GATHERING IN SPRING 2018, please contact:  
Collegium for African Diaspora Dance c/o Duke University  
1316 Campus Drive, 243 Ernestine Friedl Building, Box 90252  
Durham, NC 27708  
Email: [shireen.dickson@duke.edu](mailto:shireen.dickson@duke.edu)



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