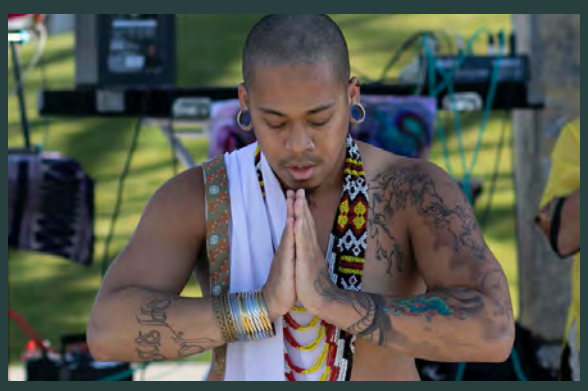
WINTER 2022

indance

DISCOURSE + DIALOGUE TO UNIFY, STRENGTHEN + AMPLIFY



CONTENTS

Dancers' Group gratefully acknowledges the support of Bernard Osher Foundation, California Arts Council, Fleishhacker Foundation, Grants for the Arts, JB Berland Foundation, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, Koret Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, San Francisco Arts Commission, Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, Walter & Elise Haas Fund, William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, Zellerbach Family Foundation and generous individuals.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL

ART WORKS. arts.gov

MEMBERSHIP

Dancers' Group – publisher of *In Dance* – provides resources to artists, the dance community, and audiences through programs and services that are as collaborative and innovative as the creative process.

Dancers' Group has evolved the paid tiered membership program to a fee-free model. If you're interested in becoming a new member, consider joining at our free Community level.

Visit dancersgroup.org for more information and resources.

JOIN
dancersgroup.org

SUBMIT

Performances to the Community Calendar

Dancers' Group promotes performance listings in our online performance calendar and our emails to over 1,700 members.

Resources and Opportunities

Dancers' Group sends its members a variety of emails that include recent community notices, artistic opportunities, grant deadlines, local news, and more.

Cover: Raissa Simpson, photo by Claire Hwang

WELCOME

by BHUMI PATEL, Guest Editor

PHOTO BY LARA KAUR

"If not us, who? And if not now, when?"

I offered this as a provocation for the writers in this issue and I am awestruck by the beauty, grace, humility, thoughtfulness, humor, and care with which each of these writers has approached this appeal. In Summer 2020, during those still-beginning days of the pandemic, I saw an uprising for social justice at a scale I hadn't experienced in my lifetime. That's not to say that fights for liberation aren't ongoing and continuously evolving, just that I haven't seen *that many* people mobilize, take to the streets, and demand change and justice before. Thinkpieces have suggested that people had *time* to be involved in protests and phone banks and letter writing because of the pandemic, but still, I was moved by the galvanized efforts of so many people to talk about race and liberation in the US.

As vaccinations became available in the US in 2021, more people began gathering. As social creatures, gathering was needed. But there was a feeling in my gut that I kept returning to over this last year. I wondered how many people had read *White Fragility*, how many had picked up *My Grandmother's Hands* and read one chapter and put it down, how many organizations hired someone to "train" them on how to be anti-racist? How many choreographies were made about interrogating one's privilege? How many artists, philanthropists, administrators, performers in our field grew tired of doing "the work"?

As I wondered where we were going, I kept asking myself: What now? Where now? Who now? Breonna Taylor's name isn't trending anymore and her murderers are free, so what are we doing?

I set out with the goal of bringing together BIPOC artists in an effort of coalitional community building. We are who we have. The brilliance of this group of writers shows me how brilliantly each of them is enacting the change they want to see in the world. One of my mentors talks about finding the shared genius in the room through collaboration and trust and the genius in this room gives me great hope for where our field, and the world we live in, can go.

I offered this provocation because we all hold so much power to create change in our communities and I know that we don't need white artists continuing to make decisions for what BIPOC artists want and need while continuing to hold power. Here, we offer roadmaps, reflections, and vulnerable representations of our depths of desire. Words matter, and yet our words are not enough - I hope you feel invigorated to act, as I do. These writings invoke conversation with me, with each other, and with you, the readers who I hope will ask yourself the question too: If not me, who? If not now, when?

Bhumi B Patel

JOIN
DANCERS' GROUP

LEARN ABOUT

- Free events
- Featured artists and news
- Discounts
- Jobs
- Grants

dancersgroup

BECOME A MEMBER!

dancersgroup.org

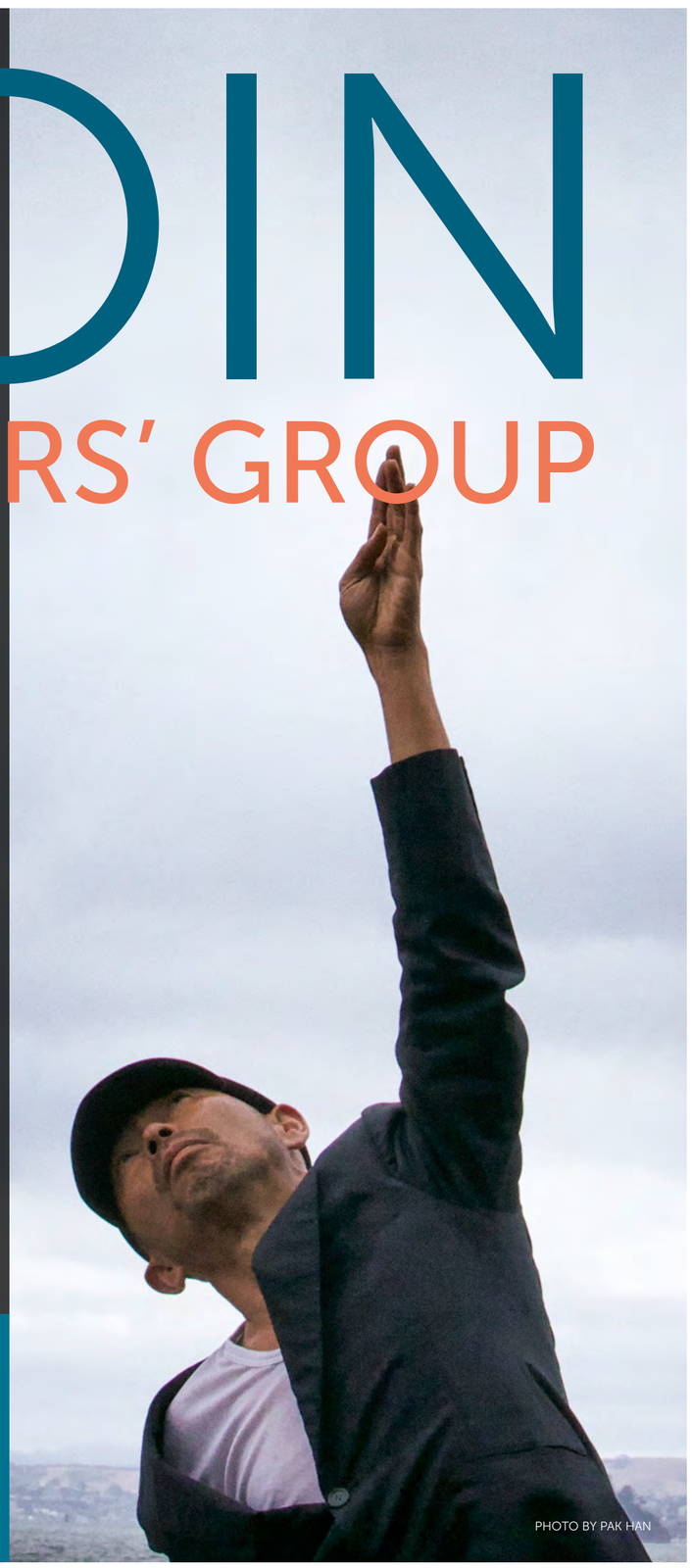


PHOTO BY PAK HAN

* *

Gravity Access Services

Audio Description for Dance & Theater Live, Recorded, In-Person or Online

Make your next event (or video archive) more accessible for everyone:

www.jesscurtisgravity.org/access

* *

Care. Liberation. Now.

Changing ***Shape***, ***Shaping*** Change.

by BELINDA JU

PICTURED BELINDA JU AND SANDRA BAPTISTA/ PHOTO COURTESY OF BELINDA JU

IN APRIL 2021, right after we'd both been vaccinated, I began to meet weekly with a dancer friend and collaborator. We met, keeping our masks on, in my living room, on my building roof, in the park. It was the first time either of us was making dance with another human in over a year and it was thrilling to simply move our bodies, in the same space and at the same time. Actually, forget about moving—it was profound simply to touch; I could count on one hand the number of people I had touched for a whole year.

We were both drawn to exploring the concept of care. Yes, that ol' thing. *Take care*, we sign our emails. *We care about you*, companies tell me in their ads. *Self-care*, that luxury we can't afford. But also no, not that ol' thing. We were interested in real care: care that is powerful and radical, care that can uproot oppression and topple regimes.

In the pandemic, betrayed by those at the top, we did what we always did: we showed up for each other. Amidst catastrophic suffering flowered a beauty and depth of our care, community, and solidarity for each other. And yet, in the spring, as vaccines were opening us back up, all that started to crumble with the return of *busy* and FOMO and *neverenoughness*. Because that's what *normal* translates to in our hyperindividuated, neoliberal society.

We wanted to understand *care*: how could we harness the deep practice we'd exercised at such great cost for a more caring future for the long run, not just in times of crisis. Real care — not marketing slogans and prosaic signoffs.

We structured our working sessions as a book club, grounding each session with a chapter from *The Care Manifesto* by The Care Collective. We invented exercises for ourselves, inspired by what we were reading: what might an *infrastructure of care* look like? How might we explore neither dependence nor independence but *interdependence*? Skipping any easy manifestations of care as either physical (*caring for*) or emotional labor (caring about), how might we embody the notion of feminist Joan Tronto's *caring with*,[1] where the care relationship is consistent with democratic commitments to justice, equality, and freedom?

In our movement explorations, our limbs both separated (pushing away) and connected (bringing together). Our points of contact varied from slip 'n slide to deep pressure, localized to whole body. Rolling together on the ground necessitated full-body intimacy and support of each other's weight. Being on the ground versus standing each prescribed different constraints, but also opened different possibilities. We butted up against power, when either of us would throw out a 'bid' that the other did or did not turn towards. We added successively more rules to our score, making it harder for us to maintain continuity of phrase given physical constraints — much like continuing to care amidst less resourcing and burnout. We dissolved any lead/follow relationship, blurring our boundaries and engaging in a dynamic give and take: sometimes one of us needed more or less, sometimes one of us got to shine more or less; at no point was our relationship ever perfectly equal.

Dance movement and social movement. The gesture and the rupture. For me, care is the bridge. And not only does it serve as the bridge between both, it contains the possibility and process of both — both the gesture and the rupture, the moving towards (ourselves, others, The Other) and away (from oppression, isms). Care is not inherently "nice"[2] — it is political (gendered/racialized/classed) and it is survival (both as caregiver and care-receiver). Care can be conceived as the mending, after the tear. But it can also be the tear itself: etymologically, care comes from the Old English *caru*, which means "burdens of the mind." That tear can then become the mending, unstitching what we no longer need and revealing our inherent whole and free self. Care can be our *practice of freedom*[3].

What do I mean by that? The philosopher Michel Foucault distinguishes between *liberation* as a momentary act and *freedom* as an ongoing practice. He wondered what would happen the day after the Grand L. Turns out we'd still need to figure our shit out. "Liberation paves the way for new power relationships, which must be controlled by practices of freedom." That work of freedom after the Grand L? It's also the work we need to do today.

This essay is about why care is hard, and for that very reason, why care is the practice of freedom.

This essay is driven by these questions:

1. Why is care so hard?
2. How might we care more? How might we expand our caring imaginaries, our notions of kin, of who "deserves" our care?
3. Does care matter? I mean, is it really going to fix anything?
4. How do we get to the perfect *there*, when we're in the broken *here*?

This essay is about why care is hard, and *for that very reason*, why care is the practice of freedom. I describe the care web as applied interdependence, and give three examples for scaled-up care neighborhoods that serve as models for societal transformation. Finally, I make the argument for why liberation is accessible to us—*right now*.

This work of care is *in the present tense* and not some far-off future. It is our work, not someone else's to figure out. And it *will never be perfect*.

But it is our practice of freedom.

Care as an Individual Practice of Freedom

What can care free us from? Here are three ways that either giving or receiving care can be a practice of freedom. First, each time we ask for care, we're chipping away at the tentacles of neoliberalism that have ensnared us, often without our knowledge or informed consent. Asking for help strips down the neoliberalist ideal of the self-made man: autonomous, resilient, and self-sufficient. It refuses the cultural value of independence as success, or even the possibility of any true "independence." We've been brainwashed by the notion that we have to do it all alone or else we're considered weak. Even Henry David Thoreau of *Walden* is a case study for interdependence: he visited his mother's home several times a week to eat her food, give her his laundry, and see his friends[4].

Care can also become a practice of freedom by unhooking our worth from our productivity and believing in our inherent worth. Under neoliberalism, the individual is only valuable as a "productive member of society" (read: engaged in waged labor, because value must be measured, and money is our only currency). But that's just a story someone made up. We are worthy simply by virtue of being alive, full stop. That's unconnected to what or how much we can produce, what our minds or bodies can do. Our belief in our inherent worth gives us a sense of enoughness that enables us to both ask for and give care by giving us a greater capacity to confront our human frailty.

Finally, care confronts vulnerability and dependence, sickness and death. We care for our (and other) bodies and minds both because of and in spite of their perpetual imperfections, the ways in which they may not behave the way we might want them to, the ways in which we have to relinquish control. Care for our (and other) mortal bodies can also be an unsettling *memento mori* when our society tries so hard to ignore, deny, and hide death. The fundamental truth of death is a feature, not bug, of the human condition. Care can allow us to unlearn our shame around having needs and mitigate our fears of frailty and death, accepting all of them as part of the human condition.

Acknowledging our interdependence, inherent worth, and vulnerability — this is hard work that's entangled in the already hard work of care, whether you're the giver or receiver. When you're really in the muck of it, care brings up a lot of feels: anxiety, fear, grief, anger, judgment, and more. But this is also the work of freedom, if we allow ourselves to open to the possibilities of liberation that care can offer us. In the words of meditation teacher Thich Nhat Hanh: no mud, no lotus. Let us feel the discomfort that care triggers for us, and begin to be in that discomfort so that the tightness might loosen, simply by virtue of our *being with*, our *turning towards*. If instead of fighting, we can dance with it: our shame, our fear, our anxiety. We can shift our weight, bend our knees, relax into the natural curve of our spine.

Care as a Collective Practice of Freedom

Care is not just my practice for my freedom, or your practice for your freedom. It's *our* practice for *our* freedom, together.

What can care free us from?

RECONFIGURING FAMILY

One answer is the scarcity mindset that rations the provision and receipt of care to the family. In our neoliberalist world, there is no collective responsibility for care; it is relegated to the family — and when they're not available, outsourced to the market. This is both unreliable and unjust: not everyone has available family or money.

How might we extend our commitments of care beyond the traditional family? What would it look like to construct family through choice and consent instead of chance?

THE CARE WEB

Justice worker Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha describes the "care web," which applies the principle of mutual aid—a collective coordination to meet each other's needs[6] —in the spirit of interdependence and community. It is from each according to their ability, to each according to their need.

A care web doesn't mean that everyone has to do everything, but it means that everyone can give and everyone can receive: pooling both caring needs and caring resources. In this way, the care web is neither unidirectional nor hierarchical, unlike the standard healthcare-mediated relationship of the binary caregiver and care receiver that is unequal and non-reciprocal. And unlike traditional models of care for, say, disabled people or charity recipients, the care web subverts the model that they can only passively receive care. Instead, a person receiving care can also direct or give care. Finally, care webs have no center, paralleling the way in which the normative, institutional centers of life have failed its members — say queer and trans communities harmed by their families[7].

PHOTO COURTESY OF BELINDA JU

Two things the care web is not: it's not charity, and it's not friendship. Members of a care web relate on equal ground instead of a hierarchical, moralistic, and often conditional relationship that characterizes charity. Care webs also don't require friendship, generally characterized by reciprocity, which is not necessarily possible when people have different needs, capacities, and capabilities.

CARING FOR CARE

Returning to Thich Nhat Hanh's *no mud, no lotus*, how might digging into the challenges of care inform the ways in which care is our practice of freedom?

One of the primary ways the care web is hard is the improbability of reciprocity, and the unequal distribution of caring needs and caring resources within that web at any given time.

romham pádraig gallacher of the Radical Access Mapping Project writes about this eloquently:[8]

> If interdependency is in our DNA, what does it mean when we fall out of whack with it? How do we handle the realities of our bodies and minds that need what they need when they need it? What does it mean

when I can't support you in the ways you're supporting me? Does interdependency mean we do the same for one another at all times, as though there's even such a thing as "the same" when it comes to this stuff? Is it a gentle ebb and flow? What if my ebb will never match your flow? What if it's sometimes a torrential downpour and one of us is drowning? What do we do then?"

This notion of needing interdependence to just "magically work out"—and expectations for reciprocity and equality—is, I believe, one of the main reasons care webs are hard. Not only do we have fluctuating needs and resources over the course of even a single day, so too will we across the course of our lifetime — if we have children, when we are sick or recovering, or as we age. And looking across a care web, different people will have different needs, capacities, and capabilities.

I don't think our society gives us many models for, or opportunities to practice, engaging with others in ways that aren't a transaction or equal trade; it's how we are in so many domains of our life: commerce, employment, friendship. I think about the sticky challenges of shifting from what's equal to what's equitable.

Likewise, we aren't well-equipped to handle variability or uncertainty. As when the rigid contracts of our expectations defer to the more dynamic fluctuations of our physical and mental health. We want predictability and control. We want always, and if we can't have that, never is better than sometimes.

We guard against disappointment — that someone else might not be able to show up for us when we need them. We guard against guilt — that we might not be able to show up for someone else when we said we would. The trying, the *turning towards*, the *being with* — how might we prioritize process over product? Even if, yes, sometimes someone might not get what they need. Even if, yes, someone's heart might be broken. Even if, yes, we might have to confront our own fallibilities. This is, still, the *practice* of freedom. The *practice* of creating, still, a more loving, generous, and humane world.

I think about choreographer Doris Humphrey, known for her theory of fall and recovery: "Movement is situated on a tended arc between two deaths." Dance—and life—exists between those two extremes. We are ever only falling away from and returning to equilibrium, but asymptotically, never reaching it. Let us fall, and embrace the fall, together.

And with that fall, the fail. Or what we think of as failure, recognizing that our normative logics of success and failure do not serve us. As gender and queer scholar Jack Halberstam writes, "Under certain circumstances failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world."[9] Losing can be generative.

Care webs are as much about care as loss. Scholar Sara Ahmed writes that "in queer, feminist, and antiracist work, self-care is about the creation of community, fragile communities … assembled out of the experiences of being shattered. We reassemble ourselves through the ordinary, everyday, and often painstaking work of looking after ourselves; looking after each other."[10] Trans and intersex scholar Hil Malatino describes his care web after top surgery as having been "delicately and elaborately woven for years, periodically (and always only partially) rent apart and repaired, made as much of loss as it is of sustaining linked threads." [11]

Care creates loss, care is created by loss, care is created by that very care too. To continue to nurture our care webs is to see it through loss, to embrace holes and patches, sutures and scar tissue. How might we meet this with compassion? Alongside all the discourse about *queering queer* or *cripping crip*, how might we care for care — our imperfect selves, our imperfect care webs, our imperfect fellow weavers, our imperfect weaving, our imperfect loom and thread and the space between those threads that are the very reason for their resilience and stretch?

Caring for care: this is, again, our practice of freedom.

CARE NEIGHBORHOODS

How might we scale up our care webs? One that is sufficiently resilient to absorb both the downpours and the droughts? One that takes us closer to a vision of universal care where all needs are met? Where the primary role and responsibility of the government is to build and sustain infrastructures of care. Where the government isn't the state as other, but a true collective governance. Where the value of care is infused across society, and society is many interweaving care webs.

I'm inspired by three case studies of residential, self-governed care webs that I call care neighborhoods: City Plaza, Occupy Wall Street, and the Dakota Access Pipeline protests. They serve as models for reimagining our society as one that centers care at every level.

City Plaza, an abandoned hotel taken over by a self-governed squat of refugees from 2016 to 2019 in Athens, is an exemplar of both the physical *caring for* and affective/emotional *caring about*. Run like a cooperative, residents took up "weekly responsibilities based on their individual capacities, from cooking meals to cleaning, group child care, and basic maintenance." There were also numerous resident-run amenities like a clinic and library, and programming from English conversation to a nightly women's dance party on the rooftop terrace.[12] Afghan woman Afaf said, "Solidarity and caring are mainly a way of thinking. Here we are discussing everything all together, what needs we have, what problems we face."[13] Iranian woman Shamina said she felt such "social, personal and psychological safety and care" that she would turn down a UN-run apartment.[14] Often described as an "'alternative family' aiming to make City Plaza 'home,'"[15] it serves as a model for what the provision of care — from basic necessities to individual and community development — can look like.

Occupy Wall Street, which began September 2011, serves as a model for the democratic *caring with*, offering a "radical politics of inclusion" exemplified by its nightly General Assembly that used consensus for collective decision-making. It was non-hierarchical and enabled a large number of people to participate. It also used a "progressive stack" by prioritizing the voices of women and people of color before white men. Although—and because—the movement was leaderless, its decisionmaking process was "highly structured, technical, and often laborious," striving to not reproduce society's violent power relations.[16]

Indigenious scholar Kim TallBear argues that in Dakota culture, "making kin is to make people into familiars in order to relate."

The Dakota Access Pipeline protest from 2016 through early 2017 inspires with its capacious conception of kinship. For the Dakota, kinship extends to the land, water, and animals on whom they depend. As such, at Standing Rock, the protestors were protecting their relative, Mni Sose (the Missouri River), from threat of an underground oil pipeline. The water protectors' camp also serves as a model for universal care. All were welcome as long as they abided by the camp's values, including a commitment to protect the water and Mother Earth. "Free food, free education, free health care, free legal aid, a strong sense of community, safety, and security were guaranteed to all."[17]

These three case studies inspire me because they bridge the care web with societal transformation. In each case, people learned skills and capacities such as collective problem-solving and governance, unlearned their conditioning, and literally manifested (not just imagined) a new society. They were empowered to take direct action rather than waiting for someone else to fix their problems and usher in the hypothetical liberation.

This is, perhaps, what is most compelling to me of all: confronting the ways in which we have been complicit in giving up our own power so that we can take it back. Realizing that change doesn't come from the abstract "other," someone more knowledgeable or expert, but us. Realizing that we don't need to be saved — we can step up ourselves. Likewise, we don't need the government to "take care of us"; we have the capacity for collective governance, to be the government, to *care* for all of us.

Liberation Now

So, how might we get there? That beautiful land where we all live in an abundance of care. Where care is the organizing principle instead of profit. Where we have nightly dance parties on the roof. Where we engage directly with our neighbors and fellow citizens so everyone's needs can be met.

That utopia that feels so different from our present reality. But in the spirit of queerness, that's a false binary. Liberation can be available to us right now. I invoke the following as our guides for liberation: Buddhism on awakening, the Dakota on kinship, and anarchism on prefiguration — moving from individual to family to society.

Buddhism teaches that we all have the seeds of awakening (also called enlightenment or liberation) within us. We all possess—or rather, *are*—Buddhanature: the awakened heart/mind. Unlike Christianity's doctrine of original sin, Buddhism believes that we are already awakened beings. However, our fundamental goodness is covered up by the three defilements of greed, hatred, and delusion. Becoming awakened is, then, a subtractive process. Through practice, we may come to know and be who we already are.

Awakening can be accessed by the most ordinary of activities: breathing. Something as pedestrian as noticing that you've been caught in thought is considered a "lowercase a" awakening by waking up to the present moment, gleaning a glimpse into the spaciousness of our Buddhanature. Buddhism teaches that liberation is available to us — all the time, because it is what we fundamentally are.

Indigenous scholar Kim TallBear argues that in Dakota culture, "making kin is to make people into familiars in order to relate." She gives the example of Little Crow, a Dakota chief who became an influential leader in large part from kinmaking: he built alliances across many Dakota communities through marriage, birth, and adoption.[18]

I am compelled by this concept of kinmaking both because it is a process not an inherited state, and because it invites agency instead of passive acceptance. Don't know someone? Make them kin so that you can forge a relationship of mutual care and commitment to one another. It seems to sidestep or reverse our usual logic, but that's the point: we need different thinking if we want to live in a different world.

In anarchism, *prefiguration* is creating the world you wish to live in, now. As one anarchist writes, "We cannot

wait for 'everyone' to choose to live in non-statist, non-capitalist relationships, or we will very likely wait forever. Nor can we force socialism on anyone.… Hence there is no choice for those of us who desire to live differently but to begin to do so ourselves."[19] Opposed to any form of coercive authority—and thus refusing to recognize state power, anarchists exercise the "defiant insistence on acting as if one is already free."[20]

Like the Dakota concept of "making kin," anarchism's prefiguration feels so obvious that I wonder why I've never thought of it before. And the answer I arrive at is that I have internalized the oppression and control. Our primary limitation in ushering forth liberation is, in some ways, simply a lack of imagination. It requires us to uproot the forces of oppression we have unwittingly harbored, so that we may create a new way of being and relating and worlding.

Both anarchist theorist Gustav Landauer and philosopher Michel Foucault wrote about the humble relationship between two people as the front lines for changing large, institutional forces. Landauer writes that the state is the relationship between people, and to destroy the state is to behave differently[21] —specifically, to acknowledge the humanity in each person.[22] Foucault writes that power is not an object to be owned, but exists in relationship whenever one person tries to control another. Power is everywhere — and so too, is its counterpart, resistance.[23] Landauer argues that the revolution must be conducted within ourselves and in our relationships. Foucault empowers us to exercise resistance in our everyday relationships, not only in service of dismantling large, institutional forces.

I began my research with what felt like an unsolvable paradox: how can we get *there* when we're *here*? It seems impossible. And yet, it's not. The there is embedded in the here — we have, indeed, all the ingredients we need to transmute here into there. Like alchemy, there is magic involved. But it's not the magic of chimera: it's the magic of activating our imagination for what is possible. It's the magic of refuting rules that do not serve us and rewriting new ones. It's the magic of believing we are already free in our glorious humanity and luminous goodness.

Changing Shape, Shaping Change

To dance is to care. When I dance, I am caring for my body: giving it the permission to move as it would like to move, rest as it would like to rest, touch as it would like to be touched. When I dance, I am caring for my spirit: letting myself feel whatever it is I'm feeling, be however it is I already am. When I dance, I am caring not only for myself: I am caring for any fellow dancers who are with me, caring for anyone who might witness, caring for anyone who doesn't witness but knows me, caring for anyone who knows whoever knows me.

When I dance, I am making and inhabiting a world, however ephemerally, that is not this one—and I am inviting you to join it. Where I, and you, get to release from the rules and beliefs of this world, and perhaps even (or rather, therefore) the rules and beliefs that are knotted up within us. Where we get to be and move in a different time, released from the fascism of the clock. And in this different world and different time, we get to be a different nervous system, a different mind, a different body. We can relate differently. We can create something different.

When we change shape, we shape change. Dance is an act of prefiguration: creating the world we want, right now. This is our practice of freedom, together.

BELINDA JU (she/her) is a coach, writer, dancer, and convener of a meditation community. As a dancer, she has performed, including original work, at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Judson Memorial Church, Dixon Place, and Bates Dance Festival. As a writer, she has shared her writing at readings around New York City, including at Carnegie Hall, and is currently completing her memoir. When not pursuing artistic endeavors, she coaches founders and leaders in tech and runs a meditation community she started in early 2018. You can learn more about her and say hello at belinda.io.

---

1 Tronto, Joan. *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice* (3/13/13 ed.). NYU Press, 2013. Pages 22-23.

2 *Pirate Care, a syllabus*. https://syllabus.pirate.care.

3 Foucault, Michel. Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. Edited by Paul Rabinow, Translated by Robert Hurley and others, The New Press, 1994. Pages 283-284.

4 Schulz, Kathryn. "The Moral Judgments of Henry David Thoreau." *The New Yorker*, 12 October 2015, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/10/19/pond-scum.

5 Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi. *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018. Page 32.

6 Spade, Dean. *Mutual Aid*. Verso Books, 2020. Page 7.

7 Malatino, Hil. *Trans Care*. University of Minnesota Press, 2020. Page 2.

8 gallacher, romham pádraig. "what happens when we can't live interdependency all the time?" *radical access mapping project*, 9 November 2015, https://radicalaccessiblecommunities.wordpress.com/2015/11/09/what-happens-when-it-feels-like-we-cant-live-interdependency-all-the-time/.

9 Halberstam, Jack. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Duke University Press, 2011. Page 2.

10 Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke University Press, 2017. Page 240.

11 Malatino, Hil. *Trans Care*. The University of Minnesota Press, 2020. Pages 1-2

12 Baker, Aryn. "Greek Anarchists Are Finding Space for Refugees in Abandoned Hotels." *Time*, 3 November 2016, https://time.com/4501017/greek-anarchists-are-finding-space-for-refugees-in-abandoned-hotels/.

13 Tsavdaroglou, Charalampos, et. al. "Acts for Refugees' Right to the City and Commoning Practices of Care-tizenship in Athens, Mytilene and Thessaloniki." *Social Inclusion*, volume 7, issue 4, 2019, pp. 119-130, https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v7i4.2332.

14 Ibid.

15 The Care Collective. *The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence*. Verso Books, 2020. Page 39.

16 Maharawal, Manissa McCleave. "Occupy Wall Street and a Radical Politics of Inclusion." *The Sociological Quarterly*, volume 54, issue 2, 2013, pp. 177-181, https://doi.org/10.1111/tsq.12021.

17 Estes, Nick. *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*. Verso Books, 2019. Page 252.

18 TallBear, Kim. "The US-Dakota War and Failed Settler Kinship." *Anthropology News*, volume 57, issue 9, September 2016, pp. e92-e95, https://doi.org/10.1111/AN.137.

19 Day, Richard J.F. *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*. Pluto Press, 2005. Page 126.

20 Graeber, David. "Occupy Wall Street's anarchist roots." *Al Jazeera*, 30 November 2011, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2011/11/30/occupy-wall-streets-anarchist-roots/.

21 White, Stuart. "Making anarchism respectable? The social philosophy of Colin Ward." *Journal of Political Ideologies*, volume 12, issue 1, 2007, pp. 11-28, https://doi.org/10.1080/13569310601095580.

22 Kuhn, Gabriel. "The State as a Social Relationship: Gustav Landauer Revived." Interview by Dov Neumann. *PM Press*, 25 June 2010, https://blog.pmpress.org/2019/07/13/the-state-as-a-social-relationship-gustav-landauer-revived/.

23 Foucault, Michel. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. Edited by Paul Rabinow, Translated by Robert Hurley and others, The New Press, 1994. Page 292.

BY SARAH CROWELL | PHOTO BY KERRY KEHOE

COLLAPSING TIME/ UNRAVELING SUPREMACY:

A LETTER FROM THE FUTURE

About me

I'm a 56-year-old queer, Black biracial woman.

I grew up in a world where art, social justice, and everyday life were seamlessly intertwined. My mother is an African American arts educator, portrait painter and anti-racism activist. My father was a white professor of ethics and social justice movements. When I wasn't in school, I was taking ballet classes, learning the lyrics to my favorite musical, or painting an abstract work on an easel that my mother had set up for me. I was also creating, directing, and starring in neighborhood dance productions (tutus and all).

I trained in ballet, modern, and jazz dance in my youth, and then performed for dance companies that resonated with my passion for social justice as a young adult. After dancing with the Performing Arts Ensemble and Impulse Jazz Dance Company in Boston, I moved to San Francisco to perform with the Dance Brigade, a feminist dance/theater troupe. I performed and toured with them for 8 years. I also co-directed and performed with a dance/theater company called i am! Productions that created work around multiracial identity through movement and storytelling.

I worked as a dance teacher, executive director, and artistic director at Destiny Arts Center (destinyarts.org) in Oakland for 30 years, where I essentially grew up. At Destiny, I learned the art of teaching, facilitating, community building, collaborative leadership, culture keeping, nonprofit fundraising and finance, advocacy for youth and the arts, and holding space for artists and artmakers to thrive. I also co-founded the Destiny Arts Youth Performance Company at Destiny, a pre-professional dance/theater troupe for teens, which provides rigorous training in hip hop, modern and aerial dance, theater and scriptwriting, and gives youth a platform to tell compelling stories about personal and political issues.

I live in the Destiny neighborhood and have no doubt that I will continue to be part of the Destiny community for the rest of my life.

I'm my mother's daughter - someone who understands how to hold circles of humans in a tender, open-hearted way, and who knows the power of art and self-inquiry on the path to liberation. I'm my father's daughter—someone who loved and honored the natural world, believed in the power of community activism, and loved family deeply. I'm a wife of an Indigenous woman, who is most certainly the love of my life. We understand how to laugh and cry together in equal measure. I'm a dog mom – we have two adorable Shiba Inus, Mimi (12) and Mabel (6 months). I am a devotee of an Indian guru who lit up my life over 20 years ago and gave me access to my heart in ways that I could only have dreamed of.

PHOTOS BY: (TOP) CATRINA MARCHETTI, (BOTTOM) YORAM SAVION

About What Motivates My Work

"What is the greatest ill in the world?" a student asked her spiritual teacher. "Self-hatred" the teacher answered in a somber tone. I heard this conversation 25 years ago and it rang like a bell inside my chest. Immediately, I recognized the intention behind all of my work as a dancer, arts educator, and community leader. It was to embody and inspire self-love. It was to create exquisite art and beloved community, never sacrificing one for the other. It was to install the mantra that joy is an act of revolution, not to deny systemic injustices, but to remind us who we are at the essence of our beings and to use that understanding to co-create a destiny that honors and uplifts everyone.

My work unravels the causes of our collective self-hatred through somatic storytelling and personal narrative, examining racism, misogyny, heterosexism and all the systems that divide us. My work tells the story of the current time by exploring impact rather than giving opinions or casting judgment.

My work reimagines and reconstructs reality through the lens of self-love. Alicia Garza, co-founder of BLM says, "The task is to try and live our lives in the way that we envision freedom looking like and feeling like." For me, this means working in authentic collaboration with performers of all ages and professional artists who believe in social transformation. My work constantly reinvents itself in order to be relevant by responding to the visions of artists in relationship to community.

When I performed with the Dance Brigade, themes of racial, gender, and environmental justice were central"?. When I created my own dance/theater company, we did work that explored the complexity of being biracial in America. When I co-created work at Destiny, every element of the creation and production of the performances moved through a social justice model. The work was collaborative, told stories with social justice themes, educated performers and audiences, challenged and dismantled systems of inequity, and inspired social change.

PHOTO BY: (TOP) KERRY KEHOE

About the Letter

This article takes the form of a letter. The letter is written to me from a future ancestor – a young woman who lives five generations forward in time. She calls me Great Grandma (I would actually be her Great Great Great Great Great Grandma, but who's counting?), even though I never had children of my own, because my dance students have always called me Mom. So, I imagine that their children would call me Grandma.

Side note: It took me 15 years of teaching young people to accept the 'Mom' label, even though my young students called me Mom all the time. I'm stubborn that way. I used to tell them that 'Uncle Mom' might be a more appropriate title, because of my gender fluidity, but 'Mom' was what they wanted to call me, so I finally surrendered.

After 30 years of teaching, I have many children in my dance/theater family. The young woman who writes to me from the future could be the great grandchild of any one of hundreds of my students. She is the combination of the wild, audacious dreams of a whole community, and she comes to me through that dream.

The idea for this letter from the future came from an exercise led by Mia Birdsong and Aisha Nyandoro in a session of the New Universal, a collective of women of color leaders from around the country led by Akaya Windwood. When I wrote my first letter to myself from a future ancestor, I could feel her very clearly. So much so that I wept the entire time I wrote the letter. Here is my latest version written just for you with all my love.

THE LETTER

Dear Great Grandma Sarah,

I've been writing to you in my mind for as long as I can remember. So much so that this letter feels like the continuation of a lifelong conversation. It is truly an honor to spill my mind onto the page in this letter to you. Collapsing time so we can be together across time and space.

My name is Sarah. My mother named me after you. She wanted me to know you as if you were right here in my blood. That's what it feels like.

My mother told me that you loved me before I was born. She told me that you dedicated your life to working with young people who loved to dance and tell stories, and who were committed to creating a world where ALL people are free. She told me that you dedicated your life to the idea that I would exist, and that I would love myself without any limits.

I exist! I'm 14 years old now. I'm a dancer like you. And I love myself as if I were the sky or the ocean. I love myself like the color of fresh green after a spring rain. I love myself so fully that I see my beauty everywhere. And I revel in the beauty of everyone I see, as if I'm witnessing a glittering rainbow over a field of yellow flowers. I laugh big. I sing loud. And oh, I love to dance.

The elders say that people did not love themselves in this way when you were alive. They say that especially Black and Brown bodies were scorned and vilified. They say that round bodies were seen as ugly compared to slender bodies, and that people became more and more invisible in society as they got older. They say that female identified people were seen as less than their male identified counterparts. They say that people who were called queer in your time were considered perverse. I've also learned that the climate crisis was at its peak when you were alive. The books say that humans were willing to sacrifice the health of the planet and all life forms for financial gain and political power. All of this is unfathomable to me. I have cried many times thinking about what was happening when you were alive. I have cried thinking about you having to hold those burdens in your body and in your heart.

You taught young dancers of all shapes and sizes and colors and backgrounds, that they were worthy of love, that they were beautiful. You taught them that they could change the world by creating dance and theater pieces about the things that mattered to them and that mattered to their communities. You helped them challenge the status quo in order to envision something different. For me.

I am here and I am free to be who I am because of you and so many people who knew that being joyful, in spite of all the oppression that was happening in your time, was an act of revolution.

My Mama told me that you were a beautiful dancer, that you looked 7 feet tall when you performed because you danced with a generous heart. I have a generous heart too. It's easy for me to have a generous heart because of the hard work you and people like you did in your lifetime to dismantle systems of oppression from the inside out and the outside in. You helped young people value building community over competition. You helped young people see the value in their stories, their bodies, and their dreams while you pushed them to be disciplined in art and in life. You brought young people and elders together to create magical dance/theater pieces. We know that the connection between young ones and elders is sacred, but that was lost during your time.

You kept choosing love over fear, even though you must have been afraid a lot. You worked really hard to love your dancer body even when the dance world of your time said it wasn't thin enough or flexible enough or white enough. And then you shared that love with your community.

Thank you. Every part of my being is grateful for who you were and what you did so that I could be who I am. You would be so proud of the seeds that you and so many others like you planted. They have borne the most delicious fruit. The world is a magical place now, my sweet Grandma.

The air and water are pristine after generations of working to reverse climate change. I can drink out of any lake or stream and the water is so healthy and so sweet. All our food is organic, as you would have said in your time, but that is just how it is now. We would never even dream of using poison to grow the food that we eat. We have amazing festivals and ceremonies to honor the seasons, the harvest time, the birth of a child, the death of an elder.

There are also ceremonies dedicated to love - cosmic love, friendship love, familial love, and romantic love. There is no fear or discrimination in love. We understand that now. Love is love was a powerful mantra of your time. Our mantra is simply everything is love.

All bodies are honored as sacred. Bodies of different sizes and shades. Bodies of different genders and sexual orientation. Human bodies are seen as vehicles for our souls, so of course we see each one as precious.

I'm part of a large group of dancers of all ages and genders who dance at the ceremonies. Some of our dances have intricate choreography that we create together. Other dances are completely spontaneous. When the dances erupt without any planning, we weave through and around each other in mysterious synchronicity. Those are my favorite times.

Oh my. I have so much to tell you that I could write to you forever. But I have to say goodbye for now. Before I go, I want to ask you for something: Please keep dreaming of a beautiful future. Please keep encouraging others to do the same. I know that there were people who did not believe that dreams could come true, so they became cynical and stagnated the evolution of humankind. But dreams matter. Your dreams, and the actions that blossom from those dreams, have literally made my world possible. And this is a world worth dreaming into being. I promise.

Yours in love throughout all time,
Sarah

SARAH CROWELL is a retired professional dancer who has taught dance, theater and violence prevention for over 30 years. She is the Artistic Director Emeritus at Destiny Arts Center in Oakland, where she served in different capacities from 1990-2020, including Executive Director. She founded and co-directed the award-winning Destiny Arts Youth Performance Company, which was the subject of two documentary films. Sarah facilitates arts integration, anti-racism and team building professional development sessions with artists and educators, both locally and nationally. She has received many awards, including the Bay Area Dance Week award, the Alameda County Arts Leadership award, and the National Guild for Community Arts Education Milestone award. She is a four-time finalist for a Tony Award for Excellence in Theater Education. Sarah performed and toured with Impulse Jazz Dance Company in Boston and the Dance Brigade in San Francisco. She also co-directed the dance/theater company i am Productions!

The Grant You Wish You Could Write

by MIGUEL GUTIERREZ

PHOTO BY MARLEY TRIGG STEWART

Hi I'm spending over a hundred hours of unpaid time to hopefully make it into the three percent of people who actually get funded by your organization. This narrative, or, "the fucking Grant I have to write," as I've come to call it to my friends, my family or any random idiot who I hijack into conversation about it, may come off a little disjointed. That's probably because I worked on it after rehearsal, exhausted, or on the subway as I headed to rehearsal, or during the afternoon I did this *instead* of rehearsal, or on a weekend night while looking out the window with all the longing of a melancholic woman in an 18th century British novel watching all the carefree 9 to 5'ers cavort through another fun-filled weekend.

My piece, um yeah, so my piece. I really don't fucking know what it's about or what it will look like. Probably it's about how fucked up the world is and how I can't really afford to live in it and how I still can't believe that my ex ended up with that guy and now I stalk him on Instagram or how my parents just never really got me and my dad slowly died over the course of ten years while my mom's world got tinier and tinier cuz Medicaid sucks and no it doesn't matter if you were an immigrant and worked your ass your whole life to raise two kids and gave them an education you still end up watching your husband shit in diapers while you fight on the phone with some bitch who says she doesn't understand what you're saying

because of your Colombian accent while you argue for the hundredth time for more nursing hours on the weekends.

Maybe it's about how when I walk downstairs from the studio to use the bathroom at the bar below I see, as usual, a bunch of drunk, fashiony white people sitting at tables being attended to by people of color, who bring them their drinks and hold the elevator open for them and bus their food and clean their rooms at the adjoining hotel and basically spend their entire work shifts on their feet, and I feel a combination of disgust at the situation, a sigh of internal relief that I don't have to be in that situation, and a bit of wonder and guilt that I spend my days in studios thinking about things like, "Should I reach for the mustard colored fabric with my foot or my hand?"

Perhaps you, or, really, the folks that are actually looking at this application - folks who I've seen when we go to each other's shows, folks who I wish I knew better (well some of them at least), folks, who, like me, are all overworked and short on time and more or less in competition with each other so there's always a low grade paranoia coursing through us that one of us is gonna get the next grant or award or gig that the other one wanted, so it precludes us from ever being able to form true collegial intimacy - will decide what percentage of money I should get from the pot o' money that was originally made by some ruthless, rapacious capitalist in the oil or steel or auto industry, who mercifully, for us, came to a late in life realization that they probably should launder their "I-am-a-colossally-greedy-asshole" reputation by getting into philanthropy. If so, please know that I would like the biggest percentage possible of that blood money. The hiccup of ethical consternation that this whole process puts me in is far outweighed by my anxieties about paying my bills, as well as my worries that I've made a terrible mistake in asking other people to work with me on this piece, which results in me taking on responsibility for their financial fates as well.

Believe me, I know that I've put myself in this position. I know, as one heartless foundation director once shockingly reminded me when, as a stipulation of applying, I called her first and she told me in an exasperated voice, "This is the difficulty you have to accept for having chosen this life." Which I'm sure she said while sitting in her paid by-the-foundation office chair, in her paid-by-her-salary outfit, in her paid-for-this phone-call job.

I know that I could have just followed the brain drain and moved to Western Europe like so many of my friends did to enjoy the life-saving benefits of a well funded social safety net and the artistically affirming benefits of an actual dance and performance market. I know I could potentially be nursing at the teat of a state that doesn't see art as frivolous or elitist. But instead, somewhere along the way I got it into my stupid head that it was more "meaningful" to stay in the U.S. and do my work here. You don't abandon your mother just because she's sick, right? I heard that on NPR once from someone who had chosen to stay in a war torn country. Somehow I felt that, as fucked up as it is here, the contours of its fucked-up-ness helped shape a way of making art that was less pretentious and more emotionally direct than what I saw overseas. (Also, I low key hate Europe.) Now I'm pretty sure that wasn't the smartest choice. But who really wants to start at square one in an entirely new country once they've reached middle age. So, again, here I am, writing you.

Incidentally, counter to what I wrote a few paragraphs ago, I would like to offer that maybe this life path hasn't exactly been a "choice." Which is to say, I can't really do anything else. I mean, I HAVE. I've been a stripper, an escort, a barista, a receptionist, a file clerk, a mail clerk, a retail worker, a busboy, a waiter, a bartender, a stage manager, an aerobics instructor, a substitute personal trainer, an academic research assistant, a babysitter, an usher, an elevator operator, a dance teacher, a workshop leader, and more recently, a guest professor. Some of those jobs I got fired from, some of them I left willingly, and some of them I do still because how else is there to survive if I don't have SOMETHING that is relatively consistent even though the only thing I really want to do is just make stuff. But what I mean to say is, and I know it sounds extreme, I can't really do anything else for too long before I just want to die. Whenever I've held a "regular" job for too long I feel the life force being sucked out of me like a Dementor's kiss. So there it is. Making art is basically my ongoing anti-suicide prevention program.

I'm not trying to emotionally blackmail you (or am I?) because I imagine, or I HOPE, that you walked into this arrangement with only the best of intentions. I know you want to be helpful. I just want to sneak this whole "I'll die if I can't make art" thing in there so that when you're looking at the narrative or the work samples or the budget or when you inadvertently allow your presumptions about me and how you THINK I'm doing financially to guide your discerning judgments, you have at least the most honest sense of what the stakes are of this shit for me. Which are, yes, my life. My teeny tiny insignificant life is in your hands. No pressure.

I know somewhere in here I should be saying that my work will help X community or address X issue, but I feel all kinds of ways about this. Do you think that what I'm doing isn't enough? Like it's not enough that I'm trying to pay everyone and myself a decent amount of money so that for the duration of the project we can think of ourselves as artists first and foremost? Cuz sometimes it feels like you asking me to attach it to something beyond itself says that its virtue or justification only exists when it accomplishes something recognizable. It feels like you're herding my imagination into a corral at the Utility Ranch. I get it, sort of, but I'm also confused, because a lot of my favorite work eludes or exceeds the fulfillment of a political platform point. Or maybe it's just that I think that the politics can be braided into the thing itself. It's messy, and it should be. I'm not trying to abdicate responsibility and say artists can just do whatever. I know that we're in the world and we can be just as shitty as other shitty people. But I'm trying to tell you that I am about the world and also not about it. The world sucks. The options available to us for real change suck. So instead I'm just making different worlds. I'm shaping a fierce but fragile possibility. I know it's temporary. How could so much feeling be sustainable?

And honestly, if the government wasn't full of cowardly, self-serving assholes, and if this were actually a representational democracy as it claims to be LOL that had actually dealt with, in a real way, its initial psychic and material wounds of genocide and slavery, we wouldn't be asking artists to live up to ethical metrics that are never demanded from, say, tech dudes, who court angel investors to drop $100 million on developing apps that hail you another gas guzzling car.

Art is messy. I'm messy. I'm actually mad at you right now because you're asking me to not be messy. You're making me come to you and play by your rules. I'm supposed to hand this is on time and the numbers are supposed to match for fuck's sake. When really what should be happening is that you should be coming to me. You should be with me as I carry the heavy suitcase of props and costumes up and down the walk ups I've lived in. You should be with me as I console the performer I'm working with who's crying because their own messiness doesn't fit into the stupid parameters of what the world deems to be acceptable behavior. You should be with me after the show when I'm sitting in the dressing room, emptied out, thinking about how that person whose opinion I care about walked away from me in the lobby. You should be with me when an idea I'm excited about keeps me up at night, gets my heartbeat racing and I run to my notebook to write it down before I forget. You should be with me in the shower (sure, why not) when I let the water run as I stare into space, lost in the possibility of strange images and dreams that I'll try to actualize the next day in rehearsal. You should be with me, you should be here when the clarity and the fear of the task at hand means I can't escape the constant battle between self consciousness and authority. But no, instead you're making me come to you. Sometimes you even say shit like, "Just write as if you were speaking to us." Bullshit. If I were speaking as "myself" I'd just say, "Give me the money. That's all I need from you." Please don't pretend you want to hear how I actually speak. You wouldn't like it.

I've lost the thread. I don't know who I'm even addressing this to anymore. Chances are that you, the person who is actually reading this, are just like me. You're probably an artist who thought, yeah, sure, I'll read those applications and make that $500 or whatever, and for a brief moment I'll feel like it's right that I get to be the one who makes the decision. Even though I know that next year, the tables will be turned and the person who applied last time is sitting where you are now, and so it goes.

And I know that in all likelihood I'll be doing this next year, and the year after that, and ad infinitum because capitalism and the rising costs of the standard of living and because the arc of economic justice bends towards Bezos. I know that if we were graphing this on a classic supply and demand curve, my dance friends and I would and will always be way past the equilibrium of any configuration of those intersections. There's too many of us and apparently we want too much, which is just to say, what we actually need. Because yeah, I need this. Why would I fucking apply if I didn't? I'd literally rather do anything else. Watch birds fight, roll in the grass, take up fencing, masturbate, Sudoku. Anything. But mostly, the thing I'm writing you to give me money for. It's the only thing I know how to do. Correction. It's the thing I'm here to do.

Whenever I've held a "regular" job for too long I feel the life force being sucked out of me like a Dementor's kiss.

MIGUEL GUTIERREZ is a choreographer, music artist, writer, educator, podcaster, and Feldenkrais Method practitioner based in Lenapehoking/Brooklyn, NY. He has been described as the "love child of Chita Rivera and Yvonne Rainer." His work has been presented internationally in over sixty cities. Recent projects include *This Bridge Called My Ass*, a performance that queers tropes of Latinidad, and SADONNA, his sad-version-of-Madonna-songs cover band. He has received a 2010 Guggenheim Fellowship, four NY Dance and Performance "Bessie" Awards, and a 2016 Doris Duke Artist Award. He was in the 2014 Whitney Biennial. He is a guest professor at Princeton University and in Hunter College's MFA Art program. He works out the feelings laid out in his essay in his new podcast *Are You For Sale?*, which examines the ethical entanglements between art making and money. miguelgutierrez.org

An invocation of integrity to Brother(hood)

BY ORLANDO ZANE HUNTER JR & RICARRDO VALENTINE

PHOTO BY RAMY MAM

Greetings! I am Orlando Zane Hunter Jr.

and

I'm Ricarrdo Valentine

and

together we are Brother(hood) Dance!

Ricarrdo:

If not us if not us if not us if not us if not us if not us if not us if not us
If not us if not us if not us if not us if not us if not us if not us if not us
If not us if not us if not us if not us not us if not us if not us if not us if
Ifnotifnotifnotif **YOUYOUYOUYOUYOU** Ifnotifnotifnotifnot
Ifnotifnotifnotif **YOUYOUYOUYOUYOU** Ifnotifnotifnotifnot
Ifnotifnotifnotif **YOUYOUYOUYOUYOU** Ifnotifnotifnotifnot
If not us if not us if not us if not us if not us if not us if not us if not us
If not us if not us if not us if not us not us if not us if not us if not us if

If it's not going to be us, then it needs to be me.
Or maybe a child, if we just listen to them.

We would like to take this time to address our concept of what Brother(hood) Dance! means.

As a collective we are connected through diasporic tethering to our ancestral dreams.

Land
Family
Healing
Food
Dance
Technology
movement
Fracture
Fractured
Fracture
Whole

There is no room for doubting us 'cause we got work to do.

Look within the *us*.

Orlando:

I did not grow up with brothers however I had one sister in my household and a number of aunts and sister circles to witness practices of care, tenderness, and resilience through trials in relationship to their environment. It's no secret that within male dominated spaces due to the construction of masculinity and hard posturing, there tends to be little value in emotional intelligence for it's seen as feminine to be in touch with how a situation has impacted your emotional body. Let alone the care that comes after.

There is no room for doubting us 'cause we got work to do!

And if it's not now, do it when you're ready.

move with urgency.

If it is not us, it's going to be them and they're gonna do it now.

As we contemplated a space based on same-gender loving beings coming to build a space of liberation and equity through brotherhood, we could not envision a space where the softness and emotional intelligence imparted to us from Black women, our sister circles, our mothers, and our aunts was not at the center of how we function and create from these male bodies. Calling on deep Black womanist and same-gender loving notions of togetherness, there would be no brotherhood if it wasn't for Black mothers, womxn, and femmes with deep love, integrity, accountability, forgiveness, and a commitment to growth. These are the fruits planted within us to move in intimate solidarity together.

Brother(hood)!

Growth in the spiritual for us has lived in our connection to the divine feminine, Yemaya, Oshun, Oya, Kali Ma, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Fannie Lou Hamer, Audry Lorde, Queen Amina. The truth is that these aren't all soft, fuzzy, or comfortable spirits to embody or deal with; they are warriors!

There is NO room for doubting us 'cause we got work to do.

The (hood) is where you come from.

They've been strategizing this shit for centuries.

hood.

Our hoods have been strategized, hijacked, and stigmatized for social inadequacy under a hypocartic system. Moving through challenges like food insecurity, land rental, high health risks and public transportation, the Black communities we come from fight back with ingenuity, creativity, and innovation.as community members we work to re-envision, reclaime, and restore our right to occupy this earth without harm to our body, mind, or spirit so that we may pass it onto the next group of humans better than we found it. D.A.T. is the dance we do in our hood. Oh yea D.A.T is dance, agriculture and technology. Wink. Get into it.

Dance Agriculture Technology (D.A.T.)

These are treasures bestowed within us so that we create and curate spaces of care, strength, positivity, change, and resilience. We believe working in this way can be the space from which we work to ensure the least injury to communities, because let's be honest our Black mothers were the first choreographers we've known.

<u>These Mthrfckrs don't wanna back down</u>

<u>Death to the patriarchy</u>

They are at the peak of mediocrity and it's causing harm to everyone, everyone, everyone, everyone.

If not us, what are/is us/we going to do?

Are we gonna do it now? Are we gonna do it now?

You know what, fuck it. Trans folks are doing it now.

Who is *us*? Are we all agreeing on the *us*?

There is no room for doubting us 'cause we got work to do!

Sunday might be the day, if not today.

Something about Sunday lets you start over from scratch.

You're cleansed.

You're quiet.

You get to listen to the natural sounds of the earth.

If not us, Black women and they're gonna do it now.

They ain't waiting.

They have patience, but they ain't waiting.

If not us, you

If not us, them

If not us, you and them

If not us, you and them and us

If not now, today,

If not now, yesterday,

If not now, tomorrow

If not now, yesterday, today, and tomorrow

then

tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow.

If not now if not now if not now if not now if not now if not now if not
If not now if not now if not now if not now if not now if not now if not
Ifnotnowifnotnow**NOWNOWNOWNOWNOW**Ifnotnowifnotnow
Ifnotnowifnotnow**NOWNOWNOWNOWNOW**Ifnotnowifnotnow
Ifnotnowifnotnow**NOWNOWNOWNOWNOW**Ifnotnowifnotnow
If not now if not now if not now if not now if not now if not now if not
If not now if not now if not now if not now if not now if not now if not

Dance!

BROTHER(HOOD) DANCE! is an interdisciplinary duo that seeks to inform its audiences on the socio-political and environmental injustices from a global perspective, bringing clarity to the same-gender-loving Black experiences in the 21st century.

Collective Matters on Dance and Other Body Modifications

WRITTEN BY MEMBERS OF DANCING AROUND RACE

Dancing Around Race (DAR) explores the socio-cultural dimensions of race within the interconnected fields of choreography, dance presentation, dance training, funding, curatorial practices, and dance criticism in U.S. contemporary and postmodern dance. Since 2018, DAR has been building momentum and relevance across the dance communities in the Bay Area as it grapples with systemic and institutional racism that require profound change. Looking closely at the Bay Area dance ecology and working with a systems thinking approach, inquiry examines how various elements contribute to or inhibit racially equitable distributions of power, access, and representation. We're a collaborative of emerging and mid-career BIPOC choreographers working together to create platforms to explore racial justice and equity. Despite the pandemic, we continue to meet and assist the BIPOC community, finding reprieve while uplifting each other.

DEFAULT

BY GERALD CASEL

I reach to the high back diagonal, leading with distal fingertips and spoking my arms as I step forward with my right foot. Allowing the arms to drop, the knee swoops up in a counter thrust against the arms' driving force. The right arm circles up above the head while the left arm slices across in front of the torso reaching toward the side low diagonal. There is a lot of weight sequencing through my bones and the resulting wave of motion ripples through my muscles and beyond my nervous system. The arm upswings and I turn on the ball of my left foot as the right leg falls up to the side high diagonal only to fold down allowing the left knee to flex with the foot and wrists also bending as in the weighted, crumpled, and genuflected figures in Nijinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

These descriptive words don't actually describe how I am feeling while performing these movements. I wonder if it's because as I think about the gesture, I can visualize postmodernism's lack of affect – in the facial expression and in the absence of dynamic peaks and valleys. This insistence on not offering kinetic commentary gives rise to an embodied neutrality such that the body can/shall be read without any markings that would announce its race, ethnicity, gender, class, or any other intersectional identifiers. When performing these movements, I am imagining the impossible, that my body can be read as neutral and that the movements I make can be translated and read as universal, without meaning or intent. Following Claudia Rankine who says, "I myself am overdetermined by my race," my dancing body is always/already/only read and preconfigured in the viewer's mind as a racialized subject.

Over the years, I have been improvising in a style that looks like a mix of Trisha Brown, Bebe Miller, and William Forsythe. Maybe these three are the ones I try to channel when conjuring movements that simultaneously reflect both my deepest somatic self and a nonchalant stream of consciousness that is at once self-conscious and carefree. I call this my default. For me, this term captures the moment-by-moment work of improvising that acknowledges my teachers while trying not to look like I give a shit. Honoring my teachers is unconscious and unavoidable, but not all of them exist within these categories. For some reason, my somatic teachers disappear in my mind's eye since so much of that work integrated imagery into an applied practice so that my body became more efficient, discerning, and clear – free from adornment and embellishment. In a way, somatic practices ask us to be a body that is unperforming.

How do we create clear boundaries of care when asking about histories of dance training that have been harmful and painful?

Lately, I've been bringing into practice the naming of people's most influential teachers. I have also asked them to identify their teacher's race or ethnicity, the form they taught, and the cultural tradition from which their practice comes. It has been interesting to see the various ways people have processed this request – with some totally unphased by the prompt – while others expressing how, just by being asked the question, were reliving a difficult experience from their past. It is never my intent to ask people to draw on past traumatic experiences and share them with the group, so I take it very seriously when someone taps me on the shoulder to say that this might not be a good question to bring up in a community gathering. How do we create clear boundaries of care when asking about histories of dance training that have been harmful and painful? How do we hold space when the questions we ask unearth a traumatic past? These are some of the challenging territories my social and creative practices have been merging.

In asking about people's training histories, I am also interested in understanding the potential for cultural mismatch that may emerge. For example, one of my most influential teachers is Kazuko Hirabayashi. Kaz

was Japanese and she taught me Graham Technique at The Juilliard School. Martha Graham was a white woman and one could say that her movement practice, the Graham Technique, embodies a uniquely white-American aesthetic, which has become a quintessential U.S. modern dance form. I never thought about it while learning the technique from Kaz, but there may have been some other internalized tensions imbued in how she delivered her teaching since her approach was vastly different from the other Graham teachers I had including Ethel Winter, Jeanne Ruddy, and Christine Dakin. Kaz's style was fast, brainy, and ferocious. She challenged me like no other teacher. When we danced poorly, she would tell jokes. I heard her once say, "If you dance like that, I have a company for you – the telephone company." Since she also taught at SUNY Purchase as well as at Juilliard, she would instigate a rivalry between the schools. When our contractions were sloppy she would say, "this looks like Juilliard junkyard!"

There was a tradition of "no pain, no gain" in these well-worn techniques, and that, unfortunately, included emotional suffering. Shame was often used as a motivating tool used to lure us out of our comfort zones and competition became fuel for technical improvement. Each of us fought for a spot in one of the annual concerts, which often featured a Martha Graham piece or something from Paul Taylor or some other quasi-neoclassical ballet choreographer. I am sure there was another way to instill discipline without having to break a student's sense of self, value, and confidence. This was the late 80s and this was the norm.

In my creative research as well as my social practice through Dancing Around Race, I have been asking people to name their teachers, their race, and the form they were taught. In a simple way, this exercise honors and exhumes the knowledge learned from their teachers but also some potentially painful emotional memories associated with their learning process. The goal of this practice is not to re-traumatize people (should they have terrible training histories) but to acknowledge the trauma-informed past and to move beyond it by arresting the transmission of suffering by not replicating pedagogical methods used by their past teachers. The hope is to transmute the passing forward of trauma into one of care and empowerment — rather than shame and fear, we draw out joy and resilience. In essence, by breaking these harmful pedagogies, we challenge our default mode of teaching, learning, and being in our bodies while seeing and meeting our students as they are and giving support so that they can be where they need to be.

Kaz's style was fast, brainy, and ferocious.

GERALD CASEL(he/they/siya) is a Bay Area-based dance artist, equity activator, and antiracist educator. As director of GERALDCASELDANCE, his choreographic work complicates and provokes questions surrounding colonialism, collective cultural amnesia, whiteness and privilege, and the tensions between the invisible/perceived/obvious structures of power. Casel is an Associate Professor of Dance and is the Provost of Porter College at UC Santa Cruz. A graduate of The Juilliard School with an MFA from UW Milwaukee, they received a Bessie award for sustained achievement. Casel founded Dancing Around Race, an ongoing community engaged-participatory process that interrogates systemic racial inequity in the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond.
geraldcasel.com

WHEN HOUSEGUESTS BECOME SONGBIRDS

BY RAISSA SIMPSON

"Why you want to fly
Blackbird you ain't
ever gonna fly,
No place big enough
for holding all the tears you're gonna cry."

Calling on all culture bearers who pass down traditions, rituals and heritage through dance. The type of dance maker I'm referring to are choreographers of color whose works set out to preserve the transmission of culture through our movement lineage of historical, socio-political, and economic struggles. This art form of socially relevant dance transcends dance genres from folklorico to the stage and commercial forms while at the same time blending Western concert dance formalities of what is deemed professional. I usher in this article with the spirit of ancestral struggles while simultaneously carving a future pathway in what is a shifting paradigm for San Francisco Bay Area dance.

Dance writing is just as difficult as choreographing a new piece. From the onset of writing, you need something of an outline—or in my case an existential crisis—whereas in the studio you can start creating right away based on a feeling. I'm impartial to the plight of the choreographer of color who just creates a dance piece intentionally—but more often than not unintentionally—highlighting racism and the harm done by systemic racism in the dance field. I posit how dance writing, in particular dance criticism, is a gatekeeper to accessing opportunities like funding, presenting and touring. That said, I'm an unlikely antagonist of the journalist community. I'm interested in ethnographic patterns of Power and following those phenomena which I feel have shaped daily life.

In this article, I will be referring to Black, Indigenous, People of Color as we, us, and our in an effort to combat referential terms such as they, them or other. BIPOC is an imperfect acronym, however it does aim to encompass us into a group or identify ways in which we hold little to no proximity to whiteness. Throughout, I may use the monikers houseguests and songbirds to also describe choreographers of color. These monikers aim to demonstrate how we play by a different set and lesser rules when subjected to whiteness and the white gaze from white dance writers. This article isn't an indemnification on dance criticism, but encapsulates the very fraught relation quite a few of us choreographers of color have with hegemonic white dance criticism.

Some of us are following in the footsteps of Indigenous artist Yolanda Bonnell by "asking white critics to not write" about our work.

HOUSEGUEST RULES: DON'T MAKE ANY NOISE

By the third question from students in the Dance Criticisms and Aesthetics class at the University of Nevada's Department of Theatre and Dance this past February, it became clear that no one could dispute the current dynamic link between dance criticism and racial representation. The talk was a joint guest lecturer event between a local Bay Area Choreographer Sarah Bush; and myself. What I find significant is how academia plays a crucial role in the examination of dance writing's racist legacy and ways in which its biases permeate criticism today. Even more evident is the fact that white dance critics (and the dance media) have a para–doxical relationship to choreographers of color when they see racial dynamics on stage they know little about. Whether real or perceived, we are naively invited into white-led spaces as houseguests. In the presence of an overlooked history, how does the houseguest remain invisible and silent?

Dance criticism has an obvious role in connecting readers to choreographers, but at the same time, contributes to misconceptions, erasure and ostracization of these same artists. In favor of avoiding retaliation, we houseguests remain silent out of a basic human need for survival in the dance world. Considering some houseguests want to create "dances just for the sake of dancing" or postmodernism, we find our work is still superimposed against power and authority from white hegemonic notions of the white gaze. On the contrary, the unspoken rules of silence patterned the hallmarks of houseguest etiquette of not being fully citizen, human and autonomous. What type of authority of power is inescapable for the houseguest?

THE OLD PLAYBOOK

The most recent display of white fragility comes from an article that was lauded on social media by quite a few of my white peers. A high profile journalist (whose name I'll refrain from using) discusses receiving a "transparent press policy" which in their mind makes demands on critics to "treat the art and artists with respect." Referring to the routine and practices of dance writers using old racial tropes and linguistics to describe our work, the press release calls into questions the writer's biases based on race and sexuality; and calls for acknowledging the basic human existence of transgender people.

Interestingly, the study of dance history across various cultures becomes the argument for why an antiracist message isn't needed for this journalist at the receiving end of the press release. Despite the reprieve against such a stipulation, the message is much needed. Additionally, the initial defiance against the news release stems from it being an ask to acknowledge racial bias in reviews. The unwillingness to do some self-reflection and a little antiracist work feels emblematic of dominant white society. **Because the Writer becomes a Narrator, we often read the depiction of our dances through the lens of privilege and whiteness, making our lived experiences unrecognizable to us.**

What did dance critics think racial reckoning would look like? Surely, they didn't think the hollow words and actionless solidarity letters after the George Floyd Uprising would come without accountability. If changes to dance criticism like antiracist work were part of news outlets' policies but never implemented, then a small request such as treating artists with respect through a press release would certainly be necessary. Perhaps this particular critic is right in that dance reviews aren't always spread en masse to large audiences, however they are studied in academia for their consistent patterns of racist depictions of us from primitivism to orientalism. The main reason why this journalist can't abide by such a request, in their own words, is because they're working under scarcity due to budget cuts. I'm sorry, what?

What did dance critics think racial reckoning would look like?

This example reminds me that like a houseguest, we play by a different set of rules in white spaces. The rules set forth before us ask houseguests to turn a blind eye to racial indignation in the white spaces and dance media. It is required of us to navigate these spaces with white hegemonic notions of civility and fairness swarming around us despite regular microaggressions and sometimes blatant racism we face. Then, when we begin to sing our truths like an unrelenting songbird filled with color and without inhibition or despair, the retaliation is swift. At the heart of the matter is the complicit impulse for those with proximity to whiteness to confuse antiracism work as an economic class issue. I'm all for the opposition to fascist authoritarianism, but can you not throw us under the bus?

WHY DO WE WANT TO SING?

Like a canary in a minefield, our voices are heard amongst the dynamite around us. When houseguests become songbirds, we sing our truth, speak out against racism, and start addressing the harm done by white dance critics' inability to acknowledge our very humanity in their writing. The translation of our art hinges on the ability of white hegemonic dance criticism to concede its authoritative perspective on our lived experiences. Adding to the complexity of this relationship is how our identity is intertwined into what type of reception of the dance given. We welcome dutiful criticism without the artifice of truth concurrent in racial linguistics.

It's no wonder when it comes time for us to sing, whiteness conveniently excludes the greater racial and social meanings in our art or our presence all together. Some of us are following in the footsteps of Indigenous artist Yolanda Bonnell by "asking white critics to not write" about our work. Bonnell's strategy is an earnest way to signal the eloquence around minding your business if you don't understand how the power dynamics between races in America work. It allows critics to witness the work versus acting as the authority on the songbird's lyricism.

Allow us to tell our own stories in the same manner we have studied yours. As you create movement in our bodies, our lived experiences recall colonial humiliation felt by Indigenous people on their own land, undeniable effects of slavery by African-descended people, and identity formed by occupation and war across the globe. Here we arrive at the truth that whiteness is filled with fixed bias through impartiality for fear of coming off as unintellectual. The innocuous questions raised here are evidence of why songbirds need to sing, and sing often. Racist caricatures are filtered through language and then deployed through reviews. Shouldn't there be a counter-narrative?

Well, I imagine there's little fairness to our relationship from the time we start our dance training. Our bodies are asked to be neutral and clean. Despite notions of postmodernism or humanism, we can only go so far as artists until we find our tackling race and the marked body. We dance and make work under struggle and under the pressures coming from the needs of our communities. Many of us are positioned in the dance field as tokens of diversity with the omnipresent fate of if we don't succeed there won't be another us to replace us. What we've realized during the pandemic is how we've been politely waiting for immediate action, but your fragility is preventing you from acting on anything.

The dance writing industry is in serious need of some diversity, inclusion, and equity but I don't trust anything that could potentially spell out D.I.E., so let's add access and learning. With IDEAL, we get what songbirds have been singing about for ages, access to opportunity and the ability for white writers to learn about our experiences. If dance writers are willing to learn more about race (not just culture) and how they're positioned in the discussion, then songbirds will have access to equitable inclusion. I acknowledge that songbirds will be singing for more, but the urgency around getting reviewed is a step in the right direction. This might be an oversimplification to what is a long history of artist-observer relations. From this perspective, I imagine the contention between critics and this newfound songbird status is the perfect harmony for a song.

The innocuous questions raised here are evidence of why songbirds need to sing, and sing often.

RAISSA SIMPSON (she/her) is a performance studies scholar and artistic director of the San Francisco-based PUSH Dance Company. Her interdisciplinary dances are at the intersection of racial and cultural identities and centers around discourse on the complex experiences of racialized bodies. Through her research she investigates how Race is performed in theatrical settings, the mass media, activism, and in daily life. Her interest lies in the body as a site for racial discourse alongside new media and technology. She is author of *Writings On Dance: Artistic Reframing for Celestial Black Bodies* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), which offers considerations on how Afrofuturism is staged in contemporary theater.

(DANCE) FIELD OF DREAMS

BY DAVID HERRERA

I live my life in a liminal space. This "in-betweenness" is more accurately depicted by the hyphen of Mexican-American rather than being American or my Mexican heritage; even as I recognize my privileges as a first generation U.S. citizen. I am Latinx, Latino, Mexican-American, and Chicano depending on cultural context. I am multilingual. I grew up in a low-income immigrant household in a vibrant multicultural community in Hollywood, CA. I am gay. I was the first to graduate college on both sides of my family. *Ni de Aqui, Ni de Alla* (neither from here nor there). Like most Latinx peoples in the U.S. my identity is an amalgamation of my current life and the history of my parents and ancestors with a mix of geographies, citizenship, languages, and cultures.

As a young artist I never saw narratives such as these on dance stages or within the leadership of companies heralded as American dance staples. Sometimes companies had a singular Latinx dancer but they were rarely the lead. I felt erased by the art form I loved. I dreamt of programming that reflected the communities and people I knew. I couldn't be alone in this feeling. Was I?

This need motivated me to create David Herrera Performance Company (DHPCo. 2007) with a mission to center Latinx experiences and communities in contemporary dance. In this time, I have explored immigrant histories, family separations at the U.S.-Mexican border, LGBTQ+ identities, Catholicism, Day of the Dead, language, racism, colorism, cultural empathy, nationalism, mixed-race dynamics, cultural poverty, celebration of heritage, and decolonization of the Latinx body and aesthetic, and much more. While the dance company gave me a platform for artistic expression and representation, I began to realize that it was not enough to ensure field wide change, at least not for me. I felt a calling to do more, but what?

I dug back into my own upbringing. How had my own community persevered and even flourished in the face of erasure and assimilation? What made us so resilient? I reflected on the way that "*la Raza/la chusma/los vecinos/la communidad*," always played a role in all major (and some minor) events throughout my childhood. If someone was celebrating a Quinceañera or mourning a death, *la communidad* rallied. Perhaps they helped plan the party, some would become "*Padrinos* (god parents)" for the young lady's dress, for the catering, for the church ceremony. In moments of sickness or sadness, the neighbors would offer to take care of the children while the parents dealt with the situation. If money was needed to return to a home country a collection was taken. You could count on the *vecina* to stop by with a small amount of groceries to help through the week when someone fell ill. In sadness and in celebration, the community made sure that burden was as minimal as possible on the centered family. We all mourned or celebrated simultaneously; no one was left behind.

I recognized that for real change to happen in the dance field, I had to stop thinking of myself as an individual artist and think more about my community of artists, specifically my Latinx colleagues.

I recognized that for real change to happen in the dance field, I had to stop thinking of myself as an individual artist and think more about my community of artists, specifically my Latinx colleagues. We have all heard the saying, "If you build it, they will come." This (mis)quote spoken by Ray Kinsella (Kevin Costner) in the film *Field of Dreams* has been absorbed into the American psyche. This mentality puts the onus on one person to build something grand, build it alone, at any cost, with the promise of American greatness. This false prophecy often leads to fatigue and exhaustion. And even worse, it assumes that one person should be able to present a fully realized "product" without faults, loopholes, mistakes, or room for growth. If it does not, then we are considered failures. Is it of any surprise then that we see so many Latinx and BIPOC dance organizations and artists leave the field, stop dancing, or go under so quickly? This and the lack of support, access, and visibility.

(**Side Note:** *As I type, I am juggling an upcoming production and its many needs, building and leading two community programs, involved with 3 other dance organizations in member capacities, writing 3 grants, sitting on a residency panel, and still having to hold a part-time job outside of dance. The difference is that now I ask for help within my circles and larger community.)*

Why are we pushed to "excel" as individuals in the dance field rather than taught to enter the field in pods or in community? It has taken me almost 20 years to begin shaking off that toxic mentality of pulling myself up by my bootstraps and American individualism force-fed into my consciousness by the generations that came before me. This particular buck stops here.

In the last several years I have had the privilege of creating and leading two community impact programs: *LatinXtensions* and *Latinx Hispanic Dancers United* with this idea in mind. Both programs are based in community exchange, giving, and learning. Both programs embrace intersectional *Latinidad* and have a mission to uplift the national community. These programs are not about me, they are about *Nosotros*. In them I urge others to build their art with community, in support of community, in relationship to community, and to ask for help in community. We have to because we need to. I have to because it's needed. We have to because we owe it to the next generation. I have to because it's right.

I want to build up with my fellow Latinx and BIPOC and LGBTQ+ and artistic communities. I want to see them thrive as much as myself. Sincerely, I do. I want to share in the glory and the pain. It will make the glory more glorious and the pain less painful. Through this, the field-wide change for inclusivity, liberty, and visibility that I did not see as a young artist can actually be achieved. But now we are doing it together.

I have stopped chasing empty promises of individualism and have started doing something more tangible and powerful. Working in community, *en comunidad*. *If we uplift each other, we will grow*. I have gone from dreaming about it, to making it happen. This is where I am now. This is my dance field of dreams.

DAVID HERRERA (he/him) is a Latinx, gay choreographer and community leader. He is the Artistic Director for *David Herrera Performance Company* (DHPCo., 2007) in San Francisco. DHPCo's mission is to center Latinx experiences and communities in the dance field. David has also launched two community impact programs: LatinXtensions mentorship and Latinx Hispanic Dancers United. Both programs provide community, resources, and opportunity to the greater national Latinx dance community. He currently sits on the *Isadora Duncan Awards Committee*, is a founding member of *Dancing Around Race*, and serves as advisor to the *Festival of Latin American Contemporary Choreographers*. David is a 2021 *National Association for Latino Arts and Cultures Leadership Institute Fellow.*
dhperformance.org

Why are we pushed to "excel" as individuals in the dance field rather than taught to enter the field in pods or in community?

SANTA MOMENTUM ALL YEAR LONG

BY YAYOI KAMBARA

"Santa, tell me if you're really there
Don't make me fall in love again
If he won't be here next year"
Santa Tell Me — ARIANA GRANDE

Ariana Grande, Mariah Carey, and Michael Bublé croon Christmas cheer loudly in my house the day after Halloween. I used to have a pretty strict no Christmas music until after Thanksgiving policy. Still, after a pandemic school year with limited socializing, no holiday performances, many of my house rules seem to be up for debate. It's currently mid-November, and Halloween candy has barely made a dent as I write and I'm contemplating my Santa note.

Dear Santa, you magical mystery of goodness, are you really there? When I get the notification that I am a finalist for national grants, I believe your mysterious universal power of love is pulling me to become an awardee. And then an email delivers a coal lump of disappointment, leaving me feeling inadequate, talentless, and wondering if you exist. As I evolve and build into a mid-career artist, the gaps are getting wider and the environment feels inhospitable for marginalized artists. Outgrowing the emerging grants, the mid-level grants are few and far between. And then, the big national grants such as NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) and Creative Capital feel really out of orbit. The odds are stacked against mid-career BIPOC artists. The amount of time, work, and resources it takes to take on these grants is exhausting

and depleting. Looking around, most of the Bay Area's institutional arts leadership positions are held by white artists who have deeper pockets of resources and I don't have the same building blocks to lean on.

What I do have is overwhelming optimism. It turns some people off, but as a person of color, it's my survival skill. I need to believe my glass is half full, or else I'd probably stop working as a choreographer. My tenacity is powered by the support I get from *Dancing Around Race* and the dancers and artists I collaborate with; whenever I come 'home' artistically, I feel nourished, and the stings of my disappointments feel a little less tender.

My creative appreciation and sustenance come from BIPOC artists who elevate stories not usually seen physically narrated in concert dance. My eyes well up, I laugh, and feelings of magical connectivity and psychic messaging feel alive in the bodies on stage, and I feel seen even though I am the one actively viewing. THANK YOU.

The directors, leaders, funders, and panelists who Secret Santa me with opportunities, jobs, and grants: THANK YOU.

But optimism can have a double-edged sword. I can keep hoping and lying down with my palms up in a full pranam pose, waiting for the universal magic to deliver to me, but I know I am missing my reciprocal responsibility of our community agreement - we are in a perpetual group Secret Santa that functions outside of seasons. We don't have to give each person a gift, but if we all give a gift to someone, someone marginalized or whose narrative isn't seen regularly, then everyone gets lifted up - equity is elevated for our field, for the LOVE OF DANCE! It's less about everyone being uplifted, and more about generosity and working against the scarcity ingrained into our training. Our dances exist in a complex ecosystem and they need to be tended through multi-symbiotic relationships, not just binary ones.

So lately, I am swelling with the need to become the Santa our field needs. I'm saying yes to being a panelist at every opportunity and even joined the Izzies Committee. Being from our diverse dance community, I can explain why culturally specific dances produced for intentional audiences aren't exclusive, gently push my equity agenda, and advocate for BIPOC artists whether they are working on owning their spaces, producing work/large festivals, or getting general operating funds! Sometimes I feel disheartened on a panel, like when my own child accuses me of being a 'reverse racist' but I also know people have my back. As my White Husbear ally gently reminds our daughter, I am correct in calling out Whiteness. Carrying that support, I quickly ease back into feeling believed. She doesn't need to get canceled for challenging my opinion but we all need to work on being open to new points of view. As I write this and sip a holiday bevy, I'm growing my symbolic Santa momentum full of regenerative energy and immune health while hopefully keeping my dancerly shape getting ready for my next performance season center stage as dance Santa.

My tenacity is powered by the support I get from *Dancing Around Race* and the dancers and artists I collaborate with; whenever I come 'home' artistically, I feel nourished, and the stings of my disappointments feel a little less tender.

Santa has to be a simple pledge we take for one another, not just for a season. As Ariana Grande sings:

Oh, I wanna have him beside me like oh-oh-oh
On the 25th by the fireplace, oh-oh-oh
But I don't want a new broken heart
This year I've got to be smart.

Let's be smart, be there for each other and I promise this Santa, Yayoi Santa/aka Ms. Kambara-Claus, will be there for you after the holiday season. I'm ready to celebrate you and our community with sympathetic joy – always.

YAYOI KAMBARA (she/her) From 2003-15, she was a member with ODC/Dance and most recently performed with Dance Brigade. While occasionally still performing Kambara focuses on choreography and directing including movement direction for contemporary opera. In 2019/20 she led a Community Engagement Residency for HMD's Bridge Project, Aesthetic Shift, an exchange between dance educators, social justice activists, and choreographers to interrogate the overlap between equity values, creative practices, and organization. Kambara was in the 4th Cohort of the APAP Leadership Fellows Program and is a member of Dancing Around Race.

Her project *IKKAI means once: a transplanted pilgrimage* is commissioned by the San Jose Japanese American Citizens League and premiers in 2023.

• ALL THE THINGS WE COULDN'T SAY

in real time •

PHOTO BY CLARA B. PEREZ

DEAR PROFESSOR,

Dancing in a professional dance company has always been a dream of mine. Ever since I was little, I would mimic what I would see on music videos playedon MTV and CMC. When I first told my mother I wanted to switch my major to Dance from Pre-Nursing, I was met with "What kind of job will you get with that?" Upon becoming a dance major, I began to wonder "Why don't the other students in my class have this same issue? How is it that their parents seemed to be supportive of their decision to pursue the arts?"

I am a child of immigrants. My parents arrived in the U.S. with little to no support on how to navigate this new world. Let alone how to raise a child in a world or system they knew nothing about. So many questions ran through my mind my senior year of college and even after I graduated.

Why is it a problem for people like me to pursue a career in the arts?
Can I make a living with a career in the arts?
Where is the money in the arts?
Why is it largely not accepted for people like me to want to pursue art,
or dance, as a career?

Is this my mental health speaking? Or am I living within a system that does not adequately support and provide resources for "people like me."

When I say "people like me," I mean Filipinos who have come to the United States for a "better life." And yes, there are opportunities in this country compared to life back on the islands where life is much slower, simpler, and serene. Until U.S. militarization decides to occupy the land. But that might be a topic for a different day…

Fast forward, I left the pre-nursing I've pursued for four years behind and I am now a dance major. Long amounts of time being spent on conditioning and training my body, being with my body, and recovering my body was a dream to me. The studies and rehearsals led to me excel at my craft of performance while continuing to develop my artistic voice and profile of choreographic experience. I have been awarded two of the Carol Haas Excellence in Performance Awards. I wanted to keep the momentum going. Months after graduation, I was invited to a

Eurocentric dancers and performers have long held the priority within university and concert dance spaces.

choreography showcase and performed a solo entitled "*Prayer.*" This piece was an ode to the limitations in life that we get to meet, resist, and accept. I felt like in a way, this was my entrance into the dance world no longer as a student held by educational institutions; I was finally dancing for myself.

Professor, you invited me back the following year to showcase two different choreography pieces. I invited dancers to join me that were not of technical, traditional, or classical training. In other words, their dancing was not Eurocentric. Instead, this particular dance collaborator studied street dance as his primary dance form. We created a dance piece together and submitted it to the choreographic advisor. The duet consisted of beautiful partner work, angular movements, sharp and solid textures, and heartfelt story lines. Upon receiving the feedback of the submission reviewer, I was disappointed in their response.

> *"You need to find a more articulate dancer."*
> *"I agree. We need to be at the highest level especially with Diablo Ballet dancers on the same program."*

I was infuriated. I felt insulted. I was insulted. Who are you to tell me I must find a more technical dancer for our own choreography? When you have no idea about what the technique to this dance form is in the first place? I was deeply disappointed in this reviewer's comment. I was flat out appalled. Street dance has its own technique, style, and form. Because this reviewer's eye was not keen on street dance forms and its aesthetic, our choreography was seen as less than, unworthy of sharing a stage with ballet dancers. The hierarchy made me uncomfortable. The comments made me feel undervalued. This is why I made the decision to pull the duet out of the show. I refuse to take part in something that has no commitment to uplifting the artistic healing of dancers of color. I wondered, who are these directors trying to appease? The donors? If so, who are the donors? Why would they not be interested in viewing street dance on stage? Any particular reason why? Were they trying to appease their own biases? I am not interested in artistic endeavors that continue to gate-keep dance spaces from folk or street dance and only hire "professional" dancers that are "classically" trained.

Eurocentric dancers and performers have long held the priority within university and concert dance spaces. I am constantly pondering the reason why? Why is ballet and modern considered to be the most supreme dance form of all? And all folk dance or street style dances are considered to be second-class or less-than? It is clear that you do not value or bat an eye at the importance of culture folk and street dance forms uplift. For this reason, I am divorcing from your work and your community. I no longer wish to participate in your events, nor give you my energy, hard work, artistry, and talent.

There is so much more to say, but I will leave it at that for now.

Sincerely,
Dela Diwata

DANIELLE GALVEZ (she/they) founded Archive Dance Collective, a space where artists and educators foster self discovery through dance education. We cultivate authenticity and nurture trust in body's expression by providing time and space for connection, conversation, and movement. All facilitation is informed by Responsive Body™

PHOTO BY HOANG NGUYEN

REMEMBERING DANCE

To the school that I trusted my mind and body to.

A trust that would dwindle down year after year. As a school, thousands of students, every year, trust you to provide for them, to nurture a space for us. Were you aware of what me and my peers went through during our time with you?

How useless sometimes it feels to try and guilt trip an establishment that only cares about money, but the feeling to do so is cathartic. I've always thought of dance as an art that frees the mind and body, and I still do, but the systems that help us navigate through dance seem to work in the opposite direction.

I remember my first quarter quite well. I remember being excited, in awe of the beautiful studio. I remember feeling grateful to finally be housed in a studio, with full mirrors built in the three walls, with a booming stereo system to match. I remember the padded floors that would protect our bodies. Little did I know that the quality of these materialistic things were not indicative of the quality of the teaching I would receive. I remember meeting everyone else, friends that I had 'til this day, also excited to be dancing in the studio again, or even for the first time.

I also remember our professor coming into our Hip Hop 1 class and telling us he was a substitute and not the regular teacher for this class. I remember him telling us, "I don't really know what I'm doing, but how hard is it to teach a Hip Hop class?"

To my professor, do you remember us? The students you neglected. The culture you co-opted for your benefit. The professor who refused to acknowledge he didn't know anything about a discipline but decided to assume the power of position anyways. The same power you used to impose Eurocentric ideas of beauty on us with? Do you remember how you told some of my friends that their bodies were too awkward to be dancers? Do you remember how you said one of our classmates should lose weight to be a better dancer? Do you remember splitting our final projects into groups of all males or all females? Do you remember when you told a group of my friends to dress more Hip Hop for their final, telling them to wear hoodies and add accessories like chains and bandanas. Do you remember how there were dancers in the class way more capable of teaching a Hip Hop class, but because of the arbitrary way we legitimize dance educators, their expertise was seen as illegitimate?

I remember this clearly, and I bet all of my classmates do, too. I'm sure that we'll all carry that baggage into our future endeavors with dance. To our professors, you have the comfort of starting new every semester. You have the comfort of forgetting us, your impact on us, while we have no choice. We are left with the world of undoing the damage you caused.

This was my first inkling that something was wrong with our dance program, but I disregarded it. As a student who holds nearly no power in the system, dismantling the system seemed almost impossible. Guilt also followed me as I hid away from directly opposing the ideas and standards imposed in our class.

The next year, I thought things would be better. He was a substitute for the quarter after all. I trusted you, the school, again, with my mind and body, still sore from the year before. But I trusted you again, not because of curiosity, but because simply, I wanted to dance, and I would do almost anything to do so.

My next dance class was a student-run class called Workshop. I would come to love this class over the years, but this first year was absolute hell.

In my first quarter in this class, I clashed with my professor's ideals of colonization and Eurocentric standards. In my second, I fought against my fellow peers and classmates. Workshop was a class in which students taught the curriculum. I was so shocked to see a class of students be given that much freedom still confine themselves to colonial expectations of what dancing should be. We had a whole studio to ourselves, and a class period from 2-6pm. It was four whole hours of dancing in a studio taught and ran by the students.

My disappointment in how little we differed from our professors that upheld such damaging ideas of dancing hit hard. That's what we were, generation after generation, receiving and handing down these colonized ideas without question or protest. Trauma teaches trauma.

To my upperclassmen, do you remember the environment you set up for us as we came in? Do you remember how competitive you made the class out to be? Do you remember how every day of rehearsal was an intense audition? Do you remember how much you overworked each of us for the sake of putting up a show to make money? Do you remember that one dancer that twisted her ankle due to the intense work environment of the class? Do you remember how she was told she was no longer needed in the class and how she was excluded from returning? Do you remember cutting one of our best dancers out of a piece because she had gotten pregnant? Do you remember fighting each other, choreographer with choreographer, comparing whose piece was superior from others? Do you remember claiming that dancers who weren't fluent in English were difficult to teach choreography too? Do you remember how

you excluded anyone existing outside the Eurocentric standards of beauty from participating in a sexy piece? Do you remember allowing the darker skinned dancers to participate in only the "ratchet" piece, but then excluding them from everything else? How, if you were trained in ballet or modern, you were cast in more pieces, regardless if it called for the technique or not?

At the end of the day, we weren't dancers to you. We were tools to build your visions and to have them come to life, and nothing more. And at the end of the day, I realized we grew up to become the bitter professors we despised for putting us in small boxes.

I think it's easy to be angry and frustrated with the mascots of colonization. In fact I feel ashamed calling them mascots. These are people who think they're right. These are people who've had these behaviors and ideas passed down onto them, and for years, these ideas have sat and stewed in their minds as normal and correct. And I understand the horror of being wrong, corrected, and challenged.

I remember when I harshly criticized a middle aged woman during class in front of everyone. I remember using childish and sexist jokes while teaching to seem likable. I remember thinking having a successful quarter meant having a set with clean and entertaining choreography.

It's sad to say the colonization and the ideas of Eurocentric standards of beauty are well ingrained in all of us. However, it takes someone willing to challenge all of these ideas to show that the "colonizers way" isn't the only way.

In my last couple of quarters at De Anza. I stayed with the dance program simply because I had the gracious honor of growing with one professor . He took over the student-run dance class in my last couple of quarters at De Anza, and in fact, he was the reason I decided to come back to dance again and again.

I remember the professor that challenged the standards everyday in almost every way he existed. I remember him telling us that dance is valuable, regardless whether or not it's consumable for mainstream media. I remember him telling us that each dancer can choose to be in any piece they way, regardless of their gender or appearance. I remember him making our shows and performances free so it was more accessible. I remember this professor welcoming in everyone wanting to learn dance, regardless if they had the money to enroll in the class.

I've sat and pondered for years now how we were going to uproot and change the dance scene. That question was way too big for me to answer, so I thought about just our little community in De Anza. Our class was carefully curated by someone that made dance free,equal, and accessible.

For every horrible, abusive thing I can remember experiencing at my college's dance program, I also remember the good one person can do by thinking of everyone. When we think of everyone, and accept everyone for who they are, free of the confines of colonization, that's what a person will remember.

Unfortunately, there's only so much one person can do when the entire system works against them. Year after year, our student-ran dance class had to fight against the yearly budget cuts that took class after class.

In the end, those who I remember the most, those who bring me the most comfort in the realm of dance, were those who helped us live out our dream of having dance exist free of colonial constraints. Thank you, I remember you.

Practitioner, healer and artist **TING** uses their art as visual/oral storytelling like their ancestors, instilling a holistic and spiritual approach to all dance forms. With a long history of involvement in the ancestral arts, and fine arts, Ting's wants to create safe spaces for all artists and ancestral practitioners.

PHOTO BY PETER NGUYEN

Shadow Dancer: Indigenous Dance in Higher Education An Open Letter To Higher Education,

My name is Agpalo Alongi Makinta, born Brandin Josue Alvarez, son of Tamika Henry and Christopher Alvarez, grandson of Joyce Henderson, Frank Henry, Flora Josue, and Ceferino Alvarez, great grandson of Teodoro Alvarez, Justina Devytiaco, Perfecto Josue, Cergia Maquinta, Frank Henry Sr., Millie Daniels, Jethro Henderson, and Irene Oliphant.

Through ancestral dance I have found strength. However, during my time both in grade school and higher education, I have seen very few of the caricatures that I have grown so familiar with, having grown up around peers who were culture bearers practicing cultural resistance. I have found myself disillusioned with a dance community and college system that has chosen to both utilize Eurocentric dance styles as core dance technique but has also made a clear delineation between "Folk Dance," and "Classical Technique Courses." I may be presumptuous but, it seems that even European folk dance is lifted to a higher platform than that of the Black and Brown Diaspora. H that is a conversation for another time.

As the caretakers of each individual within the college community, do you not feel you have an obligation to create open safe spaces for Black and Brown students of higher education through course curriculum and representation? While my current home college has made it a point to include Black and Brown representation in dance There is also the enormous task of decentralizing Eurocentric ideas, dance techniques, and ideologies around staged performance. Intuitive Dance which is often an integral part of Indigenous dance often utilizes improvised movements and should be acceptable forms of performance even when on the stage. The idea taught in higher education that staged performances must be codified in its entirety further distances the Black and Brown student and artist from the hopes of ever being able to share their works with the larger overlapping communities.

As a student at San Francisco State University, I have been extremely humbled to find a dance department that embraces cultural diversity through amazing professors that find importance in centering Indigenous, Black, Brown, Queer representations within dance but there is still so much work to do even at a school that is as progressive as San Francisco State. Below is a list of proposed classes for the Spring of 2022 at SFSU:

1. Dance 173 – Modern Dance 1
2. Dance 208 – Cultural History of Dance
3. Dance 236 – Folklore of Dance: African-Haitian
4. Dance 263 – Ballet II
5. Dance 276 – Modern Jazz II
6. Dance 399 – University Dance Theatre
7. Dance 434 – Dance Composition: Choreography II
8. Dance 474 – Modern Dance IV

While other institutions that I have studied at are a far cry from the options given even within the the span of just a semester at SFSU, it is clear that as a whole Eurocentric dance styles, along with American dance styles that were codified through the stealing and erasure of Black and Brown Indigenous cultures they often try to emulate, are favored over "Folk Dance."

The continued erasure of Black and Brown culture can be seen in the classroom when one notices that the majority of the bodies filling the space are White and it will not be accepted nor will I remain complacent. This open letter is not just that, it is a call to action and a demand that Higher Education as well as grade school make a conscious effort to create safe spaces for Black and Brown dancers through representation in the form of class options, professors, and performance opportunities.

Agyamanak Unay,
Agpalo Alongi Makinta

ARCHIE ARBOLEDA is a Young Adult fiction writer with the goal of adding more queer asian narratives to the bookshelf. As a queer Pinoy voice, Arthur hopes to bridge the gaps in his culture with tradition and transformative action. In 2015-2018 Arthur co-directed De Anza's Dance department alongside Warren Lucas in hopes to create an equitable space for dancers. Archie created a non-profit dance organization to reach youth in need of accessibility in dance.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE lost

by PAUL SINGH

PHOTO BY DAVID GONSIER

THE MAIN FORM OF DANCE I practice as of late is Contact Improvisation (CI). The name tells you everything: you are improvising while in contact with another person or group. And in truth, by the very nature of the form, there is nothing more dangerous that could have been practiced in these past two years. To be in proximity to others is what creates the craft. To barrel into someone else's limbs. To crumble your architecture next to another person's collapsing structure. To reach out and add yourself to a friend with a hand that asks for nothing. All we do when we practice this form is focus on making a dance that can be found. How can I be approachable while maintaining my own agency, my own interest? How can I hold those two opposing centers of concern and balance them out equally in time to share my sense of control with the weight of a person I'm just meeting in the space?

It is by far the most improvisational, alive-ning form of movement I've ever met. I take it and use it to feed the other forms of dance I have to maintain to make a living – ballet, Yoga, experimental, teaching. I lean on it to make me feel special. Every so often it betrays me. It asks me at every moment to temper my ambition with curiosity. It moves into directions of safety, anxiety, and pleasure all at the same time. It helps me negotiate my surroundings. It forces me to be a better human. As I write this, I realize it is the relationship in my life I understand most, even when I am lost in it.

CI obliterates all expectations. Any moment you try to make something happen without considering your partner (or everyone in the room for that matter), you set yourself up for disaster. When you hold an expectation up against someone, you rob both of you of the present moment that could have been. That's not to say that you can't have ambitions, you can't make attempts, you can't really go for something and be satisfied. You just have to do it with your partner in mind.

Now the problem is that this form of dance needs us to be right next to each other. Leaning on each other. Sharing enough weight to say, "if you left, I'd fall." Because this is what makes this kind of dance limitless as it dives into the unknown – you have to react to the reality of your instincts blended with everyone else's instincts, and somehow survive in this new constantly shifting world. This alive, chaotic, fulfilling place was one of the first parts of my life to vanish during the pandemic. So what am I supposed to do when the one activity that grounds me is deleted? I'm not sure. I grieve it. Though I understand that to lose this is miniscule in comparison to losing a job, a home, a loved one. But this form is also my greatest teacher, and without it, I haven't been able to accept the events that have shaped this country for the past 24 months.

My family is Indian. I am first generation. First one of my family born in the states. And try as I might to look like everyone else while passing through adolescence, the giveaway was always at the surface of my skin. I've learned to question my color, condemn it, resign to it,

IT FRUSTRATES ME THAT WE, AS ARTISTS, HAVE TO CLAIM VULNERABILITY AS THE WAY TO BEING FULLY ACTUALIZED.

and slowly accept it. Someday I hope to celebrate it. I am the son of immigrant parents. And so, I grew up with their wisdom in my ear. They could feel unrest before they had to see it splashed across a banner headline on the local news. They watched it happen in their home country, and so upon arriving here, could see it coming in a hazy premonition, like an unnerving crystal ball. I'll never forget my mother's words one evening after Obama was sworn in: "You wait and see. When he leaves office, you'll see the surge of racial unrest rise again. It's a tide that's always just under the surface." I didn't really hear her in that moment until I saw it for myself 8 years later, her timing so precise it

accept the nonsense that is this country right now. It is the way I learn to forgive, exist with the news reports, keep my instincts up around me when navigating NYC. And without it these last years, I have hardened.

It frustrates me that we, as artists, have to claim vulnerability as the way to being fully actualized. The super key to our superpower. It is the way to create connection to our inner selves and then share it with others. But to be vulnerable, to be in a state of emotional or physical exposure that comes with a certain degree of uncertainty, is hard enough in a studio. I can't claim that vulnerability in the world around me, not in this current world. I don't feel any

PHOTO COURTESY OF ARTIST; (OPPOSITE PAGE) PHOTO BY ANDREW JORDAN

made me fully understand the doom of repeating ourselves.

CI has always kept me sane when sanity becomes a luxury instead of a fundamental component of our daily operating lives. I hide in it. And I escape in it. It allows me to pretend the bad isn't happening, at least for a few brief hours in the week. It's pure hypocrisy if I look at it objectively: a kind of dance I love that doesn't love me back. A room full of white people dancing with me as the only outlier. "Do the work" I tell myself. It doesn't matter if I'm queer, brown, cis-gender, or small in size. Do the work. But as inclusive as CI is, it is never lost on me the differences I embody.

Can good dance come out of a body of color? Do people change the lens with which they watch brown skin moving? I am actually saying that I have to worry that Brown skin is a handicap. This scares me. It infuriates me. It also spurs me into action.

So, CI is my way to take in and

permission to use that superpower right now. I don't feel safe enough to be an ambassador of art. It is hard enough inherently being an ambassador of Brown.

Every generation has its marker, its reminder of racial tensions. For me, I can't see past Ahmaud Arbery. I thought Sandra Bland would halt me. And then I thought Philando Castile would derail me. But it is Ahmaud that finds me on a couch late at night right before I realize I'm exhausted and need to go to bed. It's then that I feel that rush of wet behind my eyes, that stinging that overwhelms me because I can imagine being him. I can imagine being yelled at and chased and turned into prey just because I like to run but forgot that running is a privilege. That certain areas, neighborhoods, parts of this earth, are only meant for people that look a certain way. I sheltered in a rural, western, conservative part of a midwest state during the pandemic. Ahmuad was murdered during this time. With no physical practice at my disposal, I had gone back to running to stay active. But there wasn't a day that went by that I didn't find myself jumping off the road into a ditch any time I felt

ALL WE DO WHEN WE PRACTICE THIS FORM IS FOCUS ON MAKING A DANCE THAT CAN BE FOUND.

a pickup truck revving from behind. After having clocked the number of 45 flags I would run by, I could feel myself shrinking, as if I was the one causing trouble. It made me quiet. And I've spent a lot of my life quiet. Always trying to read the rooms I'm in to see if I get mistaken for an ethnicity that is generally accepted in the space.

So, the two things that ruled my world these past years are the lack of the practice that gives me courage and experiencing the lethal mistreatment

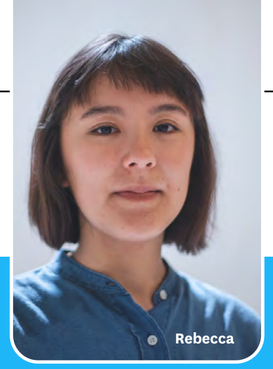
of an innocent man of color. CI and Ahmaud. And what I'm left with is thinking that my faith in CI's principles could have helped me process Ahmaud. Helped me remember that there are forms and practices out there that accept all parts of all people: emotions, colors, desires, abilities, boundaries. But with a tragedy this potent I fear even more that even with CI in my life, it would have done no good.

And then I'm left with this bigger question of "Can dance save me?" I don't want it to just be a tool to process pain. I want it to be a vehicle for radical change. And that just asks too much of it.

So, what am I asking for? At the end of this day, today, Thanksgiving, I am asking for a deliberate kind of attention. It is what is necessary for CI as practice. When we are dancing in a room full of people, you have to manage your own ambitions, the expectations of your partners and the room as a whole. You have to take the time to warm-up and get to know yourself, so that you can be added to a bigger whole. I want this deliberate attention when I live in the world. I want to enjoy and accept my own company and be open and available to all that enter my path. I want to be able to say no when I need to. And walk away from situations I cannot fix, change, or heal. The tenets I apply to CI are aspirational: to not care about your dancing history, your ableness, or the color of your skin. To only care about your willingness to listen. Your ability to move at the speed of attention. However, I can't make this translate to the larger world

anymore. I could once, but I can't make it happen at present. I want that back. And it will come. When we get back to the physical practice, it will come. It has to. Because in the interim, my defenses have bolstered. I worry, I harden, I see danger and miscommunication everywhere. And I see the end results of these fears in what happened to Ahmaud. But I live hopeful that CI can help me return to a place of sanity, acceptance, and perhaps even trust again.

PAUL SINGH earned his BFA in Dance from the University of Illinois, USA. He has danced for Gerald Casel, Risa Jaroslow, Will Rawls, Phantom Limb Company, Stephanie Batten Bland, Douglas Dunn, Christopher Williams, Kathy Westwater, Faye Driscoll, and was featured in the inaugural cast of Punchdrunk's American debut of Sleep No More. While abroad, he was a dancer in Peter Sellars' opera The Indian Queen (Madrid), as well as Peter Pleyer's large-scale improvisation work Visible Undercurrent (Berlin). Paul has had his own work shown at multiple venues in NYC, Berlin, and in 2004 his solo piece Stutter was presented at the Kennedy Center. Paul has taught contact improvisation around the world, and currently teaches varied technique classes for Movement Research, Sarah Lawrence College, and The Juilliard School. In 2021, he began his role as Artistic Associate at Baryshnikov Arts Center.



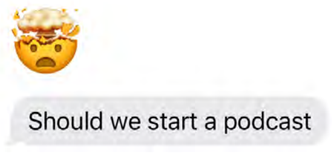
BY REBECCA FITTON
& VERONICA JIAO

MAKING PUBLIC OUR PRIVATE: exhaustion, gossip, and unfinished sentences

THE FIRST THING you should know about our friendship is that when we are together, we get off-topic immediately. We are excellent at tangents. So, when Bhumi emailed us, we immediately were engaged by the idea to further develop and expand upon our already ongoing conversations that respond to the proposed questions: "if not us, who; if not now, when?"

But between Veronica performing on her first national Broadway tour and Rebecca navigating her first semester of graduate school, our schedules rarely align and conversations often only occur via text. We tried twice to connect on Zoom to discuss our thoughts for this article, witnessed each other's bleary eyes and brain fog, and decided to reschedule. Despite this, our text conversations sustained. Our blue and white bubbles found each other in our respective breaks and allowed for flexible response times.

We thought about sharing our texts with *In Dance*, but this opportunity felt like a moment for growth. Veronica is interested in developing a podcast that addresses navigating other-ness in predominantly white theater and dance spaces, and Rebecca is grateful for the opportunity to write outside of grad school.



What we conjured up for this issue of *In Dance* is a nonlinear conversation–part transcribed Zoom conversation (our third Zoom meeting was successful) and part pre-and-post-asynchronous text interventions into that dialogue. It is a nonsequential offering, it does not have a clear beginning nor a clear end. It goes off-topic. We experiment with how our contributions can reflect our current contexts and multi-cultural identities. We purposefully ask you to dance through our pause-filled messiness as a direct resistance to the linear clarity that whiteness demands. This conversation is a peek into our ten years of friendship and familial shorthand that traverses emotional support, meme creation, and critical conversations. We gently share this offering that touches briefly on the topics of hair, whiteness, systemic injustice, and gossip and that grows from our ability as friends to check each other's bullshit and celebrate each other's joys.

• • • • • • • •

RF: My computer is sitting on my washing machine.

VJ: That's amazing.

RF: My roommate's asleep so I didn't want to bother her...

VJ: Yeah.... I'm wearing my hat.

RF: Your hair is getting long!

VJ: It's getting super long. Very difficult to put in pin curls for wig prep...

***Rebecca**: Veronica and I frequently talk about our hair. To me, my style represents my queer identity and the texture is where my mixed-race identity shines. Most of my hair is thick, brown-black, straight and wiry, but recently one perfect ringlet has sprung forth from underneath my bangs. My English ancestors are showing up!*

***Veronica:** Oh, I didn't know we had started the "thing" yet and this was on record. Wig prep includes many hair pins, and after my last dance contract that included hair length stipulations, I've kept my hair at shoulder length to resist what that contract entailed. Before that contract I kept it butt-length, and it was a huge part of my identity. But now it's at a weird length that's becoming too difficult for wig prep because both sides of my family have very thick silky hair, what's considered stereotypical "Asian hair." The current contract I'm on does note that, contractually, we have to get approval to change our appearance, but they provide haircuts and our lead hair/makeup person seems very willing to give us fun styles if it doesn't affect our wigs or look for the show.*

Contractual control over appearance should be a glaringly obvious sign of white supremacy in the workplace, but for those newly recognizing whiteness in the workplace: hair texture/length/style is part of every indigenous culture in some way, sacred in most. Stipulations on hair style & length seems to be one of the most common anti-Black/anti-indigenous workplace practices in the States, especially in dance & theater workplaces. For me, I'm so used to having my hair length and color dictated by contracts outside of dance theater spaces, that as long as the company provides the maintenance, I'm complicit in the practice; however, I say this as someone whose relationship to my hair is currently in flux, and as a newcomer who landed a big contract for my first musical theater credit.

• • • • • • • •

VJ: ... disheartening is not the right word because like that also has like a connotation of disappointed, but like at this point, it's just expected that that shit's gonna happen

RF: Yeah, yeah. I mean, how do you get an impartial jury? If they're going to take people out of the jury who protested and like, what is it, starts with a c, wow my brain is so tired, complicit behavior–silence or lack of action is complicit behavior like if you didn't protest you are complicit.

VJ: right that yeah, that was wild. Like seeing the clips of the judge like it's so...why...like I can't form words, I literally just want to say it's so KKK. Like. Yeah, that man. Yeah, white supremacy to white supremacy to white supremacy.

***Veronica:** I couldn't form words on this day. I still had to go to work, and it wasn't acknowledged in our workspace, where Black representation is a major celebration/exploitation of this musical. There was nothing left to say– for me, it was a matter of reading the verdict, being disgusted, and then knowing all of my closest Black friends would feel it, have nothing more to say about it, and go on with their lives being Black in America. There are memes circulating right now re-posted by @embracingblackculture that are like, "You don't want to talk about black liberation? - lmao this is a Wendy's." In my closest circle, I know my friends on an emotional level; knowing they are tired, we didn't even talk about it that day, everyone was just half-energetically posting one-liners about the verdict.*

***Rebecca**: One of the reasons Veronica and I are so close is because of our shared experience of anti-Asian racism during our undergraduate experience at Florida State University, a "land grant" university situated on the ancestral and traditional territory of the Apalachee Nation, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida, and the Seminole Tribe of Florida (Tallahassee, FL). The experience weighs heavy. We also acknowledge that as Asian Americans, we can only know so much and continue our self-education in solidarity and celebration with Black lives.*

VJ: We're supposed to have a "Breaking Bias" workshop soon and I'm already on high alert. Because the classism that exists within this cast is ridiculous. Ri-diculous. and like it–It's like, when we went to South Carolina, I had to put a chat like– I was like, "Don't come for my state." But I did it nicely. I was like, "Chadwick Boseman, Patina Miller, and Danielle Brooks are all from less than an hour outside of the city we're going to; the arts are active here but

PHOTOS BY (LEFT) MELI ARTIEDA, (RIGHT) JUNE CHEUNG

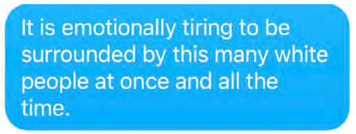
underfunded as is most of the city. So check your privilege before you decide to complain about something about the city." Because truly, every city we've gone to, someone has a problem with it. It's just, it's unnecessary. Like, we're visitors. We are visitors to everybody's city.

> ***Veronica:*** *It took a lot of consideration of whether or not to include this, as there could be repercussions presenting the tour in this way. I am fully enjoying my time on tour, with the cast, traveling the country AND I recognize these issues within my cast and production company, issues which I plan to bring up at the aforementioned workshop. The public acknowledgment of this itself – the debate of "Should I redact this?"– speaks to, "if not us, who? If not now, when?" It is the silencing fear of white supremacist structures at work, "work" here the environment that allows me to live my dream of performing song and dance.*

RF: Yeah. I think you're like, also naming things that I'm feeling as well, which is one: the exhaustion of like, feeling like, we're catching up or other people are still catching up. But also I'm still catching up and– and the world is moving.

We're not post-pandemic in any way. But, like the pacing of just like that constant navigation of like, running and then slowing down, is exhausting. Yeah. And then also, both of us are in new communities right now—you're on tour, and I'm in a new state in grad school. And that has been really difficult for me. And I'm sure like a transition for you as well that you're talking about a little bit but—

> ***Veronica:*** *It's been a while since I've been in a predominantly white workspace surrounded by predominantly cis-white people. I don't *want* to be the voice that is always holding folks accountable both in management and within the cast, I don't feel that is my place, and oftentimes, I don't bring things up in order to protect my peace, unless it affects or will affect in the future a person's safety physically/mentally/emotionally. It has been exhausting navigating the nuances of being a non-black POC on a tour celebrating the first black actress in the lead role, in a white-run workplace. Here I must acknowledge that not all BIPOC are involved in restorative justice or want to be for various valid reasons, especially in theater spaces. Everyone plays the system differently. If I raise an issue that is inequitable in our workplace, I am conscious of how much space I'm taking up as a non-black POC as well as considering and conspiring with my Black colleagues: will this prevent them from dismantling white supremacist structures the way they feel is safest for them? Where is the line between "playing the system" and complicity as a pawn?*
>
> ***Rebecca:*** *In reflection, I realized I never finished my sentence. I never explained to whom/what/where I'm "catching up." I'll echo Veronica's reflection that it has been a while since I've been in a predominately white space. In my previous home of New York City, I was surrounded by folks who shared various aspects of my own identities: queer, Asian, English, BIPOC, immigrant, mixed-race, neurodivergent, artist, advocate. To be more explicit, I hold my whiteness and Asianness as two complete identities, I am responsible and joyful for both. In this new environment, I feel isolated in my body, in that joy. The university feels like steel pressed against the soft curves of my nonconforming body. It's a kind of casual violence executed through operational procedure. I feel the need to explain my body into what institutionalism demands and resist the urge. I'm "catching up" with the university's complicit behavior of "falling behind." The constant negotiation is exhausting.*
>
> *I'm also tired of folks saying "well, Austin is different" when inquiring about what it is like to live in Texas right now. To me, it signals a certain kind of white passivity that allows white folks to forget that "liberal" cities still exist within the embrace of state and federal laws. Yes, Austin holds a popular connotation as "weird," which recently has been interpreted as a form of inclusivity. But, that has not been my experience thus far as a newcomer, and I will not and cannot forget the systemic injustices that still exist in and around this "weird" town.*



• • • • • • • • •

RF: You know, one of my favorite things about you is just like the whole-hearted, fully loving like, presence of gossip in your life. Yeah. That I just like so highly shy away from because I'm socialized differently

VJ: I love gossip, and that is highly Filipino of me.

RF: I know it is.

I also think like the presence of gossip, it's like what we— like setting up this conversation has been very hard for us because we mostly text, right. But we have this whole thing about like, how are we archiving our own stories and oral history as archive and gossip as archive, or like archive building practice? And that's maybe less related to systemic….Well, I guess it is related to systemic inequity, but like, even having some of those like conversations on record, like, how will that change? And I don't know where I'm going with that question.

> ***Rebecca:*** *Whew that was messy. The brain fog makes it hard to string coherent sentences together. What I am trying to wrap my mind around is how gossip and text, two informal conversation practices, can create an archive that is self-directed. For so long, the choice of whose experiences enter an archive and the practice of archiving stories have been dominated by whiteness. Systemic inequity is perpetuated by a lack of diverse representation, but I am not looking for my representation to mirror what is currently the status quo. I want to contribute to the documentation of my experience. I think this article is a form of that resistance practice.*

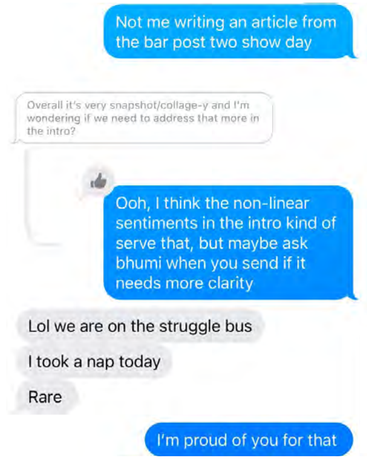
VJ: Gossip as a form of oral history, hell yeah.

RF: Yeah. Or it's like archive building and working against the ways in which white people tell us we should document our history.

VJ: Yes, that part. Yeah, also, because gossip is like, not all– again, not linear. And not–It doesn't have to be chronological. Which is another forced way, or a way that is forced on us of documenting.

RF: I had this conversation with someone yesterday about being a mixed-race person. In what ways do I choose to like, be clear about my history and document? And in what ways do I like purposely obscure because being mixed race is really messy. And so the archive should be really messy. Yeah. And like messy in a delightful way and joyful way. And also sometimes painful, but like to not be messy is not to be like, it doesn't have the negative connotation in my head.

VJ: Yes, I said, I said in the prep document something about the fact that we've had many conversations adjacent to the inquiry of, if not us, then who? yeah, so many, that it's hard to pinpoint or streamline at all. Yeah. This thing? What does it mean for communities to own their own archives?



• • • • • • • • •

We are proud of our naps and we also want to acknowledge the struggle to produce concrete deliverables right now! This piece was very difficult for us to co-write because of the aforementioned exhaustion and we knew each other's emotional energy was being sapped by our respective environments. We really had to let go of the idea of a "polished look" and ask ourselves how whiteness was showing up even in this most intimate process between two friends. We almost backed out of publishing before realizing what we needed was to shape this offering through our feelings. The amount of times we say "messy," in and about this conversation served as our center. By living in the messiness and incompleteness of our thoughts, we actively engage in our own offering: documenting ourselves in a way contrary to what whiteness demands. We show up here in draft–potentially nonlinear, unpolished, incoherent, unpalatable– and will continue to show up in that way for each other and our communities. This practice is what is so crucial to the process of undoing white supremacy as it shows up in our text messages, Zooms, hair, courtrooms, streets, friendships, gossip, institutions, and articles. In doing so, we commit to the gentleness and grace necessary to build community and a sense of belonging.

REBECCA FITTON is from many places. She cultivates community through movement, food, and conversation. Her work in the dance field as an artist, researcher, administrator, and advocate focuses on arts and culture policy, labor practices, and community-led advocacy. Her practice takes shape in studios, basements, warehouses, bars, grocery stores, rooftops, gardens, sidewalks, and streets. She served on Dance/NYC's Junior Committee from 2018-2020 and was selected to join Dance/USA's Institute of Leadership Training in 2021. She is an active member of the Bridge Collective and Dance Artists' National Collective. Fitton holds a BFA in Dance from Florida State University and is currently pursuing an MA in Performance as Public Practice at the University of Texas at Austin.

Born on the unceded native land of the Kusso (Charleston, SC), **VERONICA JIAO** (she/her/hers) is a Filipino-American dance creative and educator. As the grandchild of immigrants, she is engaged in the work of ending white supremacist structures in the arts and our bodies, by archiving the Asian-American experience. Her creative practice renders this work in the form of dance improvisation, facilitating critical conversation, and writing. As a former member of Dance/NYC's Junior Committee, Veronica co-facilitates and organizes discussions for equity and inclusion in the dance field through many mediums, including various episodes of the Dance Union podcast, Dance Magazine's online archives, and social media. As a performer, she has danced with BABEL Movement, Josh Pacheco Dance Theater, Thomas Woodman, and Disney Cruise Line.

COLLABORATIVE OPTIMISM:

by
iris
yirei
hu

photo
by
chris
orr

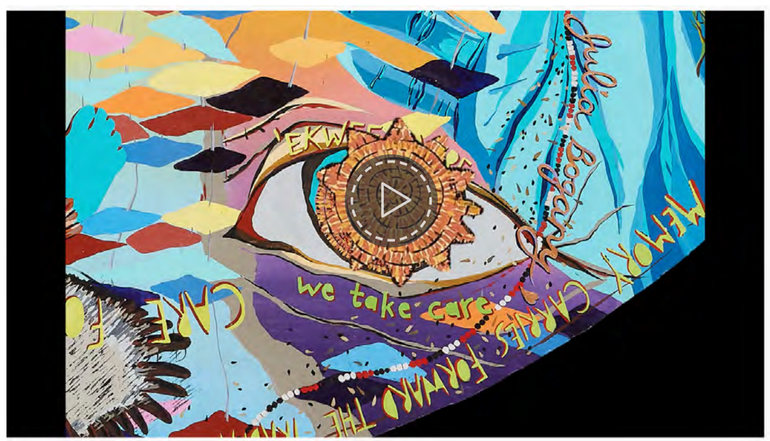
A SCORE FOR A -SHIP

I FOUND LOVE IN THE PALM OF MY HAND.

My fingers reach into a primordial, interconnected web of memory that manifests tangibly in the landscapes I have traversed. When I interact with the natural world, I notice the myriad of transformative relations that have consistently depended on one another season after season: the scrub jay who buries acorns to seed oak trees, the symbiosis between the chaparral yucca and their moth pollinator (*Tegeticula maculata*), and the common yarrow, whose tiny clouds of white flowers decorate the foothills and whose leaves can be chewed to make a poultice. The primordial is both abstract—far away and dispersed throughout multitudes of lifetimes—yet embodied and alive right in front of me. When I inhale, the sacred registers discernibly in my body. I feel it to be love.

When I use my hands to work with fibers, paint, or soil, I feel closest to these infinite nodes of brilliance. Through practice, I've arrived at the questions that drive my work: how do our hands and the stories they carry bridge presumed gaps between seemingly disparate things, and also help us understand one another? How can we understand history as generations of people cultivating love and optimism through deep relation, instead of a sequence of violent events?

For the last four years until her sudden passing, Tongva Elder Julia Bogany and I worked together to create intersecting spaces where Indigenous and immigrant peoples could explore possibilities of kinship. Elder Julia Bogany's advocacy and teaching is grounded in the question: "I always say Tongva women never left their ancestral homeland, they just became invisible. 'How do we make ourselves not invisible?' is the question I ask every day." The Tongva community, whose ancestral homeland encompasses the Los Angeles basin and parts of Orange County, have been working individually and collectively to build community and work through the atrocities they have endured from three eras of colonization — Spanish, Mexican, and American. Because the Spanish mission system was so heavily involved in the disintegration of organizing power within the local tribes, followed by the genocide committed by the American government, much of the culture, stories, identity, belonging, work, advocacy for visibility, advocacy for state and federal recognition, advocacy for collective health and healing, rests only in the hands of individual tribal members. That means when one tribal elder leaves us, the loss is felt as one that is beyond their lifetime. Generations of story, language, and song leave with them, too. Ms. Bogany was one of the most vocal, inviting, and accessible elders of her tribe and believed so deeply in collaborative life-making: when you work with and invite others in, we would be profoundly transformed and nourished by the abundance that exists in Southern California and beyond.



A life-size sundial titled Pakook koy Peshaax (The Sun Enters the Earth and Leaves the Earth) was made by Julia Bogany (Tongva), poet Megan Dorame (Tongva), and artist iris yirei hu for the We Rise / Art Rise public art exhibition in May 2021. This animation, animated by Jorge Espinosa, features the sundial's platform and poetry by Megan Dorame and iris yirei hu.

Ms. Bogany has given me the gift of possibility and optimism through her fight for social justice and for the revitalization of Southern California Indigenous legacy. She has taught me what love and resistance can look like with the power of art. Ms. Bogany worked to ensure that the future of her culture, people, and language are bountiful and accessible to generations to come. As an artist, I worked with her to process and provide solutions to her quest through visual art, facilitation, and creating platforms for visibility. Much of our work together centered the question: How can we, as residents of and visitors to Los Angeles take care of the land upon which we walk while caring for one another in ways that uplift the Indigenous legacy of Southern California and honor the multilayered, complex and contradictory histories of immigration? Notable examples of our shared work include: *Lessons from Wise Woman (Tongva Elder Julia Bogany), Grandmother Oak Tree, and Hands* (2018), an installation inspired by Ms. Bogany's tireless advocacy for the San Gabriel Mission to openly acknowledge the gravity of its crimes against California's Indigenous; a site-specific 47 ft. tall mural of Ms. Bogany at CSU Dominguez Hills (2020); and most recently in May 2021, *Pakook koy Peshaax (The Sun Enters the Earth and Leaves the Earth)*, a human sundial made in collaboration with poet Megan Dorame (Tongva).

It is from working closely with Ms. Bogany, in heart and in hand, and from experiencing the natural world as a living body that I derive my method of practice called collaborative optimism. Grounded by the many historical and ongoing traumas faced by Indigenous, Black, and people of color, collaborative optimism aims to world joy, friendship, kinship, and gathering into our shared realities. The practice emerges from the care for and guidance from the historically dispossessed of the land upon which it is practiced. Its function is to create opportunities for intercultural relationship building in its most embodied sense, and uplifts the various proximities to and embodiments of class, education, racial, and gender privileges its practitioners have access to, to center the healing of BIPOC communities and urgent land-based issues. Because being in deep relation requires time, reflection, and learning, the immediate politicization of difference in both culture and activism sectors, coupled with the pressure of visibility and speed to formulate a legible result under capitalist frameworks (i.e. social media, funding opportunities, and marketing campaigns), the nuanced practice of cultivating long-term and long-form collaboration is challenging. Collaborative optimism requires willing participants who value our connections across the world, and who understand that learning and fumbling are necessary steps towards the liberation of living beings and to whom we're related. How can collaborative optimism shape land restitution and economic justice through artful stewardship and healing? Given each of our strengths, gifts, and pathways of access, how can we leverage our privileges to organize both local and international struggles so that each of us and those connected to us can access wellness, healing, beauty, and joy in the ways that we determine?

PHOTO BY ELON SCHOENHOLZ

The multitude of lines flow, cross, and split across my palms. Each year I've noticed new lines form and creases deepen. I wonder what kind of map they form when placed next to another's hand. I imagine that beauty, however self-determined or molded with collective agency, will journey alongside us in limning another atlas with grace.

For more information about Tongva Elder Julia Bogany, please visit her website: tobevisible.org.

IRIS YIREI HU is an artist who paints, weaves, dyes, tells stories, and composts her lived reality into installations, public artworks, and intercultural-generational-and-geographical collaborations. She often works in community with artists, scientists, historians, keepers of traditions, and organizers to limn connections between people, places, and practices to explore possibilities of kinship. Building relationships to people and places through slow and critical reflection are central tenets of her work. She is interested in how art can uplift others on their journey so that we can deepen our relationship to what we experience and with whom we connect. What if we understood history as generations of people cultivating love and optimism through deep relation, instead of a sequence of violent events?

10 IN 10

WITH ANDRÉA SPEARMAN

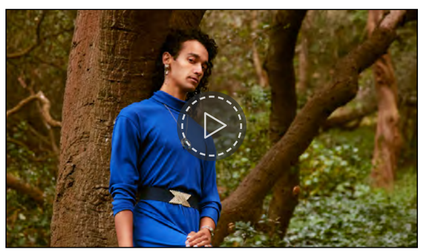
10 QUESTIONS IN 10 MINUTES

As our community continues to re-imagine hybrid performance and dance-making, the 10 in 10 interview series speaks to those right in the thick of creating dynamic dance works

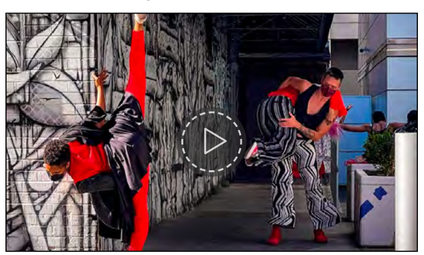
Lydia Clinton brings her bubbly and energetic personality to the virtual space of TikTok, Instagram and performing with companies such as Epiphany Dance Theater, Zaccho Dance Theatre, Capacitor and more.

Javier Stell-Frésquez amplifies and uplifts the Two-spirit community through traditional & experimental performance and practices. "Two-Spirit" is a pan-tribal term describing individuals that embody both the feminine and the masculine. They are the Co-Director of the Weaving Spirits Festival of Two-Spirit Performance that presents performances, workshops, and community circles.

Don't worry, I still asked them to show us their favorite dance moves. ;) Enjoy!



Javier Stell-Fresquez



Lydia Clinton

IN CONVERSATION

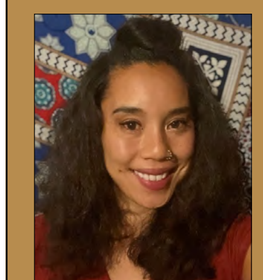
WITH ANDRÉA SPEARMAN, DANCERS' GROUP ARTIST RESOURCE MANAGER

HEALTH AND WELLNESS. These are no longer just trending topics on Twitter and Instagram. Wellness no longer means an image of a woman in athleisure wear in a yoga pose trying to sell us branded water. Wellness has taken on a more grounded and intimate meaning as we all continue to re-examine our physical and mental health this year.

In this edition of In Conversation I spoke with Olivia Eng about her holistic practices and processes that guide her as an artist and creator. After spinal surgery in 2012 she reconstructed her movement practices by healing and reconnecting with her herbalism and farming roots.

Olivia Eng is a multi-disciplinary artist, performer, teacher, and choreographer. She is passionate about creating art, photography, holistic practices, herbal medicine, traveling, and connecting with community. Eng graduated from UC Irvine focusing on Dance Performance and Sociology. She has traveled the world collaborating, performing, and studying with artists in traditional and contemporary forms of West African movement, Brazilian, Indian dance, and more. She began developing the S.C.A.R.S. (Strength, Courage, and Resilience of the Soul) Project, with a mission to foster healing through dance, story-telling, poetry, art, cross cultural exchange and holistic practices.

OLIVIA ENG



"Since I couldn't dance [from my surgery] I was like I just need some kind of artistic outlet. Then the idea came of doing Kintsugi photography. It began as painting around the physical scar with gold makeup and honoring the scar."

— OLIVIA ENG

LISTEN HERE

PHOTOS BY (TOP) ANGELINA LABATE, (BOTTOM) OLIVIA ENG

COMMUNITY

Los Lupeños de San José

PHOTO BY BUGSSY MALONE

Dance company Los Lupeños de San José is one of five arts programs run by the non-profit Cashion Cultural Legacy. Aside from performance and education, the organization has a little-known publications project. Recently a new edition of founder Susan Cashion's book, *Three Pioneers of Mexican Dance in California*, was released on Amazon in paperback & e-book formats with additional content. We believe that it's important to document our artform and to recognize the movers and shakers that got us to this point.

PHOTO BY ROBBIE SWEENY

Weaving Spirits Festival of Two-Spirit Performance

March 17–20, 2022, CounterPulse, SF

Curated by an intergenerational team of Two-Spirit community leaders, Weaving Spirits features local and national Native American artists whose offerings range from traditional music to experimental performance and drag. Learn more about the upcoming festival and activities.

HOPE MOHR

Shifting Cultural Power: Case Studies and Questions in Performance is a reckoning with white cultural power and a call to action. The book locates the work of curating performance in conversations about social change, with a special focus on advancing racial equity in the live arts. Based on the author's journey as a dancer, choreographer, and activist, as well as on her ten years of leading The Bridge Project, a performing arts presenting platform in the Bay Area, *Shifting Cultural Power* invites us to imagine new models of relationship among artists and within arts organizations—models that transform our approach, rather than simply re-cast who holds power. Published by The National Center for Choreography and the University of Akron Press.

DANCE-A-VISION

Dance-A-Vision Entertainment recently moved to their new home at Westfield San Francisco Centre! Under the Beautiful Historic Dome, Carla Service will continue to cultivate dancers by providing instruction in hip hop, jazz, African, contemporary, and more. Learn more about their upcoming classes, pop-ups, and performances

PHOTO BY CRYSTAL BIRNS

Duniya Dance and Drum Company

Founded in 2007, Duniya Dance and Drum Company is celebrating 15 years! They offer classes in San Francisco & Oakland: Bhangra with Joti Singh (Mondays), West African dance with Alhassane Da Camara (Wednesdays & Saturdays), and West African drumming with Bongo Sidibe (Saturdays). Learn more about their upcoming activities

Sharp & Fine

Co-founded in 2011 by sisters Megan and Shannon Kurashige, Sharp & Fine creates narrative performance work that brings together physically exuberant choreography, emotionally nuanced text, live music, and multi-disciplinary collaboration. Learn more about their upcoming projects as they transition to a nonprofit.

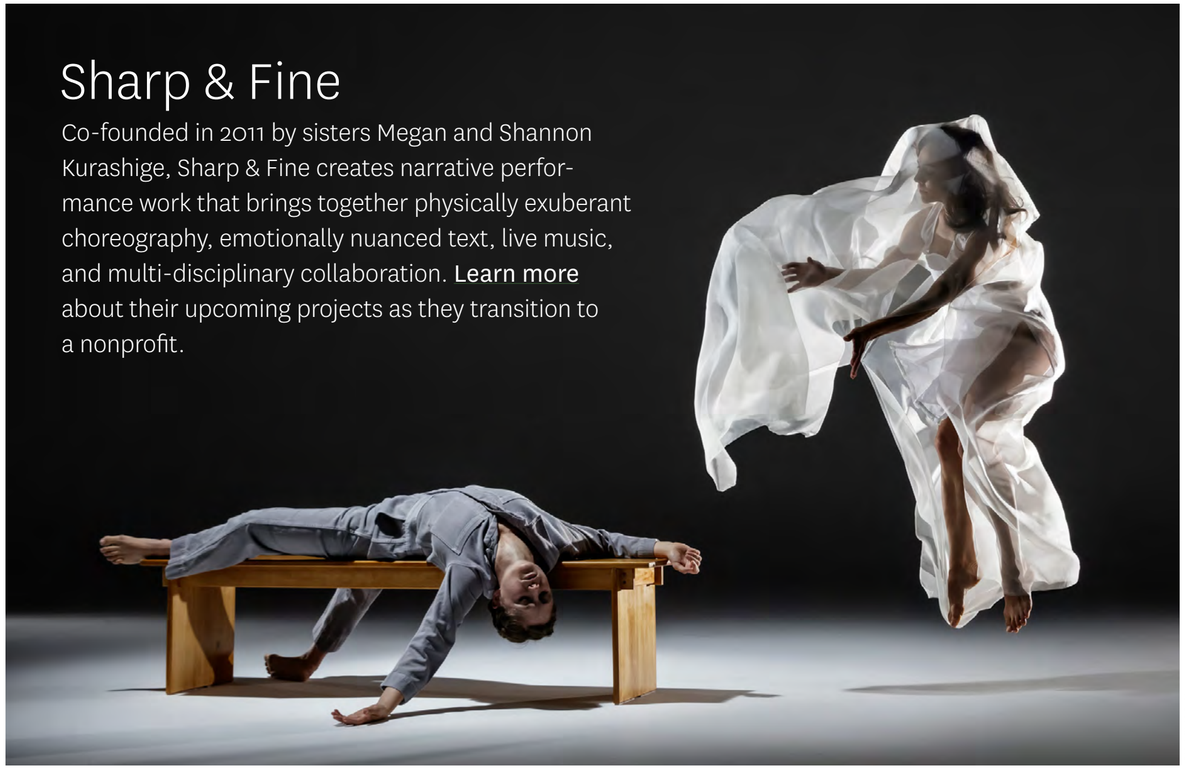


PHOTO BY RJ MUNA

Traci Bartlow

PHOTO BY JESSICA KEENER

A History of African American Social Dances with Traci Bartlow

Traci Bartlow offers dance lectures and workshops based on her extensive research, cultural and performance experience with African American social dances. Her lively historic presentations are perfect for schools, universities, dance conferences, festivals, community, and corporate events.

COURTESY OF B-LOVE'S GUESTHOUSE

B-Love's Guesthouse

Established in 2008 and set in a Victorian house, B-Love's Guesthouse located in West Oakland is a perfect stay for the visiting artist or business professional. B-Love's is an extension of artist, activist, and owner Traci "B-Love" Bartlow's lifestyle of wellness and creativity. This unique lodging experience reflects her background as an African American woman with roots in the Black farmers in Texas, social justice activism, and the cultural renaissance of the Bay Area.

PHOTO BY ELLE AIME PHOTOGRAPHY

Flux Vertical Theatre

Flux Vertical Theatre is a Bay Area dance company specializing in the art of pole, founded by Kirsten (aka Mz. K) and Leah Marie. For the past 6 years we have been dancing our way through the Bay Area and beyond with high quality shows featuring performers with backgrounds in classical and contemporary styles of dance, gymnastics, theater, and circus arts. Our mission is to inspire and entertain through our collaborative work, united by our love of Pole.

Flux Vertical Theatre is now an academy for future pole stars and a gorgeous performance space. Visit us at 811 University Ave in Berkeley.

OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY

Dancing Moons Festival
March 24–26 at the Asian Cultural Center, Oakland
April 1–2 at the Bankhead Theater, Livermore

In response to the epidemic of violence aimed at Asian Americans in the Bay Area and across the country over the last two years, Oakland Ballet will present its first-ever showcase of Asian American choreographers with world premieres by Phil Chan, co-founder of Final Bow for Yellowface; Michael Lowe, former Oakland Ballet principal dancer; Caili Quan, dancer with BalletX, Philadelphia's leading contemporary ballet company; and more.

KINETECH ARTS

Kinetech Arts, directed by Daiane Lopes da Silva and Weidong Yang, combines the work of dancers, scientists, and digital artists to create innovative and socially responsible performances. Their weekly meetup, Open Lab, brings together artists and scientists exploring the boundaries of technology and expression. Join them on Wednesdays at 7-8:15pm PST. Learn more

RHYTHM & MOTION

At Rhythm & Motion, they believe that anyone can dance and offer fun, high energy dance workout classes for everyone! They have in-person, outdoor, livestream, and pre-recorded classes. Sign up for their newsletter to receive updates.

BLACKBOX STUDIOS

3498 School Street, Oakland

BlackBox Studios is home of the School at BlackBox Studios and Ballet22. Their mission is to provide high quality training in a safe and inclusive space. The studio is launching a schedule of dance classes for students ages 3-adult starting in Jan 2022. They also offer private lessons and studio rentals.

KIANDANDA DANCE THEATER

Based in San Francisco, Kiandanda Dance Theater presents works between the USA, France and Congo. Artistically directed by Byb Bibene, the company produces performance projects, Mbongui Square Festival, and more.

Joe Landini Dance

PHOTO BY ROBBIE SWEENY

Joe Landini Dance presents their 30th anniversary at the ODC Theater on March 18–20 (Fri-Sat @ 8pm / Sun @ 7pm), featuring the premier of *City of Ghosts*, a reflection on managing loss and grief. Guests include A Pulso Dance Project, Francesca Cipponeri, Rebekah Enderle, Raven Malouf-Renning and Amy Lewis. Landini is also hosting a three-day intensive performance workshop at the ODC Theater with opportunities for participants to perform on March 20.

PHOTO BY FONTAINE WEYMAN

Monique Jenkinson/ Fauxnique

Faux Queen: A Life in Drag, the memoir of performer, choreographer, and writer Monique Jenkinson (AKA Fauxnique) will be published by Amble Press in January 2022.

A ballet-obsessed girl moves to San Francisco and finds her people at the drag club. *Faux Queen* joyously chronicles Jenkinson's creation of her drag persona Fauxnique, her journey through one of the most experimental moments in queer cultural history and her rise through the nightlife underground to become the first cisgender woman crowned as a pageant-winning drag queen.

Faux Queen finds authenticity through the glee of drag artifice and articulation through the immediacy of performing bodies. She pens a valentine to gay men while relaying the making of an open-minded feminist.

DISCOVER MORE

about Dancers' Group and past *In Dance* Articles

FOLLOW US