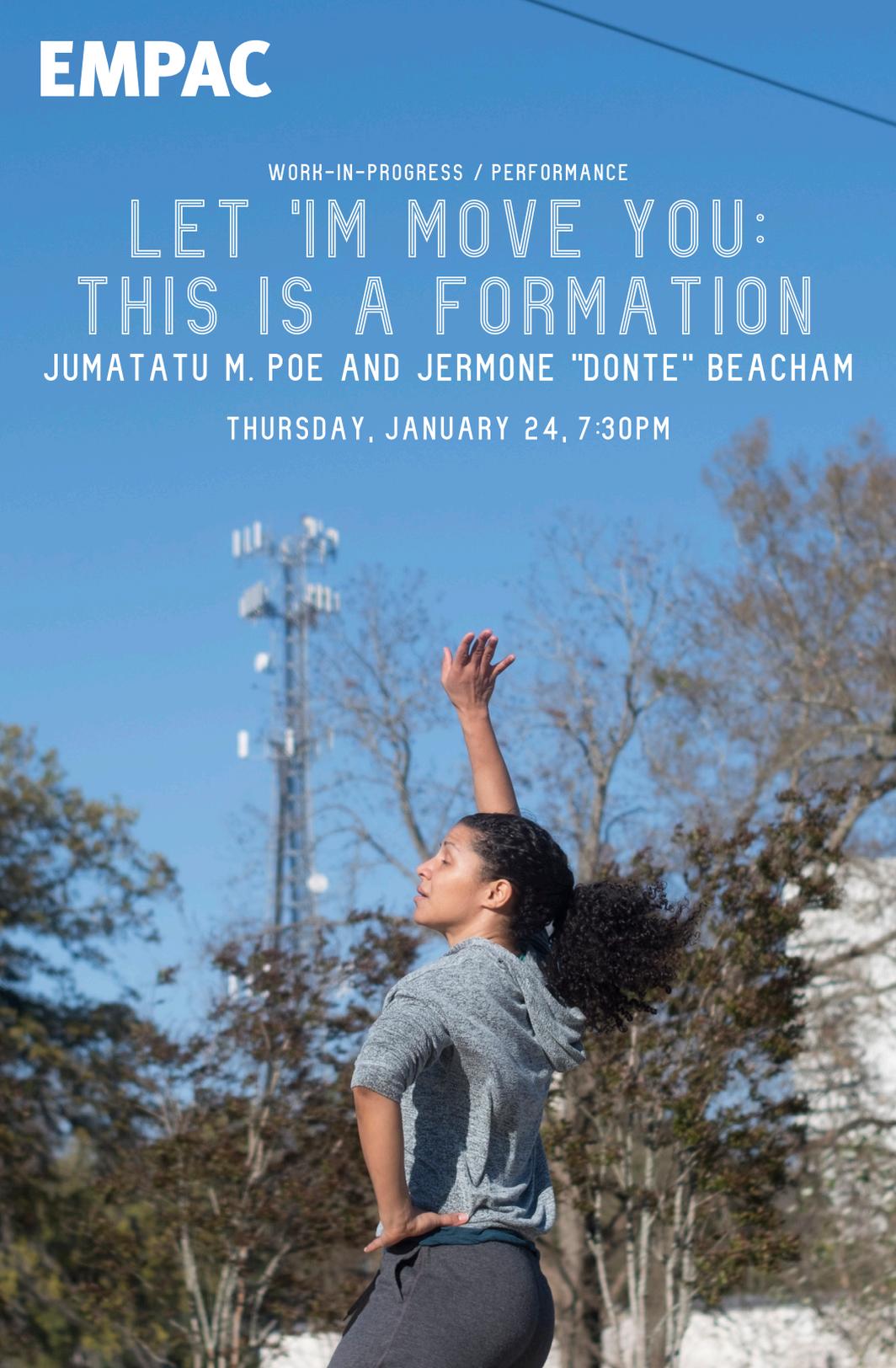


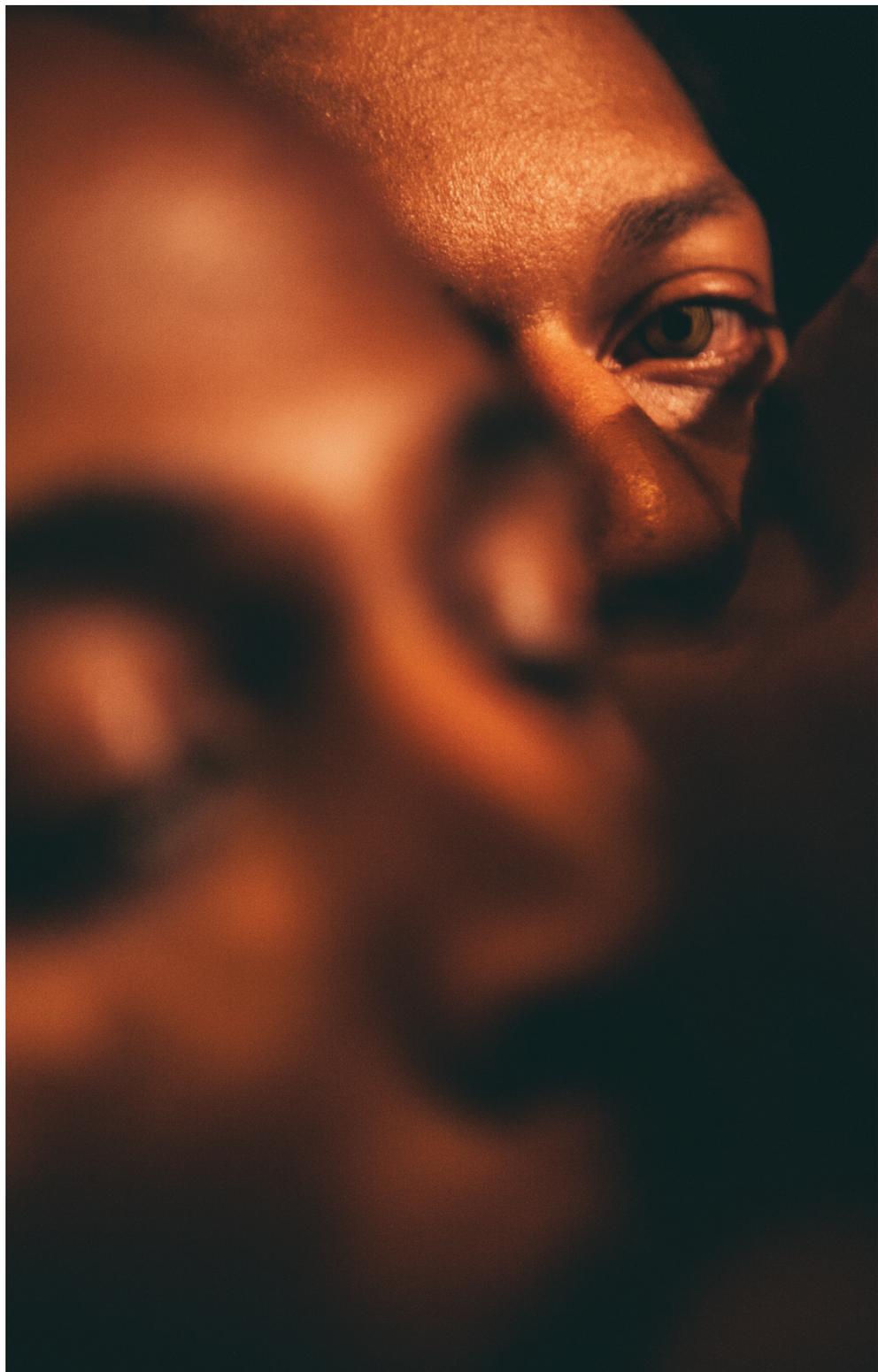
EMPAC

WORK-IN-PROGRESS / PERFORMANCE

LET 'IM MOVE YOU:
THIS IS A FORMATION
JUMATATU M. POE AND JERMONE "DONTE" BEACHAM

THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 7:30PM





CURATOR'S NOTE

“This is a move. This is a deep spinal curve on top of a high booty. This is a game, and the rhythm is key. This is luminous black and smooth brown and hard yellow skin tones. This is an alien, and that is a fairy. This is a movement; we did not start it. This is a stomp through the floor, and a buck across the universe. This is an invitation for you to amplify the respect, curiosity, and love you find in our shared space. This is exquisitely normal. This is so queer, it’s inside out. This is a show for the family, with nudity and sexual themes. This is rigorous beauty. This is a formation.”

Artists jumata m. poe and Jermone “Donte” Beacham have been in residence at EMPAC since January 15th in order to develop the next phase of the *Let ‘im Move You* series, *This is a Formation*, designed as a three-part performance that will travel across historically Black neighborhoods, queer night clubs, and institutional art spaces and theaters. The group brings together a team of collaborators, including seven dancers, lighting, audio, and visual media designers, as well as ethical and artistic consultants, to both agitate and play with the energetic lead-and-follow form of J-Sette dance. J-Sette originated in the Black femme communities of Jackson, Mississippi, in the 1970s, and has been widely popularized in the decades since by both college J-Sette dance teams and Black queer communities. The performers and artistic collaborators have spent their time at EMPAC working on theatrical elements of the project, including choreography, rigging, video and projection mapping, and audio setup. To this end, the group has worked with ethical and artistic consultants to delve deeper into the concepts and structure of the piece.

For this work-in-progress showing, the audience will be immersed in the artistic production environment, sharing space with the dancers, DJ, lighting and visual designers, as well as floating fabric panels activated with projected moving images. Together, the dance, the dancers, the audience, and both the physical environment and the space created by the music, movement, and energy enact a complex social/spatial relationship grounded in joyous, queer, Black expression. *This is a Formation* evokes a sense of care and even sentimentality: the care between the dancers, for the mediums of J-Sette and Vogueing, the joy of listening to dance music, the warm feeling of dancing with family and friends at a party, the feeling of being moved to dance by the energy of a space, all helping to break down the boundaries between audience and performer, inviting both to share space together.

—CONSTANZA ARMES CRUZ, CURATORIAL ASSISTANT, EMPAC

CREDITS

ARTISTIC DIRECTION / JUMATATU M. POE

CHOREOGRAPHY AND STYLING / JUMATATU M. POE AND JERMONE DONTE BEACHAM

PERFORMANCE / JERMONE DONTE BEACHAM, JUMATATU M. POE,
LAKENDRICK DAVIS, MARIA BAUMAN-MORALES, NIKOLAI MCKENZIE,
SANCHEL BROWN, WILLIAM ROBINSON

SOUND, TEXT AND VOCAL COMPOSITIONS / JUMATATU M. POE

SOUND DESIGN AND DJ PERFORMANCE / ZEN JEFFERSON

VIDEO INSTALLATION / MX. OOPS

LIGHTING DESIGN AND TECHNICAL DIRECTION / JUAN "COEL" RODRIGUEZ

PANEL DESIGN AND COSTUME CONSULTATION / PRECIOUS LOVELL

PROVOCATION / THOMAS F. DEFRANTZ

ETHICAL ARTISTRY GUIDANCE / SHANI AKILAH

CONVERSATION* MODERATION AND COMMISSIONED WRITING** / JASMINE JOHNSON

CONVERSATION* PARTICIPATION / DEBORAH SMITH, EVELYN DAVIS-POE, ZIZWE POE

PRODUCING AND TOUR MANAGEMENT / MARÍA WETHERS

WEBSITE DESIGN AND PROJECT MARKETING MANAGEMENT /

PURPOSE PRODUCTIONS - WEBSITE: DENISE SHU MEI;

DIGITAL MARKETING: MATTHEW DICKEN AND MELANIE GREENE

MARKETING AND ARCHIVAL IMAGES / TAYARISHA POE

SERIES LOGO / KHALEEL (@KHALEELARTT)

PROJECT ZINE DESIGN / DANAE MOBLEY

TEXT TRANSLATION / NEFERTITI CHARLENE, SIMON COURCHEL

THANK YOU TO YEMAN BROWN FOR HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS OF THIS WORK. THANK YOU TO BLACK QUEER YOUTH (YOUNGER THAN US), PEERS, ELDERS, AND ANCESTORS WHO HOLD OUR HANDS WHILE WE PRACTICE LIFE ALONGSIDE OTHERS.

*CREATORS JUMATATU M. POE AND JERMONE DONTE BEACHAM WILL PARTICIPATE IN A CONVERSATION. CONNECTED TO THE UPCOMING PREMIERE OF THE WORK AT PAINTED BRIDE ART CENTER IN PHILADELPHIA, PA ON FEBRUARY 8 & 9

**JASMINE'S WRITING WAS SUPPORTED THROUGH AN INITIATIVE OF THE MELLON FOUNDATION ORGANIZED THROUGH JUMATATU M. POE'S CHOREOGRAPHIC RESIDENCY AT MANCC

FOR BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON THE CREATIVE TEAM, PLEASE VISIT:
[HTTPS://WWW.JUMATATU.ORG/FORMATION-BIOS/](https://www.jumatatu.org/formation-bios/)

FUNDING CREDITS

The creation of *Let 'im Move You: This is a Formation* was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage; The MAP Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; National Performance Network/Visual Artists Network (NPN/VAN) Creation & Development Fund co-commissioned by Painted Bride Art Center in partnership with Bates Dance Festival, Arthur Aviles Typical Theatre DBA BAAD! Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance, Abrons Arts Center/Henry Street Settlement, Contemporary Arts Center Cincinnati, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Dance Place, PICA (Portland Institute for Contemporary Art), and NPN/VAN; Independence Foundation; and the Sacatar Foundation.

The development of *Let 'im Move You: This is a Formation* was made possible, in part, by the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography at Florida State University. Production residency funded by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Additional production support and residency provided by EMPAC / Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY. Additional residency support provided by Duke University by way of Slippage, and South Dallas Cultural Center.



BIOGRAPHIES

JUMATATU M. POE I am a choreographer, performer, and educator based between Philadelphia and New York City who grew up dancing around the living room and at parties with my siblings and cousins. My early exposure to concert dance was through African dance and capoeira performances on California college campuses where my parents studied and worked, but I did not start formal dance training until college with Umfundalai, Kariamu Welsh's contemporary African dance technique. My work continues to be influenced by various sources, including my foundations in those living rooms and parties, my early technical training in contemporary African dance, my continued study of contemporary dance and performance, and my recent sociological research of and technical training in J-Setting with Donte Beacham. I produce dance and performance work with idiosyncratic productions, a company I founded in 2008 and now co-direct with Shannon Murphy. Previously, I have danced with Marianela Boán, Silvana Cardell, Emmanuelle Hunyh, Tania Isaac, Kun-Yang Lin, C. Kemal Nance, Marissa Perel, Leah Stein, Keith Thomby Gpson, Kate Watson-Wallace, Reggie Wilson, and Kariamu Welsh (as a member of Kariamu & Company). As a performer, I also collaborate with Merián Soto. jumatatu.org

JERMONE "DONTE" BEACHAM Dancing has been in my blood since I can remember. It started off with hip hop dancing for my high school—I began to recognize my skill and talent. After 4 years of that, I was introduced to the world of J-Sette by women. J-Sette historically refers to Jackson State University's female drill team that began in the 1970s. They "created" the dance style, and thus far have made it a distinctive form of dance. I was interested in this type of dance, but not entirely until I saw a group of males performing it. At that point, I claimed the style for myself and perfected it on my body. Currently, I have my own J-Sette line, Mystic Force, and plan to increase our already considerable renown in this style of dance in our community, and eventually internationally. Previously, I served as co-captain of Dallas' Texas Teasers. I have participated and competed in several events and competitions, including 2 SetteItOff video challenges, Atlanta Pride 2010, Tennessee Classics 2009, and Memphis Pride 2008. In 2015, I was named New Legendary by the Meet Me on the Dance Floor J-Sette council, and have gained many titles since then, such as Best Dancer and Most Entertaining.

JUAN “COEL” RODRIGUEZ BFA in Dance from Arizona State University, artist, educator, performer, and researcher. Coel began his artistic venture at the age of 12 in urban dance, his primary form of study being Breaking or B-Boying. Through a variety of programs and training he began to study other forms including postmodern dance, house, and locking, as well as training as a lighting designer and theater technician. Currently, Coel’s work entails the academic and embodied research of both the history and aesthetics of urban-based dance forms, primarily breaking, as well as researching his own integrative contemporary practice.

LAKENDRICK DAVIS was born and raised in Greenville, MS, and is Chief Choreographic Consultant at ChoreoJazzy Elite Productions. LaKendrick began his journey in the arts at a very young age, participating in chorus and marching band. Throughout the years, he began to explore other areas of the arts including music composition, cheerleading, baton twirling, and a host of additional talents as he completed his high school and middle school years. LaKendrick began training others in the style of Majorette Dance in 2004-2005 and has become one of the most acclaimed instructors in the Southeast today. LaKendrick is lead competitive choreographer for the Sensational Sassettes (Atlanta, GA) and the Atlanta ToXiC All-Stars (Atlanta, GA). LaKendrick has appeared in the YouTube Red Series, “Step Up: Highwater,” Jamal Sims’ “When The Beat Drops,” and Lifetime’s “Bring It,” just to name a few.

MARIA BAUMAN-MORALES is a Brooklyn, NY-based multi-disciplinary artist and community organizer from Jacksonville, FL. She creates bold and honest artworks for her company MBDance, based on physical and emotional power, insistence on equity, and fascination with intimacy. In particular, Bauman-Morales’ dance work centers the non-linear and linear stories and bodies of queer people of color onstage. She draws on her long study of English literature, capoeira, improvisation, dancing in living rooms and nightclubs, as well as concert dance classes to embody interconnectedness, joy, and tenacity. Bauman-Morales was recently recognized with a Bessie Award for Outstanding Performance with Skeleton Architecture. Currently, she is an Urban Bush Women Choreographic Center Fellowship Candidate and an Artist in Residence at Brooklyn Arts Exchange. She just finished her tenure as Community Action Artist in Residence at Gibb Dance. Bauman-Morales is also a community organizer and co-founder of ACRE (Artists Co-creating Real Equity). Organizing to undo racism informs her artistic work and the two areas are each ropes in a Double-Dutch that is her holistic practice. mbdance.net

MARÍA WETHERS is an Independent Creative Producer and Curator based in NYC since 1997. As a Curator she conceived and created the three-week performance series “Gathering Place: Black Queer Land(ing)” at Gibney Dance and curated for the Queer NY International Arts Festival (2016 & 2015) and Out of Space @ BRIC Studio for Danspace Project (2003-2007). Her writing includes Configurations in Motion: Curating and Communities of Color Symposium publications, organized by Thomas DeFrantz at Duke University (2016 & 2015); UnCHARTed Legacies: women of color in post-modern dance in the 25th Anniversary Movement Research Performance Journal #27/28 (2004). María is also a Bessie Award winning performer (Outstanding Performance with Skeleton Architecture, 2017).

MXOOPS/WENDELL COOPER is a multimedia performance artist focused on the intersection of urban arts and consciousness studies; rapping and dancing within video installations. A certified yoga instructor (500hr RYT) and practitioner of Thai Yoga Massage, they are also trained in various forms of energy healing. Their work has toured Kenya, China, Russia, Vienna, the Netherlands, and has been presented in NYC venues such as HERE Arts Center, Santos Party House, The Box, Dixon Place, Joyce Soho, BAAD, and Harlem Stage. Their work has been supported by the Jerome Foundation Travel Study Program, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the New York Live Arts Suitcase Fund, and as a Cultural Enjoy of the U.S. State Department in Kenya. Cooper studied dance and religion at the George Washington University and completed an Integrated Media Arts MFA at Hunter College. They currently teach in Lehman College’s Dance (BA) and Multimedia Performing Arts (BFA) Programs. mxoops.com

NIKOLAI MCKENZIE was born in St. Andrew, Jamaica, and raised in the American South, Nikolai is a movement artist, improviser, actor, and teacher whose work and research deal with the tectonic plates of race, history, class, sexuality, language politics, patriotism, and how these facets of identity inherent in the queer immigrant experience physically and emotionally manifest. A graduate of the BFA in Dance and Choreography Program at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA, Nikolai’s choreography has been performed in Richmond, VA, and Norfolk, VA, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. Some performance highlights include the works of Banning Bouldin, Aszure Barton, Robert Battle, Ohad Naharin, jumata tu m. poe, Adam Barruch, and Christian Von Howard. Over the last three years, Nikolai has had the pleasure of performing as a company member and collaborator with Kun-Yang Lin/ Dancers in Philadelphia.

SANCHEL BROWN is an international dancer/choreographer/actress originally from Baltimore, MD. She has obtained her B.F.A. from Virginia Commonwealth and has extensively studied movement of the African Diaspora in Senegal, West Africa, under the direction of Germaine Acogny at L'Ecole De Sable. Sachel has had the honor to work with many choreographers such as Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Maria Bauman, Paloma McGregor, Jumatatu Poe, David Brick and many others. Her past performance credits include Urban Bush Women, "Black Nativity," "The Kimmel Center's Kinetic Tree Show," "JAMAICA the Musical," "Don't Bother Me I Can't Cope," "First World Theater's Say He Had More Than A Dream," and "Black Nativity." She is a 2015 Barrymore Award nominee for Best Lead Actress in a Musical and winner for Best Ensemble for her outstanding performance as "Mary" in Theater Horizon's production of "Black Nativity." Her choreography credits include Ntozake Shange's "For Colored Girls," New Freedom Theater's "Black Nativity," as well as her self-produced one-woman show, "Ode to Black Wombman." Her teaching engagements include Gibney Dance Center, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, Dancing Grounds, New Freedom Theater and University City Arts League.

In January of 2016 **SHANI AKILAH** visioned and created the Black and Brown Workers Cooperative (BBWC), a collective that is now 400-workers strong in Philadelphia. The BBWC has successfully changed the power structure in the Philadelphia gayborhood by ousting former LGBTQ liaison to the mayor, Nellie Fitzpatrick, organizing with and unionizing Mazzoni workers, as well as impacting city-wide policy.

Today the BBWC continues to focus on Black and Brown workers who straddle identity lines along race, class, sexuality and gender identity and identity expression. They are also launching a 2018 agenda focused on disrupting and fighting gentrification in south west Philadelphia.

THOMAS F. DEFRANTZ received the 2017 Outstanding Research in Dance award from the Dance Studies Association. He is Professor at Duke University, and director of SLIPPAGE: Performance, Culture, Technology, a research group that explores emerging technology in live performance applications. Books: *Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance* (2002), *Dancing Revelations Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture* (2004), *Black Performance Theory, co-edited with Anita Gonzalez* (2014), *Choreography and Corporeality: Relay in Motion, co-edited with Philipa Rothfield* (2016). Creative: *Queer Theory! An Academic Travesty* commissioned by the Theater Offensive of Boston and the Flynn Center for the Arts; *fastDANCEpast*, created for the Detroit Institute for the Arts; *reVERSE-gesture-reVIEW* commissioned by the Nasher Museum in response to the work of Kara Walker, January, 2017. Convenor, Black Performance Theory, and Collegium for African Diaspora Dance. Curation: afroFUTUREequ##r with niv ACOSTA at Jack, October, 2015; National Black Arts Festival Dance Focus, 2015. Teaching: American Dance Festival, ImpulseTanz, the New Waves Dance Institute, as well as MIT, Stanford, Yale, NYU, Hampshire College, and the University of Nice. Musical score, *past-carry-forward* for Dance Theatre of Harlem, 2013. He convenes the Black Performance Theory working group. In 2013, working with Takiyah Nur Amin, he founded the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance, a growing consortium of 200 researchers. In 2015 he created a tap work, "tell me a secret," for students at Washington University in St. Louis, and in 2016 he created a contemporary improvisational work, "...but are we good now?", for the students at Columbia College Chicago; in 2017 he created the tap work "...how could I have known?" for students at Connecticut College. DeFrantz believes in our shared capacity to do better, and to engage our creative spirit for a collective good that is anti-racist, anti-homophobic, proto-feminist, and queer affirming.

WILLIAM ROBINSON is from Washington D.C., son to parents Patricia and Maurice Robinson Jr. He attended college at The University of the Arts, graduating in 2008. He is a current performer with idiosynCrazy productions, Brian Sanders' Junk, and Cardell Dance Theatre.

ZEN JEFFERSON / DØ√Σ Ç@KΣ is a Swiss American performer, DJ and Bessie nominated sound collage artist based in Berlin. In 2006, he graduated with a BFA in dance from the Juilliard School and since worked in creative collaboration with artistic endeavors that have taken him around the world exploring movement, sound, and energy as tools of explorative connection and transformation. His collaborations and practice interrogate the intersections of racial politics within performance, ritual, and healing that seek to disrupt the imperialist, white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy, using the body, sound, and community as a transformative vessel for collective and inter-celestial immersion.

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