



September 11, 2023

Dear WACD Community,

Welcome to the academic year 2023-2024. To our returning students, faculty, and staff: Welcome back! To new students, faculty and staff: Welcome!

As usual, our students and faculty have accomplished all kinds of amazing things over the summer. Our graduate students have presented at conferences, traveled the globe doing fieldwork, received grants, and performed in a wide range of settings:

- Mihika Banerjee received a Graduate Summer Research Mentorship award to conduct archival work in Delhi and Madhya Pradesh, India. Her previous research on dance festivals in Odisha, India, will be published in *Choreographing Society* in November 2023.
- Arpit Gaiind received a Graduate Summer Research Mentorship award as a UCLA International Institute Dissertation Fieldwork Fellowship. Gaiind also published two book reviews in peer-reviewed publications.
- Dana Marterella has been named Art Gallery Director at Glendale College.
- Aquilah Ohemeng was one of few selected to perform with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane's Company for their Los Angeles premiere of *What Problem?* in Royce Hall as well as having her choreographic work featured in the UCLA New Wight International Biennial Exhibition: *Between the Self and its True Home*.

Recent alumni also have much to be proud of:

- Sevi Bayraktar received tenure as an Associate Professor of Dance, Music, and Performance in Global Contexts at the Center of Contemporary Dance, Cologne, Germany. She recently co-edited a volume entitled *Tanzen/Teilen (Sharing/ Dancing)*.
- Zena Bibler drove across the country with her sport utility chihuahua, Benny, to start a new job as Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, where she is teaching courses in contemporary dance technique, choreography, and dance studies.
- SAMMAY Peñaflor Dizon, in collaboration with Gerald Casel, Yayoi Kambara, and Raissa Simpson) received an Isadora Duncan Dance Award in Special Achievement for creating "Dancing Around Race: Interrogating Whiteness in Dance" - a series of site-specific performances and discussion that interrogated the dynamics of equity in performance.
- Jingqiu Guan has taken up a new job as Assistant Professor of Practice at Duke University.
- Mika Lior is currently a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at York University's Dance and Performance Studies department in Toronto, Canada, which has allowed her leave from her post as a faculty member at the School of Performing Arts, University of Malta, to work on her book manuscript.

The WACD Faculty have been busy over the last few months and have some exciting projects coming up:

- Bryonn Bain will embark on a southern tour of *Lyrics from Lockdown* this Fall, showing this work in Houston, Birmingham, and Atlanta.
- Anurima Banerji received a fellowship from the Center for Ballet and the Arts, NYU to conduct research on her new book *The Impossibility of Indian Classical Dance* and organized a series of Odissi research seminars in August 2023, co-sponsored by UNC-Charlotte and UCLA.
- Tria Blu Wakpa received an Honorable Mention for the 2023 Outstanding Article Award from the Association for Theatre in Higher Education. Blu Wakpa and two graduate student collaborators, Sammy Roth and Miya Shaffer, received the Radical Teacher Fellowship from the University of Pittsburg.
- Alex Ungprateeb Flynn's book *Taking Form, Making Worlds* was published by the Editorial Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica in June of 2023 and has just been translated into Spanish as *Tomando Forma, Creando Mundos: Las Editoriales Cartoneras en América Latina*.
- Emerita faculty member Simone Forti received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement Award from la Biennale di Venezia.
- Dan Froot & Company received grants from Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture and City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs for Arms Around America (AAA), an evening of short theatrical vignettes based on oral histories of families around the country whose lives have been shaped by guns. The Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA presented a live recording event of the podcast version of AAA, which launches this fall.
- Miguel Guitierrez presented a revival run of *Variations on Themes from Lost and Found: Scenes from a Life and other works by John Bernd*, co-created with Ishmael Houston-Jones and Nick Hallett, at Danspace Project in New York, premiered a duet *I as another* at Baryshnikov Art Center and a 2017 commission for Ballet de Lorraine, at NYU Skirball, entitled *Cela nous concerne tous (This concerns all of us)*. He was also named the 23-24 Randjelovic/Stryker Resident Commissioned Artist at New York Live Arts.
- Vic Marks' Dancing Disability Lab took place once again this past summer in Kaufman Hall. Bringing together ten diverse disabled dance artists, who offered creative workshops, supporting each other's movement practices, building artistic community, and expanding the growth of disability arts. The Lab has been supported by the Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and UCLA.
- Peter Sellars directed San Francisco Symphony's production of Kaija Saariaho's *Adriana Mater* <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2022-23/Kaija-Saariahos-Adriana-Mater> and presented work at the Salzburg Festival with Los Angeles Master Chorale and Teodor Currentzis. Over the next academic year, he will direct Berlin Staatsoper's new production of *Médée*, Paris Opera's new production of *Beatrice di Tenda*, Rice University's *Music for New Bodies*, and Salzburg Festival's new production of *The Gambler*.
- Aparna Sharma received a Digitization Project Grant from the Modern Endangered Archives Program, UCLA Library to digitize the anthropological photographs of

renowned photographer Ahmad Hossain, who has documented the social and cultural life of India's north-eastern region over four decades.

- The Art and Global Health Center has received a \$150,000 grant from the Herb Ritts Foundation to extend Through Positive Eyes, the Center's photo-storytelling project for people living with HIV and AIDS, to Eastern Europe

We are delighted to welcome new members of our community in both staff and faculty arenas. The Art & Global Health Center has added a new associate director, Wilna Julmiste Taylor, to its staff roster. Wilna comes to us from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, where she served as assistant director of the Curb Center for Art Enterprise and Public Policy. Joy Yarbrough has also joined WACD as its new administrative officer. She joins WACD staff with a BA in Psychology and several years of experience supporting student success at Ohio Wesleyan University and as an Executive Assistant to C Suite executives at a national CRE firm. Joy has recently relocated to the Los Angeles area and is very excited to work alongside you in the coming academic year.

We're excited to welcome a new Ladder Faculty member. Ayasha Guerin will join us starting this Fall. Ayasha comes to us from the University of British Columbia, where they were assistant professor of Black diaspora studies. Ayasha's book, *Making Zone A, Nature, Race and Resilience on New York's Most Vulnerable Shores*, engages Black and indigenous studies, environmental humanities, and economic critique to undertake a critical, archival analysis of a New York City flood zone. Ayasha is also engaged in art activism and curatorial research in Berlin, Germany, which forms of the basis of their current research.

WACD faculty have graciously stepped into new service roles. Vic Marks will continue to serve as undergraduate vice chair. Alex Ungprateeb Flynn will act as vice chair of the Culture and Performance PhD and Miguel Gutierrez will serve as vice chair of the MFA in Choreographic Inquiry.

As always, our year will be filled with special events, performances, guest presentations, and lectures. Here are some to keep a look out for:

- For the first time this year, we are holding a **WACD Welcome Party**. This will take place on Wednesday, October 4, 6 to 8 pm in Kaufman Courtyard. Join us for food, music, conversation, an open mic, and general merriment.
- **Beatriz Lemos** will join us as a Regents Lecturer in fall quarter. Lemos is an Afro-Indigenous curator and researcher whose practice focuses on contemporary art in Latin America. Lemos' work places a particular emphasis on anti-coloniality, gender, and race, questions she has explored through pedagogy, collaboration and curatorial interventions. As Regents Lecturer, she will offer in-class presentations, a public presentation, and a workshop seminar. Mark your calendars for October 16th to 27th to get a chance to learn from this luminary curator.
- **Bijayini Satpathy** will join us as a guest artist/speaker from October 23rd to 28th. Satpathy is a renowned choreographer, performer, and scholar of Odissi dance. She will offer two class presentations as well as a public talk.

- **mayfield brooks** will be this year's Alma Hawkins Chair, with their residency being held during spring quarter. brooks is a choreographer, dancer, vocalist, and writer and the creator of the performance methodology Improvising While Black (IWB), a system of intentional disorientation, recalibrated noticing, and community care that undergirds their performance work and their teaching. They are an interdisciplinary artist, bringing together movement, vocal work, and choreographies of breath. They will offer two courses, Dance 174 and Dance 117C. Don't miss this opportunity to work with this acclaimed guest choreographer!
- Spring will also see *First Hand*, the faculty concert.

As always, we owe a huge thank you to the WACD staff who keep the department moving forward.

Thanks to all of you for being a part of the WACD community. I look forward to seeing what the year brings and what our many interests and passions produce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JOSHEA', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Jay (Janet) O'Shea
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