

Lela Aisha Jones

Assistant Professor and Director of Dance
Bryn Mawr College Dance Program
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EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Health Science Education, August 2000

College of Health and Human Performance, University of Florida

Master of Fine Arts in Dance, April 2004

School of Visual Arts and Dance, Department of Dance, Florida State University

Ph.D. in Dance Theory and Practice, August 2018

Department of Dance, Texas Woman's University

Dissertation: *Diasporic Movement Practices: African/Afro/Black Embodied Translineages and Contemporary Migrations in Dance*. This dissertation unveiled the lived experiences of 5 diverse Black U.S. women and their commitment to teaching, performing, and/or choreographing dances of African descent as well as how their long-term engagement with these movement cultures influenced their notions of citizenship and their philosophies and practices of integrity in diasporic movement practices. (Major Advisors: Dr. Linda B. Caldwell, Dr. Rosemary Candelario)

EMPLOYMENT

Director of Dance. Bryn Mawr College, Dance Program, Aug 2022-present.

Assistant Professor. Bryn Mawr College, Dance Program, Aug 2019-present.

Associate Director of Dance: Bryn Mawr College, Dance Program, 2021-2022.

Consortium for Faculty Diversity Fellow. Bryn Mawr College, Dance Program, 2017-2019.

Residency Faculty. Middlebury College. 2016.

Residency Faculty. Widener University Dance Program. 2014.

Visiting Assistant Professor. Muhlenberg College. 2013.

Part-time Faculty. University of the Arts. 2011-2012.

Residency Faculty. Bennington College. 2010.

Residency Faculty. Texas Woman's University. 2009.

Residency Faculty. Tallahassee Community College 2004-2007.

Part-time Faculty. Long Island University Brooklyn Campus 2005-2006.

Graduate Student Teacher. Florida State University. 2003-2004.

ARTISTIC SCHOLARSHIP IN PROCESS

ONGONG: OBSIDIANS & SOFT TENDER SHOUTS (2023-present)

Brownbody, Twin Cities, MN. researching blackness as uncaptured, nomadism, and marronage spaces of liberation. (Choreographer, Director for On Ice and Stage Dance)

EMBODIED INTERVIEWS: MIXED BLOOD, MOCHA NET, WOODBURY, BROWNBODY (2023)

Brownbody, Twin Cities, MN. Improvisational, freestyle, and narrative performance presentation rooted in oral histories presented by Mixed Blood's 12x12 Project. Collaborators included members of the Woodbury community and Mocha Net. (Director, Organizer, Choreographer, Performer)

EMBODIED INTERVIEWS AND MINING WITNESSING ARCHIVING (2024)

Independent Research. Embodied Interviews on Being with the Body International. (Facilitator, Director)

OLOKUN & THE VEIL (2024)

Independent Research intersecting WEB Dubois concepts of the veil, veils in socio-spiritual context, and Yoruba pantheon cosmologies. International. (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

THE RE-EMANCIPATION OF SOCIAL DANCE (2023-2024)

Philadelphia Contemporary (Yolanda Wisher), Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, and Raja Feather Philadelphia, PA. a deeper look at how social dance has been codified and made to conform and maybe a way back to liberation. (Choreographic Contributor, Performer)

BLACK ARTIST REFUGEE GLOBAL INITIATIVE (2022-present)

Turin, Italy. think tank at the intersection of advocacy, forced migration, refugees, and art. (Community-Based Arts + Law Projects Resident Artist Scholar)

nia love | g(1)host | UNDERCURRENTS (2020-present)

New York City, New York, National and International Tour. research on the relationships of black folk and the ocean considering the history of crossing the Atlantic towards enslavement. (Consultant, Performer, Resident Artist Scholar)

MIXED BLOOD + BROWNBODY (2023)

Brownbody, Twin Cities, MN. embodied making with communities to build ongoing equitable partnerships. (Choreographer, Director, Community Organizer, Facilitator)

ARTISTIC SCHOLARSHIP

2020-present. nia love | g(1)host | Undercurrents
(Consultant, Performer, Resident Artist Scholar)

2012-present. Brownbody. Twin Cities, MN (Associate Artistic Director for On Ice and Stage Dance)
*Tracing Sacred Steps (Dramaturg, Artistic & Organizational Advisor)
*Quiet As It's Kept (Dramaturg, Artistic & Organizational Advisor)
*Beloved (Performer)

2021 Red Clay Dance. Chicago, IL
we:all ~ gon' die into revivals (Choreographer, Director)

2021 Spelman College Dance Program. Atlanta, GA
Celestial Waters (Co-Choreographer, Co-Director)

2020 Mojuba! Black Dance Festival. Cleveland, OH
Dance Film Screening: Original Spaces (Co-Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2020 University of Florida. Gainesville, FL
In/habit/at (Choreographer, Director)

2019 Modupue | Ibaye: The Philadelphia Yoruba Performance Project. Philadelphia PA
Series of Artistic & Communal Events (Choreographer, Co-Director, Performer)

2019 Partners for Sacred Spaces, Philadelphia Contemporary, & Reggie Wilson. Philadelphia, PA
Grounds that Shout! (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2019 Bryn Mawr College. Bryn Mawr, PA
Native Portals (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2019 African American Museum of Philadelphia (AAMP)
Plight Release and the Diasporic Body (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2019 QDance Center. Lagos, Nigeria
QDance Gathering: Afro Space Time with Onye Ozuzu (Performer)

2018 Philanthropy Network Greater. Philadelphia
Native Portals (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2018 Chester County Historical Society. West Chester, PA
Participatory Performance: Historical Immigration Patterns

2018 Heritage Works. Detroit, MI
ReUnion: HomeComingGoing (Choreographer, Director)

2018 Brownbody/The Requisite Movers. Twin Cities, MN
Native Portals (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2018 University of Delaware. Newark, DE
Visible Force (Choreographer, Director)

2018 Gibney Dance Center. New York City, NY
Dance Film Screening: Original Spaces (Co-Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2017 Temple University. Philadelphia
Plight Release and the Diasporic Body (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2017 Painted Bride Art Center. Philadelphia, PA
The Body Wails, The Body Restores (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2017 University of Delaware. Newark, DE
Native Portals: Continuum of Action (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2017 University of Cape Town. South Africa
Native Portals: Continuum of Action (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2017 Bryn Mawr College. Bryn Mawr, PA
Native Portals (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2017 National Homicide Justice Coalition. Philadelphia, PA
Lost Loved Ones (Choreographer, Director)

2017 Mothers in Charge. Philadelphia, PA
Lost Loved Ones (Choreographer, Director)

2016 Kùlú Mèlé African Dance & Drum. Philadelphia, PA
Undercurrent | Gathering (Choreographer, Director)

2016 Links Hall & Red Clay Dance. Chicago, IL
Native Portals: Continuum of Action (Witness) (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2016 Gibney Dance. NYC
Plight Release and the Diasporic Body: Jesus & Egun (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2016 Intercultural Journeys. Philadelphia, PA
Native Portals: Release Mourning Clearing (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2016 University of Delaware. Newark, DE
Native Portals: Continuum of Action (Witness) (Choreographer, Director)

2015 The Requisite Movers. Philadelphia, PA
Native Portals: Release Mourning Clearing (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2014 Red Clay Dance - La Femme. Chicago, IL
Divadom (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2013 Falls Bridge Festival. Philadelphia, PA
Cultural Deprivation Degradation (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2013 The Requisite Movers. Philadelphia, PA
Untitled Solo (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2012 Kùlú Mèlé African Drum & Dance. Philadelphia, PA
Gathering (Choreographer, Director)

2012 First Person Arts. Philadelphia, PA
Native Portals: Lynching & Love

2011 The Requisite Movers. Philadelphia, PA
Mining Black Water, The Beauty of My Father, Airlooms

2010 The Requisite Movers. Philadelphia, PA
Street Grace (Choreographer, Director, Performer)

2010 Shenandoah University. Winchester, VA
For Naná (Choreographer, Director)

COURSES TAUGHT AT BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

DANCE ANALYSIS COURSES

(embodied and writing attentive courses primarily about dance)

Sacred Activism: Dancing Altars, Radical Moves. ARTD 210. F2021 F2022-360 Program

Approaches to Dance: Themes and Perspectives. ARTD 140. S2020 S2021 S2022

Diasporic Citizenship in Dance. ARTD 270. F2020-360 Program

Diasporic Bodies, Continual Revivals. ARTD 267. F2019

Performing the Political Body. ARTD 250. S2018

Diasporic Bodies and Activism. ARTD 267. F2017

DANCE ARTISTRY COURSES

(embodied, choreography, conditioning, making, performance, and practice attentive courses primarily engaged in being-with-the-body)

Advanced Choreography. ARTD 342. F2019 S2021 F2022 S2023-present

Dance Composition: Process and Presence. ARTD 142. F2019 F2020 S2022 S2023

Dance Ensemble: Modern. ARTD 345. PE 145 S2020 S2021 S2022 S2023

Senior Thesis/Project. thesis independent study course for dance majors.
ARTD 400. F2019 F2021 S2020 S2023-present

Supervised Work in Dance. special topic independent studies for majors, minors, and dedicated dance students. ARTD 403. S2020-2 F2020 S2022 F2022-3

African Diaspora: Beginning Technique. ARTD 141. PE 122 F2021

Hip Hop Lineages. ARTD 138 Only F2020 ARTD 138. PE 11 F2021

Modern: Intermediate Technique. ARTD 320. PE 106 S2021

Dance Ensemble: African Diaspora. ARTD 368. PE 148 S2019

SERVICE TO THE FIELD: RACE GENDER CLASS DIS/ABILITY AGENCY

COALITION OF DIASPORAN SCHOLARS MOVING (2013-present)

Ambassador and Steering Committee Member (Current Operations Coordinator), CDSM offers strategic advice for diasporan scholars and movement artists in various settings and serves as a medium through which members can share experiences and advice, discuss best practices, and offer support.

YOUNG AUDIENCES NEW JERSEY & EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA (2017-2020)

Consulting with K-12 teachers and YANJEP program leaders concerning implementation of cultural consciousness with multiple centers of understanding, community organizing and activist development through the arts, building community through artistry, and developing arts education curriculum grounded in Black and African diasporic dance and movement cultures. Consulted in the Creative Consultant Program where teachers are encouraged to bring forth and intertwine their artistic and creative practice skills/potentials with specific arts integrated lessons and grade or school wide initiatives.

BLACK SPACIAL RELICS RESIDENCY GRANT PANEL (2019)

The Black Spacial Relics Residency supports the development of new performance works about slavery, justice, and freedom by emerging and mid-career artists. Key to this effort is the convening of the artists towards the end of the residency in reflection on their processes and work. In supporting emergent artists and emergent creative thought. Black Spatial Relics holds a developmental space for collaborative imagining about freedom.

LEEWAY FOUNDATION GRANT AWARD REVIEW COMMITTEE (2019)

The Leeway Foundation supports women and trans* artists and cultural producers working in communities at the intersection of art, culture, and social change. Through their grant making and other programs they promote artistic expression that amplifies the voices of those on the margins, promotes sustainable and healthy communities, and works in the service of movements for economic and social justice.

SOMATICS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE PROGRAM UPRISING AND DISMANTLING (2018-2020)

Facilitation of dialogues and advisement for community members (individually & collectively) of all ethnic and racial backgrounds with varying positional locations on navigating racial oppression and internalized racism that is conscious and unconscious in multiple programs and institutions post the unraveling of the Somatics and Social Justice intensive in Philadelphia.

DANCING FOR JUSTICE PHILADELPHIA (2014-2017)

Lead organizer and centralizer for a march co-organized with dance community colleagues to convene around the Black Lives Matter movement and to honor Black lives lost to police violence and brutality. DFJ Philly developed and put into action embodied ways to make visible the U.S. racial divide and its potential for continued, contemporary, and grave injustice through processions and marches as well as processing sessions titled *Coming Together* and *Release + Restoration*.

THE PEOPLE'S INSTITUTE FOR SURVIVAL AND BEYOND | UNDOING RACISM (2015)

Co-organized and garnered funding for an undoing racism training for artists and arts administrators in Philadelphia, PA with major support from Headlong and the Bread and Roses Foundation.

SERVICE TO THE FIELD

AMBASSADOR, STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER

Coalition of Diasporan Scholars Moving in Partnership with the International Association of Blacks in Dance (International 2012-present)

GRANT AND RESIDENCY PANELIST

Hambidge Artist Residency Selection Review Committee (Georgia 2020)
Black Spacial Relics Grant Panel (2019)
Leeway Foundation Grantee Award Review Committee (Pennsylvania 2019)
Red Clay Dance | La Femme Performance Residency Committee (Illinois 2019)

DEIA ADVISOR AND CONSULTANT

Young Audiences Dance to Learn DEIA Initiatives (New Jersey 2017-2020)
Brownbody Embodied Racial Consciousness (Minnesota 2012-present)

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Dancing for Justice Philadelphia 2014-2017
1st Organizer of People's Institute of Survival and Beyond for Philadelphia in Undoing Racism Intensives (Pennsylvania 2017)

GRADUATE ADVISOR FOR MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Leila Lewis, MFA, Hollins University (Virginia 2020)
Surya Swilley, MFA, Temple University (Pennsylvania 2019)
Leslie Zakiya Cornish, MFA Concert (2015)

SERVICE AT BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

PROGRAM

Disability Consultant and Major Alignment Planning (2022-present)
Director of Dance (2022-present)
Performing Arts Series Co-Curator (2020-present)
DEIA Consultation and Advisement. Dance and Arts Program (2019-present)
Structural Racism Consultant. Dance and Arts Program (2019-present)
Dance Program Guest Artist Coordinator and Facilitator (2017-present)
Associate Director of Dance (2021-2022)
Interdisciplinary and Interdepartmental Collaborator (2020-2021)
(Centering Critical Blackness with nia love + Dr. Fred Moten)

COMMITTEE

Africana Studies Steering Committee (2019-present)
Dance Program Chair of Job Search (2021-2022)
Mary Flexner Lectureship Dance Program Liaison and Collaborator (2020-2021)

FACULTY ADVISING and CONSULTING

Senior Thesis Faculty Consultant for Camillah Canty. English (2023)

Doctoral Consultant with C.C. Mckee for Alexis G White. History of Art (2022)
Fellow Faculty Advisor for Liz Burke. Hannah Holbern Fellow (2022)
Senior Thesis Faculty Advisor for Nyasa Hendrix. History of Art (2018)

FACULTY INSTRUCTION (Independent Study)

Pre-Thesis Advanced Choreography for Atalie Pierre Lewis (2023)
Pre-Thesis Advanced Choreography for Piper Rolfes (2023)
Supervised Work in Dance for Liana Wilson-Graff (2022)
Pre-Thesis Advanced Choreography for Liana Wilson-Graff (2022)
Supervised Work in Dance for Tanvi Jha (2022)
Supervised Work in Dance for Sophy Jarka Sellers (2022)
Supervised Work in Dance for Autumn Winch (2022)
Supervised Work in Dance for Diya Patel (2020)
Supervised Work in Dance for Marika Takeshita (2020)
Pre-Thesis Advanced Choreography for Hanna Higgins (2021)
Supervised Work in Dance for Sayori Yoshido (2019)

MAJOR ADVISING (Independent Study)

Senior Thesis in Dance Ayantae Cunningham (2024-2025)
Senior Thesis in Dance Kuankuan Hu (2024-2025)
Senior Thesis in Dance for Atalie Pierre Lewis (Co-Advisor 2024)
Senior Thesis in Dance for Piper Rolfes (Co-Advisor 2024)
Senior Thesis in Dance for Liana Wilson-Graff (2023)
Senior Thesis in Dance for Amell Garrison (2022)
Senior Thesis in Dance for Jasmine Stanton (2020)
Senior Thesis in Dance for Genevieve Legowski (2019)

MINOR ADVISING:

Abby Braud (2024)
Anna Wills Kornberg (2023)
Freya Plum Marr Johnson (Minor Capstone 2023)
Rachel Langgin (2023)
Kimiye Cambia Maishiro (2023)
Cate Tomson (2023)

SPECIAL PROGRAMS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

2022	360 Program Cohort – Bryn Mawr College - Paradigms of Revival
2020	360 Program Cohort – Bryn Mawr College - Centering Critical Blackness
2012	Pew Center for Arts and Heritage - Philadelphia Cultural Management Initiative with Mascher Space Cooperative

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

2021-present	Dance Studies Association (DSA)
2021-present	International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD)

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

ENCLE European Network for Clinical Legal Education Conference, International, Italy and United Kingdom (Presenter 2023)

Topic: Vibrancy and Justice: Impact of the Arts on Law, Students, and Clients

Co-Presenters: Ulrich Stege (Professor of Law), Paula LeeAnne Fraschia (Professor of Law)

Arts in Education New Jersey Convening (Keynote 2020)

Topic: Embodying in a Critical Time

Curator: Samantha Clarke

Temple University Dance Colloquium (Presenter 2019)

Topic: Diasporic Bodies, Activism, Integrity, and Revivals. Philadelphia, PA.

Curator: Dr. Sherrill Dodds

Symposium on Dance and Social Justice (Presenter 2019)

Rutgers University Dance Department with Ananya Dance Theater. New Brunswick, NJ.

Topic: Lela Aisha Jones | FlyGround. Dancing for Justice Philadelphia. The Requisite Movers.

Curators: Ananya Chatterjea. Julia Ritter.

AWARDS | GRANTS | HONORS

ARTISTIC SCHOLARSHIP

2022-2023	Performing Arts Discovery – Midwest Cohort National, International
2014-2019	Community Education Center Artist in Residence - Philadelphia
2016-2018	Pew Fellowship in the Arts
2017	New York Dance and Performance Awards Bessie Nomination
2015	Leeway Transformation Award. Philadelphia, PA
2015	Puffin Foundation Award. US National.
2013-2014	Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Apprenticeships in Traditional Arts
2010-2014	Philadelphia Cultural Fund
2013	Dance USA Philadelphia Rocky Award
2012	The Swarthmore Project Residency. Swarthmore, PA
2011-2012	Dance USA Philadelphia New Stages for Dance Initiative

THEORETICAL SCHOLARSHIP

2018	Consortium for Faculty Diversity - Bryn Mawr College - Post Doctoral Fellowship
2017	Consortium for Faculty Diversity - Bryn Mawr College - Pre-Doctoral Fellowship
2015	Army Women's Foundation Legacy Scholarship. National
2008-2010	Texas Woman's University Graduate Student Scholarship
2009	Virginia Chandler Dykes Scholarship Texas Woman's University
2001	Teacher of the Year SOFCA. Atlanta, GA