

Thursday, October 14th, 2021
Dance Studies Association Pre-Conference Workshop



***Supported by a 2021 Major Project Initiatives grant from
The American Society of Aesthetics***

Cosmo-uBuntu and Rhythm
An Epistemological Re-Centering of Rhythm

AI4Afrika (Artificial Intelligence 4 Afrika) is a world-wide consortium of artists, scholars and technologists who have come together to advance an epistemological reorientation toward Artificial Intelligence and machine learning, one that is rooted/grounded in Africana conceptual systems and centers the lived experiences of Black/Africana peoples. AI4A understands that AI as fundamentally *human* intelligence, augmented. Artificial Intelligence, grounded in a Cartesian conception of personhood— “I think, therefore I am,” is at odds with the relational, Africanist philosophy of Ubuntu: “I am, because *WE* are,” or “a person is a person through persons.” The epistemological exclusivity of most contemporary approaches to AI and machine learning has led to a reproduction/reiteration of asymmetrical power relations that continue to disadvantage and/or overlook Africana demographics. By grounding itself in what Mozambican philosopher José Cossa calls “Cosmo-uBuntu,” AI4Afrika centers (human) relationality as that which informs all life-experience and life-processes. This epistemological shift radically reframes applications of human intelligence towards augmentation, Artificial Intelligence within an Africanist framework. <http://www.ai4afrika.com/>

Scholarships available
please scroll for further information

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this announcement do not necessarily represent those of the American Society for Aesthetics.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Morning Workshop: 9-11:30 am

Location: Rutgers University Dance Department studio

(5 minute walk from Rutgers University Inn and Conference Center accommodations)

Embodiology:

Sensory Instantiation of Dynamic Rhythm

S. Ama Wray, facilitator, with Tawanda Chabikwa

Workshop Description: Embodiology® is a culturally inclusive approach to improvisation, a neo-African improvisation-as-performance methodology. It is a practice which prioritizes embodiment of rhythm which begins with the breath, expanding to build collaborative relationships between performers and higher embodied rhythmic literacy. Leading with play, joy and curiosity navigate through the prosodic multidimensionality of rhythm and embody its features of pattern, silence, tone and fractal repetitions enabling a deluge of creativity and corporeal confidence. Workshop includes live music.

NOTE: Limited to 15 total registered participants

NOTE: Readings will be sent upon registration

Lunch Break: 11:30 am-12:30 pm

Please consider pre-ordering lunch at Rutgers' Inn and Conference Center

Afternoon Workshop #2a: 12:30-2:30 pm

Black Somatics

Grisha Coleman, facilitator

Location: Conference Room A

Rutgers University Inn and Conference Center

178 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick NJ 08901

NOTE: Limited to 10-12 registered participants

This workshop is limited to self-identified BIPOC participants. Thanks for understanding.

ALSO: Please bring your own yoga mat or beach towel for floor work on the carpeted surface

I argue [. . .] that technology's embedded function of self-extension may be exploited to liberate race from an inherited position of abjection toward a greater expression of agency. In this case, agency indicates presence, will, and movement — the ability to move freely as a being—and it is not restricted to individuals but also includes systems: it concerns how beings are subjected in systems of power, ideology, and other networks.

B. Coleman, "Race As Technology," *Camera Obscura* 70, Vol. 24, No. 1
Duke University Press, 2009, doi 10.1215/02705346-2008-018.

Workshop Description: A practice-based exploration rarely experienced; a floor-full of Black and Brown folk in conversation with their bodies “as perceived from within” [1] through the simplicity and genius of Moshe Feldenkrais’ method, and his Awareness Through Movement™ lessons, this workshop will be framed through a prism of questions that continue to impact our communities of color: 1). What is carried with us, ancestrally speaking, through our soma? 2). Could sustained opportunities for self-understanding and self-care accumulate to bend this arc towards greater agency and liberation? This workshop seeks to set this enlightening and enlivening practice in the contexts of people of color as a healing and creative practice.

Required readings: Please select among 5 readings listed below for prompts and discussion during both afternoon workshops:

“Black People Figured Out How to Make Culture in Freefall”: Arthur Jafa on the Creative Power of Melancholy” <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/arthur-jafa-julia-stoscchek-collection-1227422>

“Be still and know: authentic movement, witness and embodied testimony” Christopher-Rasheem Mcmillan. *Dance, Movement & Spiritualities* 5 (1), 2018. doi: 10.1386/dmas.5.1.71_1

Reach, Robot: AfroFuturist Technologies. Coleman, G, DeFrantz, Thomas F. ‘*We travelled the Space Way: Black Imagination, Fragments and Diffractions*. Springer Verlag Series. 2019 Eds. H. Gunkle and K. Lynch. <https://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-4601-6/we-travel-the-space-ways/?number=978-3-8376-4601-6>

Coleman, Beth. “Race as Technology.” *Camera Obscura* 70, Vol. 24, No. 1, Duke University Press, 2009. doi 10.1215/02705346-2008-018.

Wynter, Sylvia. “On Being Human as a Praxis,” K. McKittrick, Duke University Press, 2015.

Workshop #2b

12:30-2:30 pm: Break-out groups, facilitated by workshop leaders

NOTE: Limited to 12 registered participants

Location: Scarlet All-purpose Room

Rutgers University Inn and Conference Center
178 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick NJ 08901

- a. *Black Somatics philosophy and aesthetics readings*
- b. *Embodiology philosophy and aesthetics readings: sent upon registration*
- c. *Cosmo-uBuntu philosophy and aesthetics readings: sent upon registration*

Final Group Meeting #3:

2:30-3:00 pm: Return to large group discussion

Location: Conference Center, in or outside patio, weather-permitting

Rutgers University Inn and Conference Center
178 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick NJ 08901

Please reserve your space by registering below:

NOTE: You are welcome to register for Morning Workshop #1 only
OR
Morning and Afternoon workshop #2a OR #2b,
plus Final Group Meeting #3.

Workshop Fees:

Workshop #1 only:	\$25
Workshop #2a OR #2b only:	\$25
Workshop #3:	No charge
Workshops #1 and #2a, + #3:	\$40
Workshops #1 and #2b, + #3:	\$40

See below for scholarship opportunities

Accommodations option:

Rutgers University Inn and Conference Center

178 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick NJ, 08901

<https://inn.rutgers.edu/>

Single and double room options

ADA accessible rooms available

The Rutgers Inn and Conference Center is available for Wednesday night, October 13, 2021 reservations prior to the Pre-DSA Conference Workshop, beginning at 9 am on Thursday, October 14, 2021.

NOTE: The DSA Conference begins at 4:00 Thursday, October 14, 2021, downtown, at the Hyatt Hotel, New Brunswick. Rutgers' bus system stops very near the Inn and Conference Center and you can depart downtown near the Hyatt Hotel.

For reservations: please phone: 732-932-9144.

For further questions, please email: rutgersinn@docs.rutgers.edu

FACILITATORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Tawanda Chabikwa (Zimbabwe/U.S.A.) is a Zimbabwean-born artist-scholar engaged with interdisciplinary research in Africana Studies, contemporary African theatrical dance, Africana cosmologies and philosophy, postcolonial modernities, artificial intelligence, and practice-based research methodologies. He joins UTEP from the University of California, Merced where he served as lecturer of Histories of American Social Dance, Latin American Dance Ensemble, Popular Dance & Africana Identities, Conceptual Art, and African Philosophy. Dr. Chabikwa earned a doctoral degree in Africana Studies from The Ohio State University and the MFA in dance from Southern Methodist University. He is currently a member of the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance (CADD). Prior to pursuing doctoral studies in 2011, Dr. Chabikwa was interim artistic director of Tumbuka Dance Company in Zimbabwe.

Grisha Coleman (U.S.A.) is time-based artist working in performance and experiential media. Her work explores relationships between physiological, technological and ecological systems. She holds the position of associate professor of movement, computation and digital media in the School of Arts, Media and Engineering, affiliated with Schools of Dance and the Design at Arizona State University. She performed with Urban Bush Women and founded the music performance group HOTMOUTH and was nominated for a 1998 NYC Drama Desk Award for "Most Unique Theatrical Experience."

Ama S. Wray (UK/USA) is associate professor of dance at University of California, Irvine. She is a former U.K NESTA Fellow (National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts) and an improviser, choreographer, director, teacher and scholar. She received her Ph.D. from University of Surrey (UK) where she developed her theory and practice of Embodiology®, a neo-African approach to contemporary dance improvisation.



Pre-conference Workshop Scholarships
Announcement

The American Society of Aesthetics Major Initiatives Project Fund

announces

4 full scholarships for the following opportunities:

- ***All Workshop Fees***
- ***Wednesday October 13th, private single room accommodation***
- ***Thursday October 14th, buffet breakfast at Rutgers Inn and Conference Center***

Call for Pre-conference workshop scholarship applications:

- 1 Dance Studies graduate student, terminal degree (MFA/PhD)
- 1 Philosophy/Aesthetics graduate student (terminal PhD degree)
- 1 Emerging Dance Studies scholar (within 7 years of graduation)
- 1 Emerging Philosophy/Aesthetics scholar (within 7 years of graduation)

Please submit your application for 1 specific scholarship category, including your name (with return email contact information); 100-150 word biography; current affiliation, including year in academic program, year in current appointment, or independent status; and, based on workshop descriptions, a 200-word statement of interest articulating 2 separate research questions for further inquiry

Submit to: DSA Pre-conference Workshop Scholarship application
c/o Jeff Friedman, Associate Professor of Dance Studies
Dance Department, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University
jfdance@mgsa.rutgers.edu

Deadline: June 1, 2021

Notification: June 30, 2021