September 26, 2018

Dear WACD Community,

Welcome, Freshmen! Welcome, Transfers! Welcome, new M.F.A. and PhD students! And a hearty welcome to our returning students and faculty. I hope you have had a productive, rejuvenating summer and are ready to dive into a challenging year full of new experiences, ideas and colleagues. I know I am.

We begin this academic year with a poignant reminder of the preciousness of life and the urgency of our work. Professor Mary “Polly” Nooter Roberts, our dear friend, colleague and mentor, who lived and worked with stage four metastatic breast cancer for more than eight years, passed away earlier this month at age 59. As we gather this fall, full of inspiration and excitement for the coming year and beyond, we do well to embody Polly’s joyful quest for knowledge and discovery, as well as her ardent desire to share that joy.

This summer we said a fond farewell to our Undergraduate Advisor Hayley Safonov. Hayley held down the fort with her bright energy and warmth for 6 ½ years, and is now applying her Student Affairs talents in the History Department. Come back to visit, Hayley!

Meanwhile, we are thrilled to introduce LaDonja Horn as our new Undergraduate Advisor. Born and raised in South Central LA, LaDonja is a first-generation college student and the first in her family to achieve a graduate degree, a Masters of Student Affairs from UCLA. LaDonja is a well-connected member of the Bruin family. She served as a Student Affairs Officer for the Dean of Students Office and as Student Conduct Coordinator for the Office of Student Conduct. I hope you get a chance to stop in and introduce yourself to LaDonja. You can find her in the Student Affairs suite under the grand staircase. She can’t wait to get to know you!

You are not going to believe the lineup of guests and events in WACD this fall. I hope you are able to take advantage of this dynamic array of people and presentations. This quarter brings a focus on contemporary West African dance:

- At the end of Week 1, UCLA’s Center for the Art of Performance presents the legendary 74 year-old Senegalese master dancer and choreographer Germaine Acogny, who will perform Olivier Dubois’s profound solo, Élue Noire – Sacre #2 here in Kaufman Hall. You won’t want to miss this one! Students in DAN 117B and DAN 106A/406A will be treated to a workshop with Acogny herself!
- WACD is proud to host choreographer and dancer Salia Sanou, originally from Burkina Faso, as our inaugural Alma Hawkins Memorial Chair. Salia has received awards from Association...
Française and the Trophée Cultures France des Créateurs Sans Frontiers. He was voted 2003 artist of the year by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, and was named an officer in the order of Arts and Letters by the French Ministry of Culture. Salia founded the Centre de Développement Chorégraphique La Termitière in Burkina Faso, and the dance company Mouvements PerpOtuels. In 2008, he authored the book *Afrique, danse contemporaine*, published jointly by the Cercle d’art and the Centre National de la Danse de Pantin. Salia will be presenting an evening of his work on Thursday, October 25 in Kaufman Hall. Details to come! **There are still a few spots left in Salia’s courses, WL ARTS 174A and DAN 117C. I strongly encourage you (grads and undergrads) to grab them while you can. Don’t miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work with this world-renowned artist.**

- We welcome West African dance instructor, **Aimée Wodobode**. Born in the Central African Republic and raised in Paris, Aimée studied the performing arts at the University of Paris XII. She performed in Bill T. Jones’s critically acclaimed musical, *Fela*, off-Broadway, on Broadway, in Africa, Europe and around the United States.

- And finally, watch for the **African Epistemologies Sacred Movement Workshop** on Fri Oct 26, time TBD, presented by **Katherine Smith** with guest artist **Yanique Hume**.

We’re also looking forward to:

- Israeli Dance Studies scholar **Hannah Kosstrin**’s talk on *Honest Bodies: Methods for Transnational Dance Analysis* on October 9 (organized by PhD candidate **Melissa Melpignano**)

- On October 24, a screening of *Beauty Bites Beast*, a documentary on empowerment self-defense, followed by panel discussion and reception, hosted by **Prof Janet O’Shea**

- **Ten Questions**, both a course and a series of public events, takes place every Tuesday 6:30-8:30 p.m. in Kaufman Hall. Created and curated by WACD Prof and Associate Dean **Victoria Marks**, and hosted by School of Arts and Architecture Dean **Brett Steele**, Ten Questions features conversations with leading scholars from across the University. Every Tuesday evening for ten weeks, four UCLA faculty members from disciplines as diverse as dance, medicine, photography, astrophysics, athletics, Chicana/o studies, law, philosophy, religious studies, and more will join Dean Brett Steele to explore one question each week, stimulating dialogue and exchange, and seeding a greater understanding of the profoundly interdisciplinary nature of knowledge production in the 21st century.

...And all that is in addition to our usual fall happenings, such as **AGHC’s World AIDS Day** event, **showings of WAC and Dance student work**, and much, much more.

This year, WACD is proud to welcome two professors to our full-time faculty: **Tria Blu Wakpa** is a scholar and practitioner of Indigenous contemporary dance, North American Hand Talk (Indigenous sign language), martial arts, and yoga. Her research combines community-based, Indigenous and feminist methodologies with critical race theories to examine the politics and practices of dance and embodiment historically and contemporarily in
educational and carceral institutions for Indigenous peoples. Tria will begin her teaching duties this winter.

No stranger to WACD, Bryonn Bain now has a joint appointment between our department and the Department of African American Studies. The son of Caribbean immigrants to Brooklyn NY, Bain is a performing artist and scholar using the arts and activism to build movements for justice, criminal justice reform, prison education, and abolition. The founding director of the UCLA Prison Education Program, Bain has drawn on his three decades of work in prisons to establish opportunities for higher education, the arts, and research in two southern California prisons.

In the midst of this whorl of activity, let’s remember that the midterm elections are upon us. Production Manager Ginger Holguin is leading our departmental effort to get out the vote. We will have voter registration forms and sample ballots available in the main office and elsewhere so that everyone can perform their civic duty with confidence!

And so it begins, a year like no other. Do drop by the main office and say hello. I’m looking forward to reconnecting with those of you I know, and getting to know those I have yet to meet.

Yours,

Dan Froot
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UCLA’s Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance acknowledges the Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (Los Angeles basin, So. Channel Islands) and are grateful to have the opportunity to work for the taraxatam (indigenous peoples) in this place. As a land grant institution, we pay our respects to Homuukvetam (Ancestors), Ahuhirom (Elders), and ewooshinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present and emerging.
Summer 2018
A Partial List of WACD Faculty Research and Projects

Tria Blu Wakpa is grateful to be a guest on Tongva and Tataviam lands. In June, Race and Yoga journal published her interview, “‘Yoga Brings You Back to Who You Are: A Conversation Featuring Haley Laughter,” Tria presented her paper, “Critiquing the Ommissions, Subordination, and Criminalization of Native American Martial Arts and Artists: Adrian Roman’s Tushka Homa (Red Warrior) System,” at the Dance Studies Association Conference, held in Valletta, Malta in July. In August, two of her poems for her completion of Empowerment Self Defense Instructorship.

Of the many projects AGHC has worked on, their annual performance of This is Bruin Life took place on September 23rd at Pauley Pavilion and was a huge success. Each year, the UCLA Art & Global Health Center, under the leadership of Assistant Director Bobby Gordon, takes UC students to Rio de Janeiro to study the methodology of Theater of the Oppressed in its birthplace. This year, 11 students from UCLA participated in the project, spanning from August to September of 2018. Students in the program studied Theater of the Oppressed with practitioners and leaders, while learning experientially about the arts and cultures of Brazil.

Congrats to Bryonn Bain for Los Angeles Theater award in SOLO PERFORMANCE, Lyrics From Lockdown, at The Actors’ Gang.

Choreographer Lionel Popkin’s new evening-length choreo-play, The Oedipus/Antigone Project, is inspired by the gap between two of Sophocles’ best known plays, Oedipus Rex and Oedipus at Colonus. The multi-media performance follows two outcasts, Oedipus and Antigone, traveling between lands and between plays, invoking topographical maps, a personal exploration of immigrant histories, and a flexible and at times farcical narrative, to question contemporary notions of displacement, exile and homeland.

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What have YOU been up to this summer?
Here is what some of WACD’s graduate students told us:
Check out this eclectic, far-reaching list of accomplishments, reduced here to the bare bones for brevity, but impressive all the same:

Shweta Saraswat became Digital Media Specialist for the Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA). She and her guru were awarded a grant from the CA Arts Council for Kathak programming in Los Angeles.

Amy Alterman joined the Lady Parts Justice League Vagical Mystery Tour for her fieldwork. The tour traveled to Bethlehem, PA, Charleston, WV, Columbus, OH, Nashville, TN, Detroit, MI, South Bend, IN, Minneapolis, MN, and Milwaukee, WI. [https://ladypartsjusticeleague.com](https://ladypartsjusticeleague.com)

Letty Bassart and her son connected with family in the mountains of rural VA. She studied Chican@/x literature and Latin American Art history during Summer Session C at UCLA.

Marianna Varviani choreographed Ahtikos: a dance of liberation for the Arc for Dance Festival in Athens.

Mika Lior continued her Fulbright-funded research in Bahia, Brazil. She spoke at the Federal University of Bahia's graduate Dance and Sociology departments, and taught contemporary dance for youth at the Pierre Verger Foundation.

Joey Navarette is now a married man, and is collaborating with husband Jobel Medina of Ate9 Dance Company on a series of solos to be presented in December. He will also present work at the National Dance Education Organization’s 2018 conference in La Jolla.

Supported by the U.S. Department of State, Christina Novakov-Ritchey studied Eastern European languages through The Critical Language Institute in Sarajevo. She presented a paper at the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) conference in Belgrade, and conducted interviews and field research for her dissertation.

Sanchita Sharma performed in The Lost Wax Project by Preethi Athreya and Pray choreographed by Mandeep Raikhy at Goethe Institute Max Mueller Bhavan in Chennai, and developed a new work at the National School of Drama in Delhi.

Jingqui Guan conducted fieldwork in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, while participating in the Jumping Frames Video Dance Festival. Her article Choreographing “ChinAfrica” through Transnational Encounter was published in the International Journal of Screendance. Jingqui’s dance films were presented at American Dance Festival, and at festivals in Santa Barbara, North Carolina and Portland, OR.

Emily Barasch was in artist-in-residence in Kassel, Germany this past year, where her most recent work, Hysterical Realness, premiered this past summer.

UCLA ARTS World Arts and Cultures/Dance