Dancing with Decolonisation
Weekend Events

We invite you to join us for a weekend of discussion on the themes of de/coloniality and movement practices. The following programme guides you through who is joining us to lead discussion through the weekend of talks, workshops, and practices. The programme will be held over Zoom and you can find the links below for each of the days. Some of the weekend programmes will be recorded, though workshops may not be to encourage participation. We encourage you to watch any of the linked videos before the talks, but some clips of them may also be shown during the talks. If at any time over the weekend you are having issues accessing events, you may reach out to us at globaldanceconference@gmail.com


*We encourage participants to try and arrive a couple minutes before beginning each day*

We also would like feedback from each day of events. We have one feedback form we will be using, though you are welcome to fill it out multiple times throughout the weekend, or just once at the end of the weekend. All feedback will be helpful for finding future direction and developing programming.

https://forms.gle/hgWQWyPBnAFDfYvk8
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Friday July 23rd  Zoom Link: https://bit.ly/3BduaGM
18:00-18:15 Opening (15mins)

18:15-19:15 Ayo Walker (60mins)
Dr. Ayo Walker is currently working at Austin Peay State University where she has become a leading voice on anti-racism and racial honesty and accountability on campus. In her first semester, Dr. Walker has set previous choreography on students, set new choreography on students, is planning on using those students as dance captains at a professional company where her work is being staged, had an article published in the Journal of Dance Education – the leading educational dance publication in the country ("Traditional White Spaces: Why All Inclusive Representation Matters") –, served as a manuscript reviewer ("Jazz Dance and African Roots"), and has been commissioned to write two chapters for an upcoming dance textbook ("Milestones in Dance History"). In addition, Dr. Walker has revamped the way Dance History is being taught at APSU, focusing on traditional dance spaces, their exclusion and "othering" of non-white innovators, and teaching the class in a non-linear format. This has changed the students approach to dance history and taught them important critical thinking skills, allowing them to investigate history through a wider lens and to make their own decisions based on research.

19:20-19:50 Community Connection (30 mins)
Community connection is meant to give us each a space to connect and relate with each other through the work that we are all engaging in around de/colonial dance. Designed to be a time to socialize, we will engage in a couple of different activities with others that will help us develop connections, feel comfortable in this space together, and start to relate as a community.

20:00-21:00 Phil Chan (60mins)
Phil Chan is a co-founder of Final Bow for Yellowface, and most recently served as the Director of Programming for IVY, connecting young professionals with leading American museums and performing arts institutions. He is a graduate of Carleton College and an alumnus of the Ailey School. As a writer, he served as the Executive Editor for FLATT Magazine and contributed to Dance Europe Magazine, Dance Magazine, Dance Business Weekly, and the Huffington Post. He was the founding General Manager of the Buck Hill Skytop Music Festival and was the General Manager for Armitage Gone! Dance. He served multiple years on the National Endowment for the Arts dance panel and the Jadin Wong Award panel presented by the Asian American Arts Alliance. He serves on the International Council for the Parsons Dance Company, and the Advisory Board of Dance Magazine. He is the author of Final Bow for Yellowface: Dancing between Intention and Impact, and was a 2020 New York Public Library Dance Research Fellow.
**Saturday July 24th**

**Zoom Link:** [https://bit.ly/3xKOeyl](https://bit.ly/3xKOeyl)

14:00-14:15 (Reorientation)

14:15-15:30 "Is it possible to decolonise oriental dance?" Naiara Müssnich Rotta Gomes de Assunção, Sarah Amawi, & Subhashidi Goda (75mins)

**Video Link:** [https://www.instagram.com/p/CAEIs0-nZRH/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CAEIs0-nZRH/)

Belly Dance, Bharatanatyam and Dabke are dances that fall into the essentializing category of “Oriental dances” and have their history directly connected to the colonial process carried by European powers in non-European regions. From then on, the dance forms became a source of much socio-political debate, ultimately turning into what is practised today, and continues to ask uncomfortable questions on decolonisation and de-brahminisation. As dancers, we share a critical eye on the transformation and adaptation of our dances to a more globalized setting and aesthetic, allowing a very problematic past to be buried as quietly as possible. Therefore, through our presentation, we aim to discuss the concept of “decolonisation” and pose the question: “Is it possible to decolonise oriental dance?”. We acknowledge that the discussions about this topic are widespread among academics and dancers but, many times, lacking theoretical depth and still in nascent stages. Therefore, in our presentation we intend to introduce the concepts of “coloniality” and “decoloniality” developed by Latin-American intellectuals of the “Decolonial Turn” (Grosfoguel, 2007; Lugones, 2010; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Quijano, 2000). We, then, intend to expose the connection between Bharatanatyam, Belly Dance and Dabka with colonial history and current developments and discussions regarding this colonial past of the dances. We will also aim to convey our concern for this silenced past through dance, presenting a performance already recorded. In this performance, we danced to “Alif Laila”, the theme song for an Indian TV show from the 90s called “Arabian Nights”. With this performance, we tried to discuss, through our bodies, costumes and choreography, otherness, auto-exoticism and the construction of stereotypes between these cultures. The song has been chosen, ironically, to show the influence of Arabian Nights in India, and yet the recent nationalism that wants to whitewash its multicultural history. Finally, we want to propose a discussion with the audience and other presenters of the following statement: “It is not possible to decolonise anything - be it our dance or our way of thinking - without acknowledging the intricate relation of our current practices with colonial history”.

15:40-16:25 "Abolitionist Kinesthetics: Movement Works in End Times" June Yuen Ting (45mins)

"Abolitionist Kinaesthetics: Movement Works in End Times" is a movement research that considers the relations between the social movements to abolish carceral institutions and the embodied movements to improvise freedom through dance. How do collective movement practices help us imagine and conjure a world after the end of racialised punishment, criminalisation and incarceration, a world without prison and police? Across 3 different continents and in 3 different time zones, 3 movement practitioners—June Yuen Ting, Jeremy Guyton and Shao Shin Frieda Luk—co-created a virtual space for shared practice to pose the abolitionist question to dance; we asked, what is an abolitionist way of moving? As the process of collective enquiry unfolded through movement prompts, shared resources and reflective conversations, we were also concerned about how to grow and nurture intentional
relationships amongst us under racial capitalism that values production and consumption over relationship. Amidst a global pandemic and following the international movements against anti-Blackness and state violence, in what felt like the end of time and the end of the world as we know it, how do we make abolition into our everyday practice, into our everyday relationships? How might movement practice be a kinaesthetic method through which we body forth these world-making relationships, guided by curiosity, imagination and experimentation? And how might we think of abolition as a project of decolonisation?

16:30-16:50 "Observation Room; How to be together" Galit Criden (20mins)
Video Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2VLyy-HiAKs&ab_channel=GalitCriden

‘Observation Room Project’ is a practice of slowing down, drawing its strength from the tension between the human subject and its surroundings. It takes into consideration the vital entanglements of one body with other kinds of bodies, where the performance work is performed, the kind of cultural history the space holds, the people who are performing, and the kind of knowledge they hold, therefore is forever relational and maternal in its perspective. The project aims to facilitate an alternative space, where there is no leader but a group of people sharing what they know, a space with no hierarchy between objects, bodies, sound, and audience – where alternative knowledge can evolve and new thoughts about people’s body, movement & freedom of choice can be learned.

17:00-18:00 Waeli Wang (she/her/hers) (60mins)
Waeli Wang is a movement artist, filmmaker, and educator. She creates interdisciplinary contemporary works interweaving personal, familial, social, and artistic contexts to investigate the human condition for the concert stage, cinematic screen, and alternative spaces. Her research explores the overlap between critical dancemaking and identity to transform and challenge unjust social relations while filling in the gaps of our collective memory. She is driven to make work that fuses movement/imagery, figurative/abstract, and the poetic personal. Cultivating community, experiential learning, and a dedication to equity are central to her art-making practice and teaching philosophy.
14:20-15:20 “Commodification of Human Movement in Digital Spaces” Jorge Poveda Yáñez, Nina Davies, & Benedikte Wallace (60mins)
In this article, we will describe the uneven conditions in which dance practices are being extracted and circulated by looking at how online gaming platforms have digitised and commodified human movement. The article will explore concrete examples of controversies and offer proper contextualisation of the legal obstacles concerning dance copyright to offer speculative courses of action for both dance practitioners and researchers. The first section of the text explores the issues of digitisation and ownership of bodily movement within virtual spaces by looking at notions of property, disembodiment and dance as a commodifiable object. The second section illustrates the complexities of copyrighting choreography through a critique on how intellectual property regimes neglect collective and social dance practices while pedestaling Western notions of the individual artistic genius. Concluding on a hopeful note, we will present alternative avenues for dance practitioners going forward by looking at how to protect dance as a digital object; the current existing initiatives to engage dancers in technological affordances; and the decentralising potential of blockchain networks to build new collaborative landscapes for collective making and circulation of creativity.

15:30-17:00 Practice Progress (90mins)
Addressing structural, professional and interpersonal white supremacy through body-based learning, Practice Progress facilitates our clients and participants toward sustained cultural shifts in their institutions, communities, and themselves. No previous experience in dance, mindfulness, or movement is required to fully participate in a Practice Progress program. Our critical work in affinity spaces supports our sessions working toward multi-racial coalition building which focus on relational trust and accountability exercises.

17:05-18:00 Debriefing (55mins) Feedback Survey: https://forms.gle/hgWQWyPBnAFDfYvk8
As we wind down our weekend, we hope for feedback and next steps in our conversations on decolonial action and environments.