

**The Dance Studies Association strongly and unequivocally condemns global anti-Blackness and white supremacy.**

The Dance Studies Association strongly and unequivocally condemns global anti-Blackness and white supremacy. We condemn the brutal murders of Black people. We condemn the systemic devaluing of Black life—a devaluation that steals and threatens the breath of Black people across the world. We acknowledge that our field has historically devalued Black intellectual and artistic labor, labor that has been and continues to be central to the development of dance studies. We also recognize the ways in which the academic dance departments and artistic institutions in which we work continue to reproduce and uphold white hegemony. DSA, too, is complicit in upholding these white supremacist structures.

However, condemning these systems is not enough; we must acknowledge that our field has been built on and benefited from white supremacist ideologies and practices, and perpetuates them in a variety of ways, even as strong efforts are made by some to dismantle them. For DSA's condemnation to be meaningful—and not just a hollow statement that reproduces the violences it calls out—it must be met with concrete actions aimed at transforming our organization and our field. To this end, DSA has been belated in issuing a statement, and the Board, which now includes nine BIPOC members, recognizes that this silence has itself been painful. With the urging of many Board members who called out an earlier draft statement's re-entrenchment of a white institutional lens, the Board decided it was important to take time to collectively initiate real steps toward our ultimate goal: the total dismantling of white supremacy and its white-knuckle grip on the dance field. Such change must begin, first, with honoring, celebrating, and amplifying the enormous contributions of Black artists and Black scholars to the field of dance studies. Fiercely championing anti-racist practices and measures in the pedagogical, scholarly, and artistic reach of our international organization is also urgent.

Affirmation of Black life and the dismantling of white supremacy are essential to the future of dance studies and this organization.

DSA will take the following immediate and long-lasting steps to combat white supremacy and anti-Black racism in our organization and in the field of dance studies more broadly:

- DSA will program ongoing events, provide public resources, and develop new initiatives that center, make space for, and empower Black scholars, students, and artists in our organization and in the field of dance studies at large;
- DSA will facilitate conversations on systemic racism, white fragility, white gatekeeping, and the micro-practical ways that racial liberalism and racialized capitalism stall anti-racist mobilization within the dance field. These long-overdue conversations will transpire among leadership and within the membership at large in order to hold the field of dance studies and DSA accountable for reproducing anti-Blackness and white supremacist culture;
- DSA will dedicate the 2021 annual conference at Rutgers University to the critical intellectual, artistic, institutional, and activist work of anti-racist praxis in dance studies, with the goal of rethinking what conferences can be and do—centering experimental and collaborative work—to dismantle anti-Black racism which we understand is compounded by concurrent health crises exacerbating already rampant transphobia and ableism. But these conversations cannot be merely contained within the remit of a single conference. DSA will ensure these commitments are ongoing and centered within the organization, our practices, and our events as we move forward.
- DSA will examine its current institutional structures, processes, and working culture to make changes that advance an explicitly anti-racist agenda, with transparency and accountability as guiding ethics. Wherein institutional racism is embedded in existing policies, DSA will change policies rather than being beholden to previous ways of working.
- DSA will continue ongoing conversations surrounding how the white, anglo-centered, heteronormative, and ableist culture of our organization has contributed to the

precarity and significant underrepresentation of BIPOC colleagues in our field. DSA will act on our prior commitments to center historically marginalized groups in the field and organization, understanding that anti-racist commitments ought to also benefit and enhance access for otherwise marginalized members, including those in non-English speaking countries, non-continuing faculty, differently-abled/disabled members, LGBTQIA+, elderly, and others whom our programming has thus far not prioritized.

- DSA will commit material and human resources to the deep, sustainable, and long-term fulfillment of the above goals, regarding the intentional redistribution of institutional resources as a necessary and central aspect of fulfilling the core mission of our organization and serving the field of dance studies.

We will undergo the above work while we, in the spirit of mutual accountability, call on dance departments to commit to hire, retain, tenure, and pay Black faculty equitably. This requires supporting Black faculty beyond their capacity to "increase institutional diversity" or fill adjunct positions. This requires a regard for African diasporic dance epistemologies not as electives to dance studies curricula but as an irrefutable foundation. Hiring Black faculty solely in contingent positions is unacceptable; tenure-track lines must be created or replaced to support Black faculty and Black dance at the structural level.

Members of the DSA Board, Standing Committees, and its Executive Director will be communicating through email, social media platforms, and on its website over the next several months to share concrete plans and progress made toward the above goals. We envision this as a deeply intentional and likely imperfect process that will engage our entire membership. DSA embraces this imperfection—knowing we are far more committed to anti-racist work than we are to a dangerous promise of perfection. Care, matched with an openness to being critiqued, is necessary to the enormity of the charge at hand. DSA welcomes contributions and input from all members of the dance studies community, at any time and in all forms, as we work together in this process toward our shared goal of a truly equitable future. While collaborative work demands more time, energy, and engagement than a single-authorship model, it provides necessary opportunity for a collective vision. Indeed it is this very spirit of coalitional thinking and action that has produced this statement, written collectively by Board members and staff.

Signed,

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