

My research agenda is grounded in embodied practice and my interest in dance as a social text, making connections to issues of race, gender, and sexuality while bringing awareness to equity and inclusion. It centers on presentation, publication, and campus conversations interrogating how minority bodies are perceived in public space, in performance, and in academia. I am committed to exploring interdisciplinary approaches to my scholarship and teaching, and work toward having my students consider dance within larger historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts. My current research project, titled *Digital Activism: Black Bodies Reclaiming Public Space*, combines the disciplines of dance, movement analysis, literary criticism, social psychology, and anthropology.

I utilize my skills in academic and popular writing formats while leveraging online delivery to ensure the most egalitarian distribution of my research findings. The *Digital Activism* project highlights my experience as an arts administrator, curator, and thought leader within the dance community. For this project I will view and review notable performances as well as conduct “talk back” sessions between black artists and a variety of audiences. My intent is to extend these conversations beyond academic circles, researching and documenting black performance artists and new trends emerging within the North American dance community. I will conduct in-person interviews with established and emerging artists<sup>1</sup> - in some cases, artists will be invited to the KSU campus as part of the residency and commissioning process I have developed through The Kent Dance Ensemble.

Dance and new media artist Megan Young has already begun developing an online portal for distribution of early stage documentation, interviews, and calls for participation. This work in arts activism and digital distribution will be presented in summer 2018 as part of the Open Engagement Conference in New York with the goal of identifying additional key partners.

I have earned distinctions on a national scale in a number of arenas. My most recent achievements include: a commission award and scholar-in-residence appointment at the Ammerman Center for Arts & Technology / 2018 Biennial Symposium at Connecticut College (Award amount - \$3500); a juried presentation in the internationally recognized series - The Current Sessions in New York, NY in August 2017; a curated performance at SPACES Gallery in Cleveland as part of the First 100+ Days exhibition in June 2017. I have been invited to present my research project titled *Digital Activism: Black Bodies Reclaiming Public Spaces* in the Open Engagement conference in New York this summer in May 2018. I am currently an invited artist

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<sup>1</sup> Nic Kay, Jessica Pretty, Miguel Gutierrez, Boychild, Yve Laris Cohen, Keith Hennessy, Marissa Perel, Marguerite Hemmings

as part of the Landings Residency at Gibney Dance Center (New York, NY) where I work to augment my research —This work is being conducted in collaboration with BESSIE award winning dance artists Ishmael Houston-Jones, Okwui Okpokwasili, and Miguel Gutierrez.

Recently, I was nominated for a Governor’s Award for the Arts in Ohio.

I have participated in numerous collaborative research projects on campus, as well. I am primary artist/researcher for The Performance of Pan African Tales (a \$5000 Catalyst Grant awarded project) developed with KSU faculty members Tameka Ellington, Jakyung Seo, Janine Tiffie, Nicholas Drashner, and Dr. Babacar M’Baye. My choreography performed by KSU student Austin Coats was recently presented in The International Association of Blacks in Dance conference in Los Angeles, CA in January of this year. As [Artistic Director of the Kent State Dance Ensemble](#), I have developed a guest artist program, producing a concert this spring featuring seven new works by national and internationally recognized choreographers. Five of the seven guests were artists of color, further demonstrating my commitment to diverse representation and increasing the visibility of black voices and aesthetics within the campus community. Bringing these artists and their work to campus was achieved through my fundraising initiative, Broadway Voices, which raised over \$7,000. I have secured the support of key collaborators and am actively working to identify future partners for such activities.

As noted above, my work seeks to contextualize black dance aesthetics and cultural signifiers through research, writing, and public presentation locally and nationally. To this end I have hosted informal talk back sessions on campus with the above mentioned guest artists and our dance majors. Additionally, I have shared my personal perspectives and research through presenting a “[Ted Talk](#)” as part of TedX KentState. My writing and research considering critical race, gender, and sexuality studies are presented in my ongoing publications in THINKingDANCE, The Dance Enthusiast, and BillyPen publications. One such work has earned international recognition through inclusion in U.S. Department of Arts & Culture’s new resource guide, “Art Became Oxygen”. My articles, titled *When Dance Voices Protest* and *nora chipaumire’s portraits of myself as my father: Memories of My Own Father* are included in a chapter of Society of Dance History Scholars’ Journal “Conversations across the field of Dance” and the *Art is Matter* anthology, respectively. Additionally, part of my service to the field involves my work as a book reviewer for the journal Choice Review, the go-to source for librarians seeking worthwhile new titles for their collections.

Kent State students benefit from my unique combination of world-class training, performance experience, and individualized lessons developed for my courses. For instance, I have actively supported the “student first” endeavor, by inviting the Co-Director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre to conduct a private audition for the dance majors at Kent State, by

spearheading a dance senior trip to New York City and by escorting Austin Coats to this year's International Association of Black in Dance Conference in Los Angeles, where he performed my choreography "Vital Grace."

My methodologies include studio-based practice and performance paired with historical research and writing on current developments. My work over the past two years at Kent has helped focus my upcoming project and three of my goals are to host a curated event at Kent State University, publish my finding in Dance Chronicle and Movement Dance Research, and continued development of the on-line dialogue.