

## **Research Statement**

### **Gregory King, MFA**

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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 towards having my students consider dance within larger historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts. My scholarship purposely and strategically informs my choreography and pedagogy. I have great interest in upsetting traditional hierarchies in dance, on the stage and the page. Each project I undertake involves a three-pronged approach to inquiry; pedagogy, choreography, and research – simultaneously exploring the topic in the classroom, while creating original work for the stage and investigating through the written word. My role is as the conduit to learning, not the container of knowledge.

**Current Research Interests: Social-engaged practice and interdisciplinary collaborations; Race in Higher Educations; Curriculum and Instruction; Cultural Exchange and Movement Making; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Education Through the Lens of Otherness.**

I utilize my skills in academic and popular writing formats while leveraging online delivery to ensure the most egalitarian distribution of my research findings. My current research project *Tenure and Race: Faculty of Color Navigating Higher Education*, in relations to Performance, utilizes the scholarship of critical race, gender, and sexuality studies, as it contextualizes the relevance of black aesthetics and cultural signifiers as devices for existing, and educating in academic spaces. It examines public theatre, dance, and performance art demonstrations by employing analytic tools from movement analysis, social psychology, and anthropology. My research is grounded in the research foundations of autoethnography, and phenomenology, drawing especially from recorded investigations of race and queer theorists. The embodied practices considered in my research were analyzed through the lens of communication scholar Julie-Ann Scott whose work centers around performance narrative research and pedagogy. My intent is to extend these conversations beyond academic circles, to augment a more global discourse.

My work is directly supported through my appointment as a 2019-2020 Provost Faculty Associate, by the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the Provost's Office at Kent State University.

Because of the diversity of people, ideas, and issues in my life and work, I am committed to interdisciplinarity. I am interested in total theatre and inclusivity. I work with diverse individuals who are part of the rich world in which I live; it helps make my research multifaceted. I believe

art can serve as a vehicle to express points of view that cause one to pause, to consider and reconsider one's position/s, and sometimes to laugh at the ridiculousness of it all. I believe art, in its clearest expression, demonstrates a difference and simultaneously the unity of experiences. I want to get dirty, question and celebrate conflicted, complicated, glorious lives fully lived.

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; 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; an invited residency from by the San Francisco Public Library; and Transformer Station in Cleveland. I have been invited to present my current research project at The Moving Forward Symposium at New York University, The Collegium for African Diasporic Dance at Duke University, and the OhioDance Festival at Ohio State University.

Recently, I was nominated for a Governor's Award for the Arts in Ohio, was the recipient of the Creative Contribution Award at Kent, and a Faculty Recognition Award.

Discontent with conventional solitary approaches to dance, I have recently sought opportunities to expand my practice through collaborative partnerships. By working with fellow artists, scholars, musicians, and social scientists, I have discovered fertile ground in which to engage in trans-disciplinary topics, learn and apply new research methods, and question assumed values of the dance discipline.

I have participated in numerous collaborative research projects. I was the choreographer / researcher for *The Performance of Pan African Tales* (a \$5000 Catalyst Grant awarded project) developed with KSU faculty members Tameka Ellington (Fashion), Jakyung Seo (Theatre Tech), Janine Tiffie (Ethnomusicology), Nicholas Drashner (Sound Production), and Dr. Babacar M'Baye (Africana Studies). I have also collaborated with Megan Young, media specialist on *Cloud of Whiteness*, an interactive installation and performance piece that was presented as a microcosm of our current and trans-historical political climate, and with Saxophonist Chris Coles on *The Nine Lives Project* (a \$45, 000 Grant from the Knight Foundation), an interdisciplinary multi-movement suite intended to heighten awareness of ongoing racial injustice in America, inspired by the Charleston church shooting in 2015.

Aesthetically, my work is connected to my Jamaican roots and my lifelong exposure to space, people, and customs of my life in America. I am drawn to the unique vernacular language and tradition of storytelling that exist here. While my artistic practice includes a myriad of dance related references, my work is consistently imbued with my personal history and identity of place. With each project my choice of process and craft serve greater content and conceptual goals while actively questioning assumed values in historical performing arts discourse and engaging in social, political, or cultural critique.

I have shared my personal perspectives and research through presenting a "Ted Talk" as part of TedX KentState. My writing and research considers critical race, gender, and sexuality studies,

and are presented in my ongoing publications in ThINKingDANCE, The Dance Enthusiast, and BillyPenn publications. One such written work has earned international recognition, being cited in the U.S. Department of Arts & Culture's resource guide, "Art Became the Oxygen." Additionally, I 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 research. For instance, in partial fulfillment of her Master of Fine Arts degree, I was asked by Kent State Alum L. Taylor Ashton to serve as her Graduate Thesis Director. For this role I engaged with Ashton in in-depth research manifesting in a creative process, public presentation, and a written document. As her mentor I interacted with her throughout her thesis process, questioning, directing, and editing her research so it supported her intentions.

My research and body of work addresses the inequities experienced by marginalized communities and I hope it is clear that my methodologies include studio-based practice and performance paired with historical research and writing on current developments.

**Ongoing projects: *Tenure and Race: Faculty of Color Navigating Higher Education, Men Will Disappear, Dust, Cloud of Whiteness, Embodied Pedagogy, This Is Not A Body, The Nine Lives Project, ...Cut Me A Check***