

*Curator/choreographer/performer Jaamil Olawale Kosoko talks with Brenda Dixon Gottschild, whose scholarship on the presence and influence of Africanist aesthetics in American dance forms has made an indelible intervention in the genealogy of dance history and contemporary dance. Here they discuss what led her to a career of writing about dance through the embodied perspective of a black female dancer. Their conversation also touches upon Gottschild's most recent endeavor, the Coalition for Diasporan Scholars Moving; a nation-wide network of support organized to assist black scholars who have encountered racism in their attempts to attain degrees, tenure, diversity, etc. within U.S. university dance programs. This interview is Part One of a two part series of interviews dedicated to this issue.*

Date of Conversation: Tuesday, March 12, 2013, Philadelphia, PA

**Jaamil Olawale Kosoko:** I have the honor and esteemed pleasure of sitting with one of the premier scholars of dance. Brenda Dixon Gottschild is a cultural critic, a scholar, and author of four esteemed books: *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts*; *Waltzing in the Dark: African American Vaudeville and Race Politics in the Swing Era*; *The Black Dancing Body – A Geography From Coon to Cool*; and her most recent book *Joan Myers Brown & The Audacious Hope of the Black Ballerina: A Biohistory of American Performance*. Brenda, it is such an honor, such a pleasure to be sitting with you. Thank you so much for allowing me and us into your home.

**Brenda Dixon Gottschild:** It's my pleasure, Jaamil. I honor and respect the work that you are doing.

**Jaamil:** I know you foremost as a writer and cultural critic, and what I enjoy most about your work is how you use dance as a vehicle to measure society, and the pulse of society, what is happening in contemporary times. This is very much the course of thought in *Digging the Africanist Presence*. What led you specifically into this direction with your scholarship?

**Brenda:** I somehow feel like I've been on this road all my life. Early readings before I was even in graduate school -- my first husband passed me books when we used to scour the bookstores in New York; things like Lawrence Levine's *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*, and of course Janheinz Jahn's *Muntu: African Culture and the Western World* and his marvelous *Through African Doors* were out then. Those books introduced me to a world of diasporan expression and accomplishment that I had never dreamed of, that I had never been introduced to in all of my schooling, which at that point was undergraduate. I think that kind of stirred up an interest. At that point I was a performer in New York. I danced with various and sundry dance groups -- usually the only person of color -- like Mary Anthony, or Edith Stephen, or these "under the radar" companies.

**Jaamil:** Really, Mary Anthony was the under the radar? I guess at that time...

**Brenda:** Under the radar in the sense that she wasn't the Martha Graham Company or Paul Taylor. I wasn't in that stellar league of modern dance. I gravitated to avant garde theatre, the experimental theater of the sixties. I studied at the Herbert Berghof (HB) Studio from '69 - '72,

first with the incredible William Hickey, and later when I was pregnant, with the great and wonderful Uta Hagen. Students in Hickey's class were "shocked" to see a black woman taking on white southern gentility when I spent a whole summer working in class as Blanche duBois on scenes from *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Only Bill and I weren't phased. I was also a member of the pioneering group of the Open Theatre that created, for instance, *The Serpent* and *Terminal*. With them I had the opportunity to take some workshops with Grotowski himself.

Certain racial things happened, however, which made me understand that even though I hadn't really deeply experienced racism in New York, I was somehow still separate from this basically white, modern dance and experimental theatre world in which I had lived so comfortably. In 1969/1970 I was on a long tour in Western Europe with the Open Theatre. We had started dedicating each show to the Black Panthers by saying, "Fred Hampton was killed in his bed in Chicago, Bobby Seale is on the move across the country, Huey Newton is this... da da da da. We dedicate this performance to the Black Panthers." Well, I am the only black person in the group. Muriel Miguel is Native American, she's in the group, and everyone else is white. At some point, maybe half the group rebelled and said, "Why are we dedicating this to them?" Also, we were scheduled to perform in Algeria. A third of the group, if not more, were Jewish and they didn't want to go to Algeria, so all of these tensions began to erupt in the group. Upshot was, I was not asked to come back.

I left the group and my first husband and I began teaching at Bennington College. While I was there I directed a very singular production of Sonia Sanchez's *SISTER SON/JI*; a one act play of a black woman talking about her revolutionary life. The Attica Prison riot happened while we were at Bennington, so this was like 1971, 1972. Esty (my first husband) and I felt like this could not happen without some kind of response, so we did one of those moratorium days at Bennington. Bennington never had any kind of political thing like this before. [Laughs] We worked on white guilt, inviting up artists from New York like Willie Kgositsile, a poet, and other black artists, musicians, dancers, and what have you. We had money from all of the departments at Bennington to bring them in . . . and then I did not get rehired.

**Jaamil:** How long were you at Bennington?

**Brenda:** Just one year, '71 until '72, and by the end of that year I was pregnant. So then, how did I get into all of this? This is why I say that I feel like I've been in it all my life. To make a long story a little bit short, after leaving Bennington in '72 I become a parent to my wonderful daughter in 1973, I separate from that husband, I go back to graduate school at NYU just to keep my head together and to keep some sanity after a very difficult separation. I am introduced to Performance Studies, which was still the drama department at NYU. Richard Schechner was there and people like Brooks McNamara who studied vaudeville and minstrelsy, white minstrelsy, largely.

It made me understand that the things in my background that I had inklings of with *Muntu* and Lawrence Levine years before could actually become a course of study for me, and that I could contribute something to that course of study that any -- excuse me -- but any person who was not a diasporan person could not contribute. I had something different than them; not more than, but *different* than Lawrence (who became a dear friend of mine during a Rockefeller Bellagio

Residency grant I received to complete the minstrelsy chapter of my first book in 1995), different than Janheinz Jahn, or Schechner or McNamara, or anybody else to contribute. I could contribute to it also from an embodied presence. There was nobody dancing doing that. There was nobody African American doing all of the things that I was as a black female dancer/scholar.

**Jaamil:** And this department was largely white and largely male, I imagine.

**Brenda:** Definitely. You mean Performance Studies at NYU? At that point it was. This was before people like Marcia Siegel joined the faculty. I got my doctorate before they were there.

**Jaamil:** Had you experienced cultural bias being in this course of study that may have not easily been understood by your peers as it was by you?

**Brenda:** Richard Schechner was my mentor and guide. He was just open for it all. He was the one who was looking at Mecca and Maya (the Hindu concept) and trips to India and Arab lands as anthropological theatre. He was the person who influenced me, and was my dissertation advisor. People had thought Brooks should be because he does popular entertainment, but I knew that Brooks would never get behind me doing the kind of political dissertation that I did. Of course, Richard was fine with that.

**Jaamil:** So was this early dissertation the beginnings of *Digging*?

**Brenda:** No, actually it was what became the second book, *Waltzing in the Dark*. My dissertation was on this wonderful ballroom dance team, Norton and Margot. They are on the cover of *Waltzing in the Dark*. That's really why I went back to graduate school.

I was doing one of those SEEK programs at Hunter College where I was a tutor when I was still doing my masters program and had very little money. A theater friend said they were looking for tutors at Hunter College, one of whom was John Felder, who always had an interest in African American endeavor and history.

John introduced me to Harriet Johnson, an independent cultural historian who had a black theater collection in the Chelsea Hotel where she lived. She curated an exhibition that was going on in the basement of the Metropolitan Museum on *Green Pastures* and the touring company of *Green Pastures* during the depression, with costumes and ephemera -- this was like 1975, '76. Margot Webb was on one of the panels they had with some of the performers discussed in Marshall Stern's *Jazz Dance* like Ulysses S. Thompson (a legendary early vaudeville dancer) who was still alive. When Margot began to speak I felt this incredible *déjà vu* -- she too had wanted to be a ballet dancer, at some point she lived around the corner from where I grew up in Harlem -- so, we immediately bonded. I spoke to her after and asked her, "Can I write an article on you?" At that point I was writing for a now defunct black magazine called *Encore American and World Wide News*. That's how I used to get all my tickets to performances. I wrote an article on Margot for that, and that was why I wanted to go back to graduate school, because I wanted to write a book about her.

I was in a master's program at NYU; my master's thesis was on Bertolt Brecht and my interests were there as well. Then I knew I wanted to get a doctorate, because I wanted to write a book about Margot Webb and that became my dissertation. The world was not ready for a dissertation like that to be published in 1981, even though Richard Schechner praised it to the heights. He felt like it was really a wonderful dissertation. What happened was that unlike many of the graduates from there, my dissertation didn't get immediately published.

I got onto a totally different track with *Digging*, and that happened largely because of the culture wars. I was writing criticism by then for *Dance Magazine* and I was seeing ballet as well as modern dance and sensing that everyone adored Balanchine. But sensing also, again, with my always looking for the black in the white, that there was something else going on there.

**Jaamil:** Certainly.

**Brenda:** And what is it that makes him? He is the Americanizer of ballet. What's so American about this? That line of questioning...

Of course, there was all of this other stuff going on during the culture wars from say the late 80s through the mid 90s, and I'm starting to get involved in American studies. I start going to American studies conferences, not dance conferences, where people knew nothing about this kind of stuff. But when you went to American studies, every panel of the hundreds of panels would somehow be talking about African influences in da da da. It was through American studies that I encountered the use of this term "Africanist" -- I think it was used by [Joseph E.] Holloway. He had done an anthology about Africanist presences in American life. And then, of course, Toni Morrison's incredible work on literature: *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*.

I had role models, if you will, in American studies to support what I wanted to do in an embodied way in the dance world. I really feel like I kind of siphoned that information into my work, which then was disseminated in the dance world, despite of a lot of resistance I had from the white establishment in the dance world. It's out there now.

**Jaamil:** And thank god it is out there.

**Brenda:** Who would have known?

**Jaamil:** So we fast forward to the 90s and the aftermath of the culture wars, and you have been teaching at Temple University, and you meet your love. You begin a process of creating work that leads you into some really tough questions. Themes of identity and gender and so I guess we can say his name?

**Brenda:** Yes, Hellmut Fricke-Gottschild. Brenda and Hellmut. [Shows picture]

**Jaamil:** Wow, that's a wonderful poster.

**Brenda:** It's from Middlebury, probably in '03 or '04. This was on the cover of the Arts & Entertainment section of *The Inquirer*, July of '03, "Couples Working Together." We toured with this piece, *Tongue Smell Color* and again --American studies -- I was on the International Committee of the National American Studies Association in '98 or something. In all of the exchanges we were having, one committee member said, "I like your interventions, I'd like for you to do something at the upcoming American Studies Association conference." I told Hellmut and we decided that we would work on something together, instead of me being a talking head. So, for the ASA of 1999, in Montreal, we did the first version of *Tongue Smell Color*. (Just to backtrack a little bit, we had been working together before that. We did a big piece in Philly in 1996 called *Frogs*, which had nothing to do with the kind of issues we were dealing with in *Tongue Smell Color*, but Hellmut and I had indeed been working together for quite a while. The immediate predecessor to *Tongue Smell Color* was a piece we did in Germany called *Stick it Out*. We were being provocateur at that point, so you can imagine *Stick it Out* had many different layers and meanings.)

So, as I said, we performed *Tongue Smell Color* in 1999 at the ASA conference. Various people came including Holly Hughes, who was performing there; Shelley Fisher Fishkin, another very wonderful American studies friend of mine who wrote an incredible book called *Was Huck Black?* exploring Africanist influences in Mark Twain's writing; Susan Foster was there; Tommy DeFrantz . . . Hellmut, with his wonderful nose for creating the right atmosphere to move forward (he was the artistic director of his own dance company, Zero Moving Dance Company), put together a beautiful PR packet with blurbs from people who had seen it like Tommy, Holly and others. His friend, Beatrice Schiller, did this photograph. [Shows image] We toured that piece from 2000 to 2008, when Hellmut said he didn't want to do it anymore.

Audiences were hungry to have someplace to vent, embrace, enter and air out feeling around race, nationality, gender, memory, guilt -- those are the types of issues that came up. Frequently, following the piece (which is about an hour) we would open it up by asking people: "Can you please extend the performance beyond what you saw into your own life?" in other words, "Enter it where we left off." Then people would begin to say, "Well when you did that, it took me back to this," or, "I grew up in Virginia, and until I was five this little black girl was my best friend, and then my grandma said you can't be friends with her anymore because you can't wash it off." Crazy comments came from the audience in various and sundry places where we performed. The conversations after the performance often would go on as long as the performance itself.

We performed *Tongue Smell Color* for the last time at the end of a really nice residency Tommy deFrantz got me a couple days every week at MIT for the whole month of February in '08. For the final performance, Hellmut and I decided that we were going to do it in a different form; we would do a retrospective of it. We showed videos of various performances of it while he and I then talked about it and did some of it live. He's so creative, always coming up with incredible new ways to present the material. After that he was really...

**Jaamil:** I'm done! [Laughter]

**Brenda:** I'm telling you, the appetite. There seems to be, again, a new interest, in the age of Obama, in talking about race. I can see, again, that it's not about how little or how much progress we've made. The real deal is, it's never over. We need to continue to talk about this all the time. That's what I feel like people don't realize.

**Jaamil:** I agree whole-heartedly

**Brenda:** People think it's over. I spoke to somebody at DanceUSA who said that many of their members say: "We've been doing this for twenty-five years, why do we need to have a race sensitivity session at the conference on this now?" *Because this is America.* Condoleezza Rice said years ago that racism is America's birth defect. Coming from Condoleezza Rice, you know, I think she's right. There is always the need for this.

**Jaamil:** It is my personal belief, and please feel free to interject, that it is a conversation -- the act of the discussion is what influences and evokes the healing process.

**Brenda:** Right, and over and over. We can't say, for instance, "Why do we have these same questions about sexuality now?" Every generation has to go through it again.

**Jaamil:** You've been doing this work for half a century.

**Brenda:** Yes, I'm seventy years old.

**Jaamil:** These are issues that are cyclical; each generation has to combat them essentially.

**Brenda:** Combat and come back. I don't feel it's bad that we have to come back. You pointed out to me this very recent article in *The Inquirer* about being white in Philly, which allowed me to show you that in 1995, *Philadelphia Magazine* had a whole spread on the issue of race. [Shows magazine] And, incredible, *The New York Times* (this is in 2000) had done a series for a whole summer, pre Obama. [Gestures at a copy] And, I love this cover of a Hassidic man and a woman wearing dreadlocks in *The New Yorker*; 1993, culture wars time. [Picks up the issue] We are always at war, culturally.

**Jaamil:** Being in an inter-racial partnership, and a creative partnership as well, what have you and Hellmut learned from each other as a result of that companionship?

**Brenda:** One of the things is what we've learned from the world, and particularly with these performances, what we've learned from audiences -- again, in terms of the need to have a safe comfort zone for discussing things. Also, what we have learned from each other is in many ways, I think I said it in *The Black Dancing Body* or in the new book, that most of the time I forget that Hellmut is white. One of the things that we've learned, of course, is that love conquers all.

It's not that we are the same, we certainly disagree. One of the things, and I don't think people understand this so I will be careful how I say it: anyone who is white still carries racism that needs to be dealt with. It is foolhardy to assume it's over even when you are in an interethnic

relationship. Hellmut is smart enough to not assume that. He knows what he is working out. I know probably some people who hear this will be upset. Well, then are only white people racist? It has to do with power. Even though every white person doesn't have power in the sense of systemic and structural racism, these things of course can only be carried out by individuals; in that sense it is that white people have to deal with racism. It's not that black people have racism, though we may have lots of other things. An excellent book that deals with that subject is a book called *Seeing White* by Jean Halley, Amy Eshleman and Ramya Mahadevan Vijaya. They so clearly show why this is true.

**Jaamil:** This brings to mind the movie *Django Unchained* that recently surfaced over the holidays, which is a really interesting depiction of stylized slavery and racism. What I did see in there though was how the black body was engineered to hate itself, as was portrayed through the two lead characters, the slave slave and the freedman, Sam Jackson and Jamie Foxx. So with the power that Steven [Head House Slave played by Samuel L. Jackson] had, he was able to provoke this fear in the plantation. The only reason I bring that up is to bring up a racism that is embedded in black people that is a learned, systemic racism of self-hatred, essentially meant to break that community.

**Brenda:** Absolutely, which I think though, is very different from systemic racism and white racism. For instance, I get so annoyed when people say, "Well, you know, slavery wasn't invented by white Americans, there were blacks who put each other in slavery in Africa." Yes, so!? We know that, Orlando Patterson already talked about all of that. We know that slavery has existed as long as prostitution and rape. All of those things have existed throughout all cultures, but there's a very different heritage of it in America.

**Jaamil:** To change gears a little bit. I want to think about your current life as a Buddhist; how that has affected your writing and your overall take and how you approach mankind.

**Brenda:** Humankind.

**Jaamil:** Thank you for that correction.

**Brenda:** I would be lying if I were to say that I am a Buddhist. I can't truly follow any particular calling. And of all my many old friends who are Buddhist -- Lanny Harrison, Meredith Monk, etc. -- will not admit that Buddhism is a religion. But, it does have its rituals, its altars. You put up Rinpoche or whoever on your altar. To me, that is a religion.

The improviser that I am -- just as I improvised a new stratagem for embodied dance research -- I think I have improvised, from Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism, my own particular way of acknowledging my guardian angels. I've certainly taken from Buddhism, and I love Pema Chodron. I'm not in that sense a practicing Buddhist. I've taken some things, like when I do the Lojong teachings or Tonglen, I devise my own way of doing it, which isn't even how Pema would say you are supposed to do them. I find, though, that I am certainly grounded by sitting, but even when I do a sitting (now they call it mindfulness meditation) I have my own fashion in which I've figured out how to do that.

I still am very influenced by Christianity. I am involved now in the Episcopal Diocese Antiracist Committee here in Philly. I'm involved in the Episcopal Church as I was in New York because the Episcopalians that I know on the east coast are very involved in issues of social justice. I used to go the Episcopal Church in the West Village when I lived in Westbeth, St. Luke's. Again, that was a church that was really committed to change and this one here, not far from where I live, St. Martin's, we just had a reading group on Michelle Alexander's book, *The New Jim Crow*. I am working with them on various and sundry things. And of course there was liberation theology as well, that also attracted me to a certain level of Christianity. So, yes, I would say, certainly the idea of the 17th Karmapa, and who could not be enthralled by and revere the Dalai Lama. So their presence certainly affects me. I have my prayer flags all over the house.

**Jaamil:** Does your affiliation with this anti-racism committee play a role at all in spawning the idea for the Coalition of Diasporan Scholars Moving?

**Brenda:** No, actually, if I may, I'd like to address this Coalition of Diasporan Scholars Moving. Maybe early 2011 a friend at a university that I will leave unnamed, let me know about some obviously ethnocentric or biased incidents that were being thrown at her by her chairperson, which were obfuscating her movement forward, just on merit review, even before tenure. I went back and forth trying to give her ideas, then in the fall of 2011 Liana Conyers, out of the blue, emails me. I can't remember how she got my email address, but somebody suggested that she contact me with some blatantly biased, discriminatory practices that were happening almost to prevent her from getting her MFA completed.

I at that point sent out an SOS to senior scholars that I knew who might be able to help her. Halifu Osumare at UC Davis, Tommy deFrantz who was just moving to Duke, Yvonne Daniel who had been a professor at Smith and is a dear friend of mine; we all began to give Liana ideas. It turned out we were able to give her not only practical support, but spiritual support. And then, this past fall, 2012, I get this SOS from A'Keitha Carey who had left her job at SUNY Potsdam for obviously (I'm sorry) racist reasons. At that point I felt I couldn't keep doing this by myself, or just sending out these SOSs. This should not be happening in the new millennium, post-Obama, post-whatever, although we see what crap is happening in Washington now, and do not doubt that is because we have a black president.

In any case, that is why I started the Coalition for Diasporan Scholars Moving. An immediate onslaught of feedback came in. I sent every dance scholar in academia whom I could think of a notice saying these are the things that have happened. Also, around the same time I realized that the International Association of Blacks in Dance was going to be giving its 25th anniversary conference, so I sent a note to Denise Saunders the chair of IABD, asking if I could do a panel there with some of these people speaking to see what we can garner. Out of that came the Coalition for Diasporan Scholars Moving. We have two lawyers on board. It's not like we are going to go out and prosecute anyone, because of course we are really working against the system.

**Jaamil:** The institution...

**Brenda:** The institutional racism -- and there you can use the word systemic racism, institutional racism. But, of course, that plays out in individuals. It plays out in some individual chairperson who is giving you grief because you, as this new scholar, are so attractive to the young students who are looking for that kind of wonderful expressive energy and talent and research that you are bringing to the table. Just as I brought a kind of research to the table, these young dance scholars are bringing a new kind of understanding of what it means to dance and to have a company and to write as well. It's very scary for those people in power.

**Jaamil:** I know you have the mission, and I was wondering if you would mind just reading it aloud for us.

**Brenda:** I would love to. So, we had a wonderful panel at the IABD conference and the bullets in the mission statement were prepared by Lela Aisha Jones and Deneane Richburg. I put together the entire thing with the manifesto, so here it goes.

Manifesto and mission statement of the [Coalition for Diasporan Scholars Moving:](#)

*As movement researchers and performing scholars of the African Diaspora, we have all experienced some form of either outright discrimination or subversive, exclusionary tactics by the academic community. CDSM is our response to millennial-style racism in our supposed post-racist era. Like those involved in the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-20th century, we are resolved to be proactive. Our fledgling organization is creating a database, disseminating our Mission Statement, and gathering resources (including legal counsel). We welcome new members from across the Diaspora as we extend our base. A voluntary, non-profit coalition of concerned dancer/scholars, we do not collect dues or elect officers. We are a service organization, ready to "trouble the waters" in order to embrace our future fully and fairly.*

- *To offer strategic advice for Diasporan scholars and movement artists in academic settings*
- *To maintain a database for networking and announcements*
- *To configure an organized process of pairing mentors and mentees in times of growth and crisis*
- *To serve as an accessible hub for national/international collaboration and partnering for efficient processes of sharing resources and social capital*
- *To serve as a medium through which members can share experiences and advice, discuss best practices, and offer support.*

We can be reached at [cdsm@iabdassociation.org](mailto:cdsm@iabdassociation.org).

Thank you.

**Jaamil:** That is a very clear vision. I personally applaud you inaugurating this coalition, for taking the initiative, for seeing a need, and attempting to really fill that gap, that void, and create a space for young scholars to essentially have an outlet and to create community; to bridge those

who are in these esteemed positions of power and those of us who are not, but struggling to get there. Thank you. It's so needed.

**Brenda:** There is a little bit of mentoring going on right now. It's a service organization that kind of exists under the radar. But a couple of people have been set up, and again, I don't want to name names, but a couple of people who are having real issues with their chairs or universities have been set up with senior scholars who are at least giving them moral support. The lawyers on board really told us that the most we could do is mentoring, networking, and moral support, but lawsuits against the university, that's unlikely.

**Jaamil:** In closing I want to ask you, in the grandeur of your seventieth year, what may you say is your truth at this moment, and how do you share that truth and offer it to a younger generation of future scholars, and cultural critics and crusaders?

**Brenda:** That's a heavy one, and a mouthful. Interesting how you said it: what is your truth? I mean I wouldn't have put it that way. What I have had to do, whatever it's worth to other people, is to function as though I had nothing to lose. There are so many people that I see that need help. I mean indeed, the many people who never get an education and are out in the street and all of that, so why should I mince my steps?

My message would largely be, please move as though you have nothing to lose. Move from your gut and from your heart (and your head is someplace in there). You need to choose what you feel is your integrity, somehow things will fall into place. Putting one foot in front of the other, that's another thing. I never had a master plan. I didn't ever think that I was going to be what I call myself now: an anti-racist cultural worker using dance as a lens. I guess also being open to improvisation. And then, of course, my Buddhist sense of being mindful of the present and being present to the present. The present is a present, it's a gift, and we don't know how much longer we have.

**Jaamil:** Move from your center, move from your gut. It's sort one of the elemental instructions that we are given in Dance 101, Modern 101.

**Brenda:** And in Yoga, always working on your core.

**Jaamil:** Exactly, strengthening your core. What a wonderful final idea. Thank you for this moment, it has been such a pleasure, such a gift Brenda.

**Brenda:** Thank you.

Brenda Dixon Gottschild is the author of *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts*; *Waltzing in the Dark: African American Vaudeville and Race Politics in the Swing Era*—winner of the 2001 Congress on Research in Dance Award for Outstanding Scholarly Dance Publication); and *The Black Dancing Body – A Geography from Coon to Cool*—winner of the 2004 de la Torre Bueno prize for scholarly excellence in dance publication). Her most recent book, titled *Joan Myers Brown and The Audacious Hope of the Black Ballerina-A Biohistory of Performance and Race*, was published in January, 2012. She is Professor Emerita of dance studies at Temple University and a former consultant and writer for *Dance Magazine*, and she performs movement theater works with her husband, choreographer Hellmut Gottschild.

Jaamil Olawale Kosoko is a performance curator, producer, poet, choreographer, and performance artist. He is a 2012 Live Arts Brewery Fellow as a part of the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival, a 2011 Fellow at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and an inaugural graduate member of the Institute for Curatorial Practice in Performance (ICPP) at Wesleyan University. Kosoko has created original roles in the performance works of visual artist Nick Cave, Pig Iron Theatre Company, Keely Garfield Dance, Miguel Gutierrez and The Powerful People, Headlong Dance Theater, as well as anonymous bodies (a performance company he co-directs with Kate Watson-Wallace). He has sat on numerous funding and curatorial panels including the National Endowment for the Arts, New Dance Alliance, MAP Fund, Movement Research at Judson Church, and the Philadelphia Cultural Fund among others. For more information, visit: [www.philadiction.org](http://www.philadiction.org)