

HARVARD

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



THEATER, DANCE & MEDIA

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. **University of California Los Angeles, 2019**
Culture and Performance
School of the Arts and Architecture
Written Dissertation and Feature Length Documentary (95mins):
[*Living is Resisting: An Autoethnography and Oral History of Street Dance Activism in Los Angeles*](#)
Co-Chairs: Peter Sellars, Allen F. Roberts Committee: Bryonn Bain, Robin DG Kelley
- M.A. **University of California, San Diego, 2014**
Ethnic Studies
- B.A. **University of Southern California, 2011**
American Studies and Ethnicity (African American Studies)
Honors Thesis: *"Jerkin': Aesthetics, Identity, and Movement"*

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2020-2021 **Lecturer**
Dartmouth College, African and American Studies
Courses: #BLACKLIVESMATTER, Rituals of Breath: Black Performance & Resistance, Black Radical Tradition, Black Arts Movement
- Lecturer**
Harvard University, Theater, Dance, & Media
Courses: Street Dance Activism: Embodying Liberation Through Somatic Practices and Rituals of Breath, Junior Tutorial, Black Arts Movement to #blacklivesmatter
- 2019-2020 **Visiting Lecturer**
Dartmouth College, Department of Theater
Courses: Introduction to Theater; Race, Gender & Performance
Dartmouth College, African and African American Studies Program
Courses: Black Radical Tradition; Black Arts Movement; Introduction to Diaspora Studies; AAAS.089.01- Independent Study- Collective Un/becoming: Engaged Pedagogy as Praxis

GRANTS

- 2019-2020 City of Los Angeles, The Department of Cultural Affairs Artist-in-Residence (AIR) Program
National Endowment of the Arts- *Funded*, [\$12,000]

PUBLICATIONS

- Perkins, K.A. & **Bell, S.** (March 2020). "Esai's Table: Building worlds with our imagination." Program for *Nathan Yungerberg's*, Esai's Table at The Cherry Lane Theater, New York, Playbill.
- Bell, S.** (July 2018). "For Trayvon Martin, Skittles and a Iced Tea." In Levine, C. (Ed.) *This is not a gun, 31 objects, 31 days, 31 voices*. Montez Press.
https://static.montezpress.com/media/interjectionPDFS/Interjection-004-07_Cara-Levine.pdf
- Bell, S.** (under review). "Jerk Sisterhood and Jerk Femcees: Black Feminist Consciousness in South Central Los Angeles." In Brown, R. N. (Ed.) *Hip Hop Feminist Pedagogies of Renewal*. Routledge.
- Bell, S.** (under review). "Co-Choreographing Freedom Dreams while Dancing in Blackness." *Dance Research Journal*.
- Bell, S.** (under review). "Street Dance Activism". *An Introduction to Comparative Ethnic Studies: Decolonial Love, Knowledge, and Revolution*. Edited by Baham N., Sacramento J., Salomon C., Tran J., and Wilson A.L., Routledge Press
- Bell, S.,** Aprahamian S., Gunn R., and Park, M. [Special Issue CFP: Dance and Protest](#). International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM).

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Bell, S.** (April 2020). *Activism in 21st Century Africa*. Panel at Yale Association for African Peace and Development Conference. Yale University. New Haven, CT. (Postponed due to COVID-19)
- Bell, S.** (March 2020). *Street Dance Activism in South Central Los Angeles Case Study*. Paper presented at Humane Infrastructures, UCLA Conference. University of California, Los Angeles. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (March 2020). *Street Dance Activism*. Workshop at Humane Infrastructures, UCLA Conference. University of California, Los Angeles. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (August 2019). *Dance Work for the Commons: Actions, Interventions, Innovations*. Plenary Session presented at Dance Studies Association. Northwestern University. Evanston, IL.
- Bell, S.** (August 2018). *Revolutions in Pedagogy and Practice*. Plenary Session presented at Association for Theater in Higher Education (ATHE) Annual Conference. Westin Boston Waterfront, Boston, MA.
- Bell, S.** (August 2018). *Street Dance Activism with Shamell Bell*. Workshop presented at Association for Theater in Higher Education (ATHE) Annual Conference. Westin Boston Waterfront, Boston, MA.
- Bell, S.** (June 2018). *Street Dance Activism Workshop*. Dance, USA Annual Conference. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (February 2018). *Living is Resisting: Street Dance Activism as a Corporeal Pedagogy*. Workshop presented at Collegium for African Diaspora Dance, Dance Black Joy: Global Affirmations and Defiance. Duke

HARVARD

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



THEATER, DANCE & MEDIA

- University, Durham, NC.
- Bell, S.** (August 2017). *Spectacular Life: Performance, Resistance, and the Paradox of Black Agency*. Panel at Association for Theater in Higher Education (ATHE) Annual Conference. Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino, Las Vegas, NV.
- Bell, S.** (August 2017). *Protest as Performance: Political Bodies in Action*. Panel at Association for Theater in Higher Education (ATHE) Annual Conference. Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino, Las Vegas, NV.
- Bell, S.** (June 2017). *Research, Pedagogy, Activism*. Workshop presented at Mellon School of Theater and Performance Research. Harvard University. Cambridge, MA.
<https://mellonschool.fas.harvard.edu/blog/street-dance-activism>
- Bell, S.** (August 2016). *Protest as Performance: Political Bodies in Action*. Panel at Association for Theater in Higher Education (ATHE) Annual Conference. Palmer House Hilton. Chicago, IL.
- Bell, S.** (November 2015). *Living Is Resisting: Street Dance Activism in the Black Lives Matter Movement*. Presentation at the “Debating the Stakes in Theatre and Performance Scholarship,” American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR/TLA) Annual Conference. Portland, OR.
- Bell, S.** (February 2015). *The Battle: Fighting/Moving to Be Heard in the Movement*. Presentation at 1st Annual International Hip Hop Activism Conference. Minneapolis, MN.
- Bell, S.** (November 2013). *Corporeal Pedagogy: Haunting and Resisting Public Imagination*. Presentation at the “The Post-Thematic Conference,” American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR/TLA) Annual Conference. The Fairmont Dallas Hotel. Dallas, TX.
- Bell, S.** (October 2010). *The Jerk ‘Movement’: Aesthetics and Identity in an Emergent Youth Dance Form*. Presentation at the 1st Annual Claremont Graduate University Southern California McNair Scholars Symposium. Claremont Graduate University. Claremont, CA.
- Bell, S.** (July 2010). *Jerkin’: The Viral Construction of Aesthetics, Identity, and Movement in an Emergent Youth Dance Form*. Presentation at the Leadership Alliance National Symposium (LANS). East Brunswick Hotel. East Brunswick, NJ.
- Bell, S.** (July 2010). *Jerkin’: The Viral Construction of Aesthetics, Identity, and Movement in an Emergent Youth Dance Form*. Presentation at the Yale Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Presentation. Yale University. New Haven, CT.
- Bell, S.** (April 2010). *We Jerk*. Documentary presentation at The University of Southern California (USC) Writing in the Community Presentations, USC Ron Howard Theater of the Robert Zemeckis Center. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (April 2010). *Jerkin’: Aesthetics, Identity, and Movement*. Presentation at American Studies and Ethnicity Honors Thesis Presentations. University of Southern California. Los Angeles, CA.

Bell, S. (July 2009). *Krumping and Jerking: The Politics of Black Youth*. Presentation at American Studies and Ethnicity Honors Thesis Presentations. University of Southern California. Los Angeles, CA.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2015 **Graduate Student Researcher**
University of California Los Angeles
Advisor: Dr. Robin DG Kelley
- The Russian Revolution: A View from the Third World (2018)*
By Walter Rodney, edited by Robin DG Kelley
University of California, Los Angeles
- 2010 **Research Assistant**
University of Southern California
Advisor: Dr. Laura Pulido
A People's Guide to Los Angeles (2012)
- Summer
2010 **Research Fellow**
Yale University Undergraduate Research Fellowship
- Summer
& Fall 2009 **Research Fellow**
Provost Undergraduate Research Fellowship
University of Southern California

TEACHING & FACILITATION EXPERIENCE

- Spring 2019 **Teaching Fellow**
World Arts and Culture 142/242 Myth & Ritual
University of California, Los Angeles
- Spring 2019 **Teaching Fellow**
Dance 145 Hip Hop History
University of California, Los Angeles
- Winter 2019 **Teaching Fellow**
World Arts and Culture 79 Food Politics Cultural Solutions to Political Problems
University of California, Los Angeles
- Fall 2018 **Teaching Fellow**
Intro to World Arts and Culture
University of California, Los Angeles
- Independent Study Advisor:** Katelyn Ohashi
University of California, Los Angeles
- Spring 2018 **Teaching Associate**
World Arts and Culture 151/251 Ethnography of Religions

HARVARD
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



THEATER, DANCE & MEDIA

University of California, Los Angeles

- Winter 2018 **Teaching Associate**
World Arts and Culture Art as Social Action
University of California, Los Angeles
- Fall 2017 **Teaching Associate**
Intro to World Arts and Culture
University of California, Los Angeles
- Teaching Associate**
World Arts and Culture 104 Representations
University of California, Los Angeles
- Summer 2017 **Instructor**
Summer Discovery Program at UCLA
University of California, Los Angeles
- Spring 2017 **Teaching Associate**
Dance 145 Hip Hop Dance History
University of California, Los Angeles
- Spring 2016 **Teaching Associate**
Dance 145 Hip Hop Dance History
University of California, Los Angeles
- Teaching Associate**
Art and Moral Action
University of California, Los Angeles
- Fall 2015 **Teaching Assistant**
Arts Ed 102 Introduction to Arts Education for Multiple Publics
University of California, Los Angeles
- Spring 2015 **Teaching Assistant**
World Arts and Culture 142 Myth & Ritual
University of California, Los Angeles
- Winter 2015 **Teaching Assistant**
Dance 44 Dance World Histories
University of California, Los Angeles

INVITED LECTURES

- Bell, S.** (Nov 2020). *California in the 60s*. Remote Instruction Lecture. Instructor: Dr. Kate Van Orden. Harvard University.
- Bell, S.** (Nov 2020). *Dance Studies*. Remote Instruction Lecture. Instructor: Dr. Cynthia Ling Lee. University of California, Santa Cruz.
- Bell, S.** (Sept 2020). *Hip Hop Education*. Remote Instruction Lecture. Instructor: Aysha Upchurch. Harvard University.
- Bell, S.** (Sept 2020). *Cultural Diverse Language of Dance*. Remote Instruction Lecture. Instructor: Maxine Montilus. SUNY Old Westbury.
- Bell, S.** (Aug 2020). *Art as Social Action: Daily Abolitionist Practices*. Remote Instruction Lecture. Instructor: Peter Sellars. UCLA
- Bell, S.** (May 2020). *Race, Gender, & Performance*. Remote Instruction Lecture. Instructor: Dr. Robin Bernstein. Harvard University.
- Bell, S.** (April 2020). *Black Lives Matter: Arts Leadership, Theory, and Practice*. Remote Instruction Lecture. Instructor: Dr. Jasmine J. Mahmoud. Seattle University.
- Bell, S.** (April 2020). *Street Dance Activism: Joy & Freedom during Uncertainty*. Guest lecturer for Race, Gender, and Performance Course. Remote Instruction Lecture. Instructor: Dr. Robin Bernstein. Harvard University.
- Bell, S.** (Nov 2019). *Street Dance Activism and Radical Joy*. Guest lecturer for Theater for Social Change Course. Partnership between Skidmore College & Tang Museum. Saratoga Springs, NY.
- Bell, S.** (Nov 2019). *Street Dance Activism*. Workshop for Theater for Social Change Course. Partnership between Skidmore College & Tang Museum. JKB Theater. Saratoga Springs, NY.
- Bell, S.** (Oct 2018). *Co-choreographing Radical Joy in Our Movements*. Lecturer, Radial Joy Embodied: Shamell Bell + Seljani in Residence. Boston University. Boston, MA.
- Bell, S.** (Oct 2018). "Street Dance Activism with Shamell Bell." Workshop for *Radial Joy Embodied: Shamell Bell + Seljani in Residence*, Boston University. Boston, MA.
- Bell, S.** (June 2018). Guest Lecturer, Los Angeles Dance Platform. Invite only event. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (August 2017). *Move: Lindy Hop to Hip Hop with Shamell Bell*. Lecturer & workshop facilitator for The California African American Museum (CAAM). Los Angeles, CA.

HARVARD

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



THEATER, DANCE & MEDIA

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

- Bell, S.,** Aleskie, M., Boehme, J. & Sinno, H. (January 2020). *Session 1 The Value Proposition: Artists, Institutions, and Communities*. International Society for the Performing Arts. New York, NY.
- Bell, S.** (April 2019). Panelist and workshop facilitator for *!!!!PUBLIC ART Inquiries, Encounters????* Ramapo College of New Jersey. Mahwah, NJ.
- Bell, S.** (April 2019). Shamell Bell + Seijani in Residency at *!!!!PUBLIC ART????* at the School of Contemporary Arts Ramapo College of New Jersey. Mahwah, NJ.
- Bell, S.** (Oct 2017). Mini residency, public lecture and street dance activism workshop at Washington University in St. Louis. St. Louis, MO.
- Bell, S.** (March 2015). *Black Lives Matter: It's Origin, Reaching Back, the Present, and Future Possibilities*. Plenary Session/Radical Dialogue. University of California Los Angeles. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (March 2015). *#BlackLivesMatter, the Movement for Black Liberation, and the Role of Black Studies*. Panelist, Westin Los Angeles Airport Hotel. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (Feb 2015). *Modern Day Lynching: Black Lives Still Matter*. Panelist, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Law. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (Feb 2015). *Black Lives Still Matter*. Panelist, Cal State University Los Angeles. Los Angeles, CA.

COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS & INVITED TALKS

- Bell, S.** (Jan 2021). Keynote speaker Dartmouth's MLK Day.
- Bell, S.** (Dec 2021). Invited Speaker. Mirman Private School. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (Dec 2020). Panelist. *HHEX Presents: Making it Through 2020 with HipHop (We Gon' Be Alright)*, Hip Hop Education EX, Harvard University.
- Bell, S.** (Oct 2020). Moderator. Interview on *Rize* with David LaChapelle Williams College.
- Bell, S.** (Oct 2020). Interview with Tyree Boyd Pates. Ford Theater: Movement/Matters festival online
- Bell, S.** (Oct 2020). Community Panel *Antigone in Ferguson*. Theater of War production, online.
- Bell, S.** (Sept 2020). [Center for Popular Democracy](#) (CPD) and [Level Forward](#) "Transformation 2020: Popular Democracy Defined", online.

- Bell, S.** (July 2020). *Virtual PillowTalk: Meet Shamell Bell*. Jacob's Pillow. Becket, MA.
- Bell, S.** (June 2020). *Juneteenth: Black Lives & Radical Possibilities*. Arizona State University: Barrett, The Honors College.
- Bell, S.** (March 2020). *F(R)EELING: Street Dance Activism*. Workshop for Dartmouth College. Hanover, NH.
- Bell, S.** (Feb 2020). *Street Dance Activism Workshop*. Clark Atlanta University. Atlanta, Georgia.
- Bell, S.** (Feb 2020). Keynote speaker, Dartmouth's Black Convocation. Dartmouth College.
- Bell, S.** (Oct 2019). *Esai's Table*. Panelist, Briggs Opera Theater. Hartford, VT.
- Bell, S.** (Dec 2019). *Radical Love and Radical Joy*. Workshop, AfroPunk. Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Bell, S.** (April 2019). *Shamell Bell + Seijani in Residency*. Grand Park Our LA Voices festival. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (November 2019). *Street Dance Activism Workshop*. California African American Museum. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (November 2019). *Street Dance Activism Workshop*. Bowdin College. Brunswick, ME.
- Bell, S.** (September 2019). Invited speaker, Black Legacy Month Closing Ceremony. Dartmouth College.
- Bell, S.** (September 2019). Invited speaker, JUKE JOINT! Benefit for JAG Productions, *Esai's Table*.
- Bell, S.** (May 2018). *Making Black Lives Matter in School, Street Dance Activism Workshop*. Invited panelist and workshop facilitator. CalArts. Valencia, CA.
- Bell, S.** (May 2019). Invited panelist, workshop facilitator, and radical joy advisor. We Rise. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (April 2019). *Street Dance Activism Workshop*. Otis School of Design. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (February 2019). Guest speaker, Media Arts Lab. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (February 2019). Keynote speaker, USC College Access Day. University of Southern California. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (January 2019). Shamell Bell + Seijani, panelists and speaker, Martin Luther King Celebration. California African American Museum. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (May 2018). *Radical Joy Dance Workshops*. Invited panelist and workshop facilitator. We Rise. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bell, S.** (April 2018). *Becoming a lighthouse: co-choreographing our movements*. TEDxUCLA. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S597OmHhNU8>
- Bell, S.** (September 2017). Invited lecturer and street dance activism workshop facilitator, Smith Leadership Symposium. Balboa Park, SD.
- Bell, S.** (January 2017). Invited street dance activism workshop facilitator, Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

HARVARD

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



THEATER, DANCE & MEDIA

Into Action- A Celebration of Community Power + Cultural Resistance. Los Angeles, CA.

Abdullah, M. & Bell, S. (October 2015). Featured BLMLA, speaker, Justice or Else! Million Man March 20th Anniversary

ACADEMIC SERVICE

2020-2021	American Society for Theater and Research (ASTR) Executive Committee Member
2019-2020	International Black Theatre Summit Steering Committee
2019-2020	Nomination for ASTR- Member of the committee on Conferences
2018-2019	ATHE Black Theatre Association Member at large
2018-2019	Scholar in Residence- University Village Apartments-South
2018-2019	Student liaison to Asst. Vice Chancellor, Student Development, UCLA
2017-2018	Student liaison to Dean for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion School of the Arts & Architecture, UCLA
2015-2016	ASTR Graduate Student Caucus Founder & Co-Chair Peer Networking Committee
2014-2018	World Arts and Culture/Dance Graduate Student Representative
2014-2015	ASTR Graduate Student Caucus Co-Chair Faculty and Peer Mentorship Committee

GRADUATE SERVICE

Fall 2019	Director , Dartmouth student Stella A. Asa's "Bla(n)K Piranha"
2019-2020	Undergraduate mentor Dartmouth College - Stella A. Asa; Amadu F. Kunateh; Khymaya Perkins; Mariana Penaloza; Olivia J. Audsley; El Gonzalez; Kalé Camara; Ryan M. Lane; Natan Santos; Jason A. Mazard; Nicole R. Tiao; Devin T. Montgomery
2018-2019	Co-Advisor with Dr. David Gere, Independent Study- Katelyn Ohashi, University of California, Los Angeles
2018-2019	Honors thesis Advisor , co-advisor with Peter Sellars- Jackie Nguyen, University of California, Los Angeles

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS & AWARDS

- University of California Los Angeles, Black Excellence Award Recipient, 2019
- Sydney Peace Foundation, presented to the leaders of The Black Lives Matter Movement, 2017
- Peacemaker's Award, presented to the organizers of Blackout For Human Rights by Pastor Michael McBride, 2017
- University of California Los Angeles, World Arts & Culture Department Chair Discretionary Fund Award, 2015-2016, 2016-2017

- University of California Los Angeles, Jean Irwin Scholarship, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018
- University of California Los Angeles, Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Program, 2015, 2016
- University of California Los Angeles Extension, Transforming Your Community Certificate, March 2015
- University of California Los Angeles Regents Stipend, 2014-2015
- University of California San Diego, San Diego Fellowship 2012-2014
- University of California San Diego Competitive Edge Fellowship, Summer 2012
- Ford Foundation Fellowship Honorable Mention, 2012, 2013
- Valedictorian, University of Southern California, African American Cultural Celebration, 2011
- Leadership Alliance Mellon Initiative, Summer 2010
- University of Southern California Dornsife College Honors Program
- McNair Research Program Scholar, 2008-2009 Cohort
- Dean Joan Research Scholarship, Spring 2009
- Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, 2009 Cohort
- University of Southern California, Norman Topping Scholar, 2006-2007 Cohort
- University of Southern California, Scholars Program Scholar, 2006-2007 Cohort
- University of Southern California, Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society
- University of Southern California, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society
- University of Southern California, Mortar Board Senior Honor Society
- University of Southern California, Blackstonians Pre-Law Honors Society
- University of Southern California, Dr. Thomas Kilgore Honor Society
- University of Southern California, Phi Alpha Delta Pre-Law Professional Fraternity, 2006-2010 (*Eboard*)

SELECTED MEDIA

<https://www.dancemagazine.com/protest-dance-2648441874.html?rebelltitem=3 - rebelltitem3>
<http://www.latimes.com/la-et-cm-street-dance-activism-20170420-story.html>
<http://www.laweekly.com/news/these-savvy-women-have-made-black-lives-matter-the-most-crucial-left-wing-movement-today-6252489>
<https://mellonschool.fas.harvard.edu/blog/street-dance-activism>
<http://dailybruin.com/2015/05/15/ucla-graduate-student-incorporates-dance-background-into-activism/>
<http://www.uscannenbergmedia.com/2016/01/19/black-lives-matter-runs-on-girl-power/>
<http://bostonreview.net/forum/robin-d-g-kelley-black-study-black-struggle>

Featured Podcasts (Selected)

Busting a Move(ment): How Dancing in the Streets Became Civil Disobedience [Playboy Sex & Culture – Spoken Edition](#)

Episode 2: Two Docs Changing the World [Change Cadet Podcast](#)

HARVARD

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



THEATER, DANCE & MEDIA



BIO

Dr. Shamell Bell is a mother, community organizer, dancer/choreographer, theater teacher, cultural ethnographer, director, and documentary filmmaker. Bell received her PhD in Culture and Performance at UCLA's World Arts and Cultures/Dance department. She received her M.A. in Ethnic Studies from UC San Diego and B.A. with Honors in American Studies and Ethnicity specializing in African American Studies at the University of Southern California. Her work on what she calls, "street dance activism" situates street dance as grassroots political action from her perspectives as a scholar, dancer, and choreographer. Shamell's research examines street dance movements in South Central Los Angeles through an autoethnographic and performance studies lens. Her street dance experience includes featured roles in music videos, award shows, and tours. An original member of the #blacklivesmatter movement, beginning as a core organizer with Justice 4 Trayvon Martin Los Angeles (J4TMLA)/Black Lives Matter Los Angeles to what she now describes as an Arts & Culture liaison between several social justice organizations such as the BLM network, Blackout For Human Rights, The Undercommons at UCLA, among others. The Undercommons were featured in Dr. Robin DG Kelley's ["Black Study, Black Struggle"](#) article and wrote ["No Racial Justice Without Basic Income"](#) also published in the Boston Review. They are currently collaborating on an updated article exploring a Universal Basic Income and COVID-19. Dr. Bell serves on the advisory board of several social justice organizations such as soteria., a collective creating safe spaces at music festivals. She also consults for social justice impact in the tv, film, and music industry with credits such as "community engagement consultant" for George Tillman Jr.'s film adaptation of Angie Thomas' best-selling book, "The Hate U Give". In addition, she provides mentorship for aspiring

creatives interning with Grammy Award winning singer and songwriter Lalah Hathaway's #realmusicrebels. Shamell consulted as a member of a think tank for actor, activist, and rapper Common's philanthropic company, Think Common. She often teaches alongside her 9 year old son, Seijani, who focuses on meditation and mindfulness. They were featured in Common's supergroup, August Greene's promo campaign for their first single, "Be Optimistic". She and her son also serve as Radical Joy Advisors to "Contra Tiempo," a role created by the Urban Latin Dance Theater Company with a focus on healing, socially astute performance and community engagement. Most recently she is a recipient of a grant with the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) funded community development program called "South LA Promise Cultural Mapping." She was commissioned to lead workshops in Council District 10 at the Black cultural landmark "KAOS Network" in Leimert Park, CA that "utilizes cultural mapping strategies, ethnographic documentation, community gatherings, and free public events to identify and support the artists, cultural practitioners, tradition bearers, and sites that Los Angeles Promise Zone neighborhood residents deem significant". Celebrating her alma mater UCLA's centennial, she was featured in "UCLA: Our Stories, Our Impact," a multimedia traveling exhibit sharing the stories of Bruins who have advanced equity and equality in America. In December 2019 she conducted a "Radical Love and Radical Joy" street dance activism workshop at AfroPunk Johannesburg. In Summer 2020, she was invited to join the faculty of Harvard's "Mellon School of Performance Research" summer intensive. She also was the Activism Lead for [Future X Sounds](#) with a focus of bringing together a like-minded global music community that embraces the responsibility of their craft and leads by example while providing a platform for talent discovery and critical reflection. Dr. Bell curated discussions and workshops for social impact, and an online series to raise awareness, and funds related to COVID-19.

Dr. Shamell Bell, currently a lecturer in African and African American Studies at Dartmouth College and lecturer in Somatic Practices and Global Performance at Harvard University, and visionary instigator of Street Dance Activism (SDA), *envisions*, then *embodies*, the possibility of a better world. Through healing ourselves, through moving as one, and through taking it to the streets, she leads SDA with a mission based in *movement*. The Global Dance Meditation for BLACK Liberation began with Dr. Bell's dream, a clear vision of people around the world heeding a call, at the same time, to the same rhythm, in a collective resonance. It's grown into a conversation, a community, a journey, and a CALL TO ACTION. In October, she had a "Call to Action" to provide energetic and healing support, shift frequencies, and embody liberation during the 2020 election. Further, the Dartmouth students of Dr. Bell's AAAS 80.05 #Blacklivematter course, and the Harvard students of TDM: 181 B Street Dance Activism, ended Fall 2020 with a "Community Gathering" where 150 people gathered to shift the academy and embody liberation. After nearly 4 hours of gathering, relationships were fortified as they continue to move the work forward inside, and outside, of the classroom.

She also serves as the Social Impact director of *The Ritual of Breath is the Rite to Resist*, a collaborative project across a set of institutions featuring visual artist Enrico Riley (Dartmouth), librettist Vievee Francis (Dartmouth), and composer Jonathan Berger (Stanford), and developed courses with the explicit intent of bringing these institutions in conversation together, bringing social activists into the classroom, and the pedagogy into the streets. October 2020, Dr. Shamell Bell was also on a Community panel for an online presentation of [Antigone in Ferguson](#) that fuses dramatic readings by acclaimed actors of Sophocles' Antigone with live choral music performed by a diverse choir, including activists, youth, teachers, police officers, and concerned citizens from St. Louis, Missouri and New York City, culminating in powerful, healing discussions about racialized violence and social justice. The project was conceived in the wake of Michael Brown's death in 2014, through a collaboration between Theater of War Productions and community members from Ferguson, MO, and premiered at Normandy High School, Michael Brown's alma mater, in September of 2016. Among several

HARVARD

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



THEATER, DANCE & MEDIA

publications currently under review, Dr. Bell's editing the [Special Issue CFP: Dance and Protest](#) for the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) journal with Serouj Aprahamian, Rachael Gunn, and MiRi Park. In addition to editing a short documentary and collection of essays with her students on their engaged pedagogy, methodology, and praxis as they build what the students affectionately call the "Dr. Shamell Bell courses" (www.drshamellbellcourses.com) community.

In addition to academia, Dr. Bell also consults in K-12 education, teaching elective courses and offering dance education and social justice leadership development for highly exclusive schools such as Westside Neighborhood School (Los Angeles) and Mirman School (Los Angeles), a private school for the gifted. Dr. Bell also coordinates social justice conferences with their middle school students.

Website Link: <https://linktr.ee/streetdanceactivism> Social Media Handles: Instagram- @shamellbell @streetdanceactivism. Twitter- @shamellbell @SDanceActivism

ARTIST STATEMENT

My dance technique strengths are in the African diaspora, choreography, Hip Hop, contemporary, and improvisation. Beginning my professional dance career at the tender age of 2 in beauty pageants across the nation, dance has always been my lifeline. To combat the detrimental forces in my neighborhood of South Central Los Angeles, I was among dancers that would create international dance phenomena such as "clown dancing" and "krumping". I founded my own performing arts organization at the early age of ten years old with youth in the neighborhood and classmates from my advanced dance classes at Bancroft Middle School. After being discovered as a "clown dancing" extra on the set of Christina Aguilera's *Dirrry*, David LaChapelle would feature my friends and I in the clown dancing section of what we now know as the groundbreaking dance documentary, ["RIZE"](#). I would dance professionally with hip hop artists from Will Smith to Ludacris until I decided to dedicate my life to street dance and inner city youth as an intervention. As a lead organizer for the Black Lives Matter movement, I would use street dance as an intervention and become well-known for what I call ["Street Dance Activism"](#). My work to date has been widely received and shared virally through multimedia projects and interviews. I have been featured in [TEDxUCLA](#), [Los Angeles Times](#), [Dance On- Dance Docs](#), [BET.com](#), [Playboy Magazine online](#), and [Afropunk Solution Sessions](#). I am also mentioned in the [New York Times](#) along with several incredible choreographers in the Los Angeles dance scene.

My scholarly and artistic work are deeply intertwined, so I consider my engaged pedagogy teaching practice and documentary methods with my collaborators, our artistic expression. My doctoral work at UCLA's World Arts and Cultures/Dance Department situates documentary work with an (auto)ethnographic and performance studies lens to investigate how hip hop and street dance movements disrupt social, economic, and historical paradigms and presents street dance as an alternative strategy for radical social change. My dissertation, which is a hybrid of written text and a feature-length documentary film, is the first major study using an autoethnographic lens to explore both Krumping and

Jerkin' – street dance movements emerging in popularity during the early to mid-2000s in South Central Los Angeles. First, I briefly trace a genealogy of dance forms that address the relationship between hip-hop, activist performance and African diasporic tradition in Black America to situate Krumping and Jerkin' within a broader history; then, I explore Krumping and Jerkin' in the present, theorizing how these forms dance toward freedom, and the future. In particular, I explore the historical context and ways that Black youth use hip hop, street dance and social media as tools to contest detrimental forces in their community and mobilize against the dominant paradigms shaping their identities including state-sanctioned violence, police brutality, “gangs,” and conceptualizations of Black femininity and masculinity. I look at how Black youth in South Central Los Angeles make space within their communities through dance as an embodied cultural practice and storytelling. I argue that street dance movements should be understood as artistic, political expression. With direct immersion in contemporary street dance forms from South Central Los Angeles, my work offers an autoethnographic overview of how I developed concepts and practices from my own experiences as a dancer, choreographer, and community organizer. It also provides glimpses of dance in particular social-justice performance events, transcending pathologizing narratives of “gangs” while permitting people in South Central Los Angeles to speak for themselves. The documentary film provides visual material and first-hand accounts that weave through, and are inspired by, the written portion of the dissertation.

Five original concepts emerged in my theoretical formulations: Corporeal Pedagogy, Co-choreography, Street Dance Activism, Choreographies of the Oppressed, and Choreographies of the Liberated. My research investigates what I refer to as a corporeal pedagogy, or the Black youth's peer-driven alternative ways of knowing, thinking, and teaching that provides practical application of lessons for their lived experiences as well as a somatic healing modality and a form of spiritual transcendence. As an original member and choreographer in the Black Lives Matter movement, I take a co-collaborative approach, meaning that I decenter my role as an authoritative choreographer and scholar through collaborative work with “Street Dance Activism” as a method of embodied transformative change. Street dance activism creates a network of dance activists healing alongside each other, educating and taking on the issues of oppression, through dance. Finally, I offer “choreographies of the oppressed” as the actual unpacking of the systems of oppression through street dance activism that may lead to “choreographies of the liberated.” Both terms are inspired by Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* but emphasize bodily interventions and somatic practices. Across these themes, I ask, how are desires for freedom taught and learned through the body? How are these liberatory needs and expressions linked to African Diasporic traditions for today's Black youth? Using these techniques, we build on contemporary global performance through dance that reaches across the diaspora and inspires new ways of understanding the role of the body in activism.

I am currently focusing on revising and expanding my dissertation also having my co-choreographers update their embodied oral histories they created. I will turn my dissertation project into a three-part project that includes 1) an analysis of street dance in Los Angeles contextualized in the early formation of the Black Lives Matter movement, 2) a manual for Street Dance Activism that offers a tutorial for those who want to use Choreographies of the Liberated or Street Dance Activism as a pedagogy, and 3) a video that provides archival footage as well as my autoethnographic framing. The manual and the video reflect my investment in public scholarship; my research is also a tool for my social justice work as I strive to make my research accessible to activists and community members. This project builds upon the articles that I am currently developing for *Dance Research Journal*, as well as a chapter for Ruth Nicole Brown's edited anthology *Hip Hop Feminist Pedagogies of Renewal*, which is forthcoming from Routledge. In addition, I publish my work across different platforms for accessibility and continuing to use documentary and social media as a method to engage inner-city communities. My writing

HARVARD

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



THEATER, DANCE & MEDIA

collaboration with Cara Levine and thirty-one other artists, [“For Trayvon Martin, Skittles and a Iced Tea”](#) in “THIS IS NOT A GUN, 31 OBJECTS, 31 DAYS, 31 VOICES,” was published online by Montez Press in July 2018 and in print [April 2020](#).

My artistic, scholarly, and activist work informs my work in the classroom, as my highest aim as a teacher is to bring the classroom to the community and vice versa. My life experience provides a critical perspective that comes from my non-traditional educational background as the first in my household from South Central L.A. to receive a high school diploma, let alone a doctorate. I am inspired by bell hooks’ concept of “engaged pedagogy,” an extension of Paulo Freire’s “Pedagogy of the Oppressed,” and I take inspiration particularly in the way Freire underscored the importance of a “humanizing pedagogy,” in which the method ceases to be an instrument by which the teachers can manipulate the students because it expresses the consciousness of the students themselves. The crux of my teaching philosophy is to foster a pleasurable learning environment of engaged pedagogy, one that bell hooks would consider a “counter-hegemonic act, a fundamental way to resist every strategy of white racist colonization.” I foster a relationship with my students built upon bell hook’s suggestion of genuinely valuing each other’s presence and giving a piece of myself to my students as they do so in return. In doing so, we co-create an inclusive classroom where students can realize that their diversity contributes to the scholarly conversation. I encourage students to resist conforming to traditional models of education, thinking, and living in our world. Together, we dismantle the ivory tower and create a place of belonging for every student.

These ideas strongly influence my interdisciplinary approach, evident in my lecturing position at Dartmouth College. At Dartmouth, I taught the classes “Race, Gender, and Performance” and “Introduction to Theatre” in the Department of Theater and “Black Radical Tradition” and “Black Arts Movement” in the African and African American Studies Program. To help my students engage with the community beyond the Dartmouth campus, I began a collaboration with JAG Productions, a Black theater company headed by Jarvis Antonio Green in White River Junction, VT, to highlight our similar vision expressed in their mission statement “to serve as an incubator of new work that excites broad intellectual engagement; and thereby, to catalyze compassion, empathy, love, and community through shared understandings of the humankind through the lens of the African-American experience.” My students gained hands-on experience with JAG productions and community outreach programs. Their class assignments included active participation and a written synthesis of the world premiere of Nathan Yunkerberg’s play, “Esai’s Table” while archiving and documenting their entire experience. In order to promote community vitality and preservation, the final exam for both the “Black Radical Tradition” and the “Black Arts Movement” was a culminating event called “F(r)eeling.” There, students presented their final projects and participated in a poetry workshop led by Dartmouth student Agnes Ugoji and a street dance activism workshop led by me. Each of my classes involves Digital media projects and collaborations with my students including [story maps](#). Also, my student Khymaya Perkins and I collaborated on a review, “Esai’s Table: Building Worlds with Our Imagination” which was featured in the program for Nathan Yunkerberg’s play “Esai’s Table” at Cherry Lane Theatre. Collaboration is the bedrock of my teaching approach.

In honor of the now-deceased Dr. Doran George, for whom I was a teaching assistant, I would love to redevelop his course called, “WORLD DANCE HISTORIES- (Re)choreographing (Post)colonialism: dances of conquest, appropriation, and resistance.” The course speaks directly to my proficiency in contemporary global performance. In honor of his memory, I adapted my section’s syllabus. Especially with the global nature of dance movement and social movements through the dissemination of viral dances and strategies for resistance, I am excited to develop a course that speaks to contemporary global performance.

During my graduate studies at UCLA, I co-advised Katelyn Ohashi with [Dr. David Gere](#) in a multimedia independent study project based on the poems she began in my “Art as Moral Action” course. Katelyn surprised me and recited [“Self-Hatred Goodbyes”](#) on “Good Morning America,” after her second time going viral. We worked on somatic exercises surrounding “embodying joy” weekly as she began our independent study, anxious about how she would beat the defining moment of her Michael Jackson routine. She was amazed that journalists could pick up on her setting her intentions for [“joy”](#) throughout the routine. We faced a heavy decision as she cut the music of her Michael Jackson routine because it no longer sparked joy after the [“Leaving Neverland”](#) documentary. I mentored Katelyn on her social impact and included her in programming surrounding mental health awareness for [“We Rise”](#), a mental health awareness festival, where she discussed body image and I gave meditation and “radical joy and movement” workshops.

Mentoring students on their academic scholarship and artistic pursuits plays a pivotal role in my teaching approach. As soon as I arrived at Dartmouth, I advised Stella Amuzu Asa ‘22 on the development of her newly written play, “B.l.a.(n.)k. Piranha: An exploration into the sexual terrorscape of Black femininity,” for a Studio Lab production funded by the Theater department. We are currently documenting my process of directing and choreographing this piece to publish an article and short documentary that focuses on quotidian movements and embedding choreography/co-choreography alongside the text. My courses, the “Black Radical Tradition” and the “Black Arts Movement,” during Dartmouth’s winter quarter let me continue building relationships I had with students from Fall 2020 while also creating new ones. Students from both the Black diaspora and non-Black marginalized diasporic identities from all my classes at Dartmouth have worked with me on creating unique individual projects this spring quarter. In fact, due to the high demand of independent study requests, my students formed, “Collective Un/becoming: Engaged Pedagogy as Praxis,” where we are curating an autoethnographic book and documentary that chronicles our collective healing process and thinking through what is freedom and what happens the day after we achieve it. The Collective has also been my first experience in teaching the intersection between Afrofuturism and Quantum Physics and we are excitedly documenting our shifts in perspectives during COVID-19 and imagining the “Day After” that looks completely different than the intricate systems of oppression we currently experience.