

The Centre for Creative Arts (University of KwaZulu-Natal)
presents

Your paragraph text



JOMBA! MASIHAMBISANE DIALOGUES #4

22, 23 and 24 May 2024
(digital and on-line)

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

(RE)TURN TO THE DRUM?

Provocations in contemporary dance's
engagements with traditions,
cultures, memory, hybridity and
contested identities.

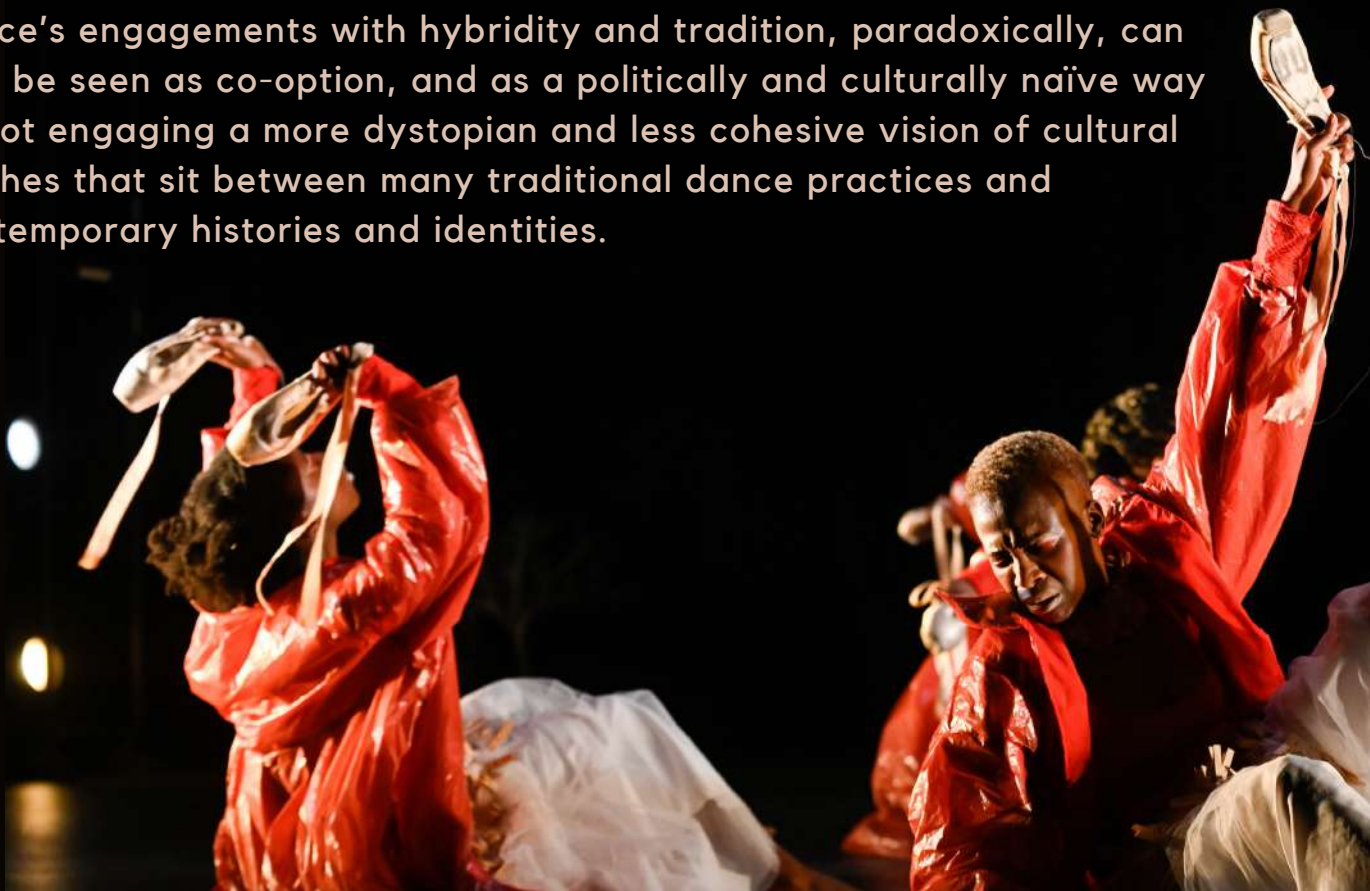
Vincent Mantsoe in "KOMA" (JOMBA! - 2022)
Photo: Val Adamson

(RE)TURN TO THE DRUM?

The fourth annual JOMBA! MASIHAMBISANE DIALOGUES, hosted by the JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience, sets out to engage scholarship, pedagogy, and practices into negotiating the intersections (easy and uneasy) of tradition, culture, memory, hybridity, and contested identities in contemporary dance making, performance, and scholarship. With the title '(re)turn to the drum', we want to provoke discussion with/ by/ on contemporary dance and its makers about how ideas of culture and tradition are being - and could be - negotiated and reimagined.

Traditional dance forms are often seen as a set fixed embodiment of cultural heritage and historical narratives. Passed down through generations (sometimes as oral traditions) these dances are narrated and embodied in ways that sees them encapsulate the often-nostalgic memories of past cultural values, rituals, and beliefs. Whether this is ballet, the rhythmic beats of flamenco, the storytelling of Bharatanatyam, or the powerful stamping of Ndlamu and Ngoma.

Contemporary dance, as a critical art form has/ had an unique ability to evolve, adapt, and transform and thus given rise to a dynamic interplay between traditional and classical contemporary forms – especially in the context of the global South. Often seen as showcasing the resilience and creativity of dance and dance makers, contemporary dance's engagements with hybridity and tradition, paradoxically, can also be seen as co-option, and as a politically and culturally naïve way of not engaging a more dystopian and less cohesive vision of cultural clashes that sit between many traditional dance practices and contemporary histories and identities.



(RE)TURN TO THE DRUM?

This said, cultural and traditional hybridity in contemporary dance has also opened up vital feminist, decolonial and post-colonial debates and discussions around inequity of access and non-symbiotic relationships between forms and process being used by choreographers and dancers, and specifically in programmes that bridge North / South collaborations. It has also opened up debates around cultural appropriation and how cultural and ancestral barriers are crossed, and by whom.

Also of note is that in contemporary Africa, many choreographers are 'returning to the drum' as a statement about identity and being, and we see dance makers draw inspiration from their cultural and traditional roots while pushing the boundaries of creativity. This (re)turning could be seen as both a reflective looking back and a profound 'turning' that understands that tradition can be reimagined differently in the present. However, contrarywise, there is also discussion that this 'return to the drum' is an artistic impasse or deadlock for contemporary African artists whose creativity sits within finding acceptability within political landscapes and the current popularist discourses that encourage a (sentimental) return to selected traditional values, heritages and cultures – a type of subjunctive nostalgia.

Of further significance too, is the contemporary choreographer's provocative engagement with spirituality that is often embedded in traditional and cultural practices and how this is navigated or appropriated in the now.

Robyn Orlin's "we wear our wheels with pride and slap your streets with color ... we said 'bonjour' to satan in 1820 ..." with Moving Into Dance Mophatong (2021)

Photo: Jérôme Séron



In this 4th annual JOMBA! MASIHAMBISANE series of dialogues we are interested in engaging the above myriad ideas and provocations and are especially interested in:

- Critical discussions in dance studies that engage/problematised definitions and debates of meaning within terms like tradition, culture, hybridity, and contested identities;
- Critical discussion/analysis of dancers and choreographers whose work; bridges/engages/confronts tradition, culture and the contemporary world;
- Critical dance engagement with feminist, decolonial and postcolonial challenges to idea of hybridity and cultural exchanges;
- How diasporic contemporary dance practices engage ideas of cultural appropriation, belonging and identity in performance making; and
- Critical discussion of, and by, dancers and choreographers using traditional spirituality and spiritual practices to negotiate/engage/confront contemporary ways of being.

Moeketsi Koena and Gaby Saranouffi (JOMBA! @ DAG - 2018)
Photo: Val Adamson



Submission of Abstracts

We are calling for the submission of short abstracts/proposals for consideration for inclusion in the 2024 JOMBA! MASIHAMBISANE DIALOGUES #4.

As part of this event's ethos, we seek to open up the modes of contributions, and therefore we encourage the following formats:

- The presentation of papers and new scholarship.
- The presentation of digital scholarship and praxis led research.
- Hybrid forms of presentation.
- Proposal of a relevant panel.
- Digital online workshops.
- And any other unique formats that can be suggested for inclusion, including audio and video formats.



Abstract Details

Abstract Length: no more than x400 words
(or in the formats offered above)



Due Date for abstracts: Friday 5 April (by 4pm)



ABSTRACTS SHOULD BE SENT TO:

Thobile Maphanga: thobimaphanga@gmail.com



Details Required

- Name of author/s and/or artist-scholars.
- Indicate TYPE of presentation (paper, film, discussion panel etc.)
- Short x200 word bio of author/s and/or presenter/s.
- Contact email address, and WhatsApp number of corresponding author.
- If appropriate, affiliation to any academic or artistic institutions.
- The final submissions (post colloquium) of papers/digital offerings need to be maximum of x2500 words or equivalent only, and delivery on-line is 10 minutes only for all mediums of delivery.
- We encourage excellent (emerging and established) scholarship without the trappings of long unwieldy papers.
- We will generate a digital conference proceedings/publication that will go through an editorial process so that scholars can get research accreditation.

(RE)TURN TO THE DRUM?

The JOMBA! MASHAMBISANE DIALOGUES

Steering Committee

Liane Loots (UKZN, SA)
Thobile Maphanga (UKZN, SA)
David Thatanelo April (UP, SA)
Sarahleigh Castelyn (UEL, UK)
Yvette Hutchison (Warwick Uni, UK)
Clare Craighead (DUT, SA)
Mbongeni Mtshali (UCT, SA)
Gift Marovatsanga (UKZN, SA)



Dada Masilo in "the bitter end of rosemary" (JOMBA! 2011)
Photo: Val Adamson