

Breanna R. Taylor

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“I know my work is not just for me. It is for those who have yet to realize the power of their presence.- Breanna R. Taylor.

EDUCATION

M.A. *Performance Studies, Black Studies Concentration. New York University. May 2020*
Dean's List: Fall 2019, Spring 2020

B.A. *Afro-American Studies, Arts Concentration. University of Wisconsin-Madison. May 2019*
Dean's List: Fall 2016, Spring 2017

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

Hip-Hop Dance Choreography & Performance, Kromrey Middle School, *Madison, WI.* 2017-2019

- Studied new and emerging dance movements.
- Organized student talent show to showcase new routines.
- Created performance pieces for students to showcase.
- Arranged costumes for students for the end of the year showcase.

Black Cultural Center Dance Class, *Milwaukee, WI, Madison, WI.* 2020

- An 8 week remote-based dance class to help cultivate and build community for UW-Madison students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Research Interests: *Blackness, Black social dance, Afrofuturism, Queer theory, embodied trauma, horror studies, Trans-Atlantic studies, transformative healing, Black womxnhood, fantasy, haunting/ghost studies, and social death.*

WORK(S):

● **Eventually, I Have to Breathe: An Examination of the Practice of Hip-Hop Dance and the Traumatized Black Body (2018).**

○ This study focuses on how Hip-Hop Dance can be used as an antidotal tool to educate individuals on the retrieval (acknowledgement) and release (healing) of corporeal trauma, or trauma that has been stored away in the Black body. Corporeality serves the purpose of explaining how the Black body is used as a primary site of information, while sifting through its interaction with trauma. Trauma, in this context would be the results of slavery and ill-treatment of Black bodies (i.e., police brutality, low-resourced and underdeveloped communities, restrictions on Black expression, etc.) within a US context. In analyzing the Bangin' dance scene in Milwaukee, Wisconsin among Black youth in underdeveloped and surveilled communities, the practice of Hip-Hop Dance to retrieve and release embodied trauma can be explored through this body of work.

● **MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY! An Analysis of the shared relationship between water and Black People (2019-Present).**

○ MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY seeks to explore the complicated relationship between Black people and bodies of water. In the spirit of something being lost below the waves, only to resurface again; I am looking for what emerges or resurfaces from this study to help make sense of how water has been weaponized against Black bodies, looking specifically at the Atlantic Ocean. The overall hope for reconciliation or healing becomes centered at the heart of this work, in which I revisit the time period of enslavement to explain how Black people have become a relic of the impacts of forcible and violent movement across the ocean. Strategically using the word "relic," I am making a connection to the zombie horror figure, understood and recognized within an American context, and complicating our understanding of the 'zombie' as it relates its Black past. The use of the zombie figure in this work also highlights the theme of experimentation/zombification of the Black person as it relates to enslavement, positioning the ocean as a site of experimentation. The zombie continues to emphasize the topic of embodiment and social death as it relates to anti-blackness. It is my goal to not

only bring about new ways of understanding the relationship between Black people and water, but how we continue to wade through death everyday.

RESEARCH CONFERENCES

International

Taylor, B. (*2017, October*). Hip-Hop Dance and the Expression of Black Male Masculinity. Poster presentation at the International Colloquium for Black Males in Education, Toronto, Canada.

National

Taylor, B. (*2019, May*). Eventually, I Have to Breathe: An Examination of the Practice of Hip-Hop Dance and the Traumatized Black Body. Poster presentation at the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program New Member Orientation, Madison, Wisconsin.

Taylor, B. (*2019, April*). Eventually, I Have to Breathe: An Examination of the Practice of Hip-Hop Dance and the Traumatized Black Body. Poster presentation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Undergraduate Research Symposium, Madison, Wisconsin.

Taylor, B. (*2018, November*). Eventually, I Have to Breathe: An Examination of the Practice of Hip-Hop Dance and the Traumatized Black Body. Poster presentation at the Southern California Conference for Undergraduate Research, Pasadena, California.

Taylor, B. (*2018 November*). Eventually, I Have to Breathe: An Examination of the Practice of Hip-Hop Dance and the Traumatized Black Body. Poster presentation at the International Conference on Arts, Education, and Social Science, New York.

Taylor, B. (*2018, August*). Eventually, I Have to Breathe: An Examination of the Practice of Hip-Hop Dance and the Traumatized Black Body. Oral presentation at the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, Symposium Madison, Wisconsin.

Mays, M., **Taylor, B.** (*2018, February*). Mega Mixtape Motivation Vol. 1: Creating Impact by Leading, Developing, and Giving. Oral presentation at the Pre-College Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence Retreat, Lakelawn, Wisconsin.

INVITED TALKS & APPEARANCES

Championing Diversity for Campus and Beyond Diversity Forum. Panelist. **2018** Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement. University of Wisconsin-Madison. November 8.

Black Cultural Center Installment and Officiation. Quoted on Memorabilia. **2017** Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement. University of Wisconsin-Madison. May 3.

Black Cultural Center Dedication and Libation Ceremony. Speaker. **2017** Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement. University of Wisconsin-Madison. February 28.

#UW2DC: History Makers Share Their Journey to the Smithsonian. Panelist. **2016** Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement. University of Wisconsin-Madison. November 18.

PERFORMANCES/ART INVOLVEMENT

“Salt, Fat, Ashes, Heat.” *Milwaukee, WI. New York, NY. Los Angeles, CA. September 2020.*
Director/Panelist/Graphic Designer

Creator: Eva Margarita

Producer: Mateo Hurtado

Stage Manager: Yarie Vazquez

Associated With: The Brown Theatre Collective & The Tank NYC

- In exploration of an archive of blackness, in everyday life, Eva Margarita’s ‘Salt, Fat, Ashes, Heat,’ digests the idea of consuming the other. Done through a cooking practice, this conjuring aims to trace the cyclical flow of gathering, knowledge, and mourning for black folks across the Americas. Taking an endo-cannibalistic approach, Eva Margarita resorted to cook three different entrees with her father’s ashes to not only honor his spirit but to show how communities pass on knowledge through a practice in eating and conjuring with another. To consume the flesh is to commit to its history and its (re)invention. Taking place over the course of 12 hours, ‘Salt, Fat, Ashes, Heat’ served as a journey in memory, flesh, and the human need to accompany one another in life and death.

“MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!” *Milwaukee, WI. June 2020.*
Director/Writer/Editor

- A short film analyzing the complicated relationship between Black people and water. I employ the ‘zombie’ as a way to highlight the social death and dehumanization the Black subject has undergone through the process/experimentation/zombification of enslavement. By positioning the ocean as a site of terror, death/worldmaking, and experimentation, this short film helps to make sense of how Black people continue to wade through death day in and day out.

“LIVING DEAD.” *New York, NY. April 2020.*

Director/Writer/Editor

- This project pushes to discuss the state of Blackness in relation to social death. Honing in on this concept of “social death,” I am looking to investigate through the lens of horror how Black people have/continue to live in at the threat of death day in and day out. This film is in connection to my project, MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!.

“CALLBACKS.” *New York, NY. March 2020.*

Director/Writer/Editor

- An experimental, non-dialogue film using irony to follow a character who is anticipating a callback for a dance audition, but their excitement is intercepted when they receive a call from their ex, wondering if they should call back.

“DISTANT MEMORIES.” *New York, NY. February 2020.*

Director/ Cinematographer/Writer/Editor

- Distant Memories, an experimental, non-dialogue film hones in on the nightmare of Saz, who is tortured by water dreams. In connection to my project, "MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!, I wanted to experiment with dream elements and the ghostly presence of those who have died by water.

“BLINDSPOT”. *Milwaukee, WI. December 2019*

Co-Producer/Assistant Director

Creator/Director/Writer: Marquise Mays

Co-Producer: Gregory Thomas

Director of Photography: Charles Fatunbi

BTS Photographer: Justin Gordon

Graphic Designer: Dante Nash

Selected for the 2020 Minority Health Film Festival.

Selected for the 2020 Twin Cities Black Film Festival.

● This experimental documentary is a love letter to Lue Powell. It is a documented testament of her life leading up to when she lost her sight and her choice to not let her disability, disable her from living. Through the testimonies and stories from the other wimmin in Lue's family, BLINDSPOT is a story about the strength of family, faith, and love through uncertainty and fear.

“reSURRECTION” *November-December 2019*

Performer

The Woolgatherers Theater Group, Writing for Rights Series. *New York, NY.*

Creative Director(s): Grace Herman-Holland

Playwright: Andre Ford

Director: Ray Dubois

● Writing for Rights is a series of short play readings to benefit New Sanctuary Coalition, an NYC-based organization working to stop the inhumane system of deportations and detentions in this country.

● reSURRECTION seeks to honor the lives of Black transwimmin and Queer folx who have since passed on due to the incessant violence of homophobia/transphobia and inadequate health care.

“The Humane Experiment: THE ENCOUNTER” *May 2019*

Choreographer, Performer, and Co-Director

Campus Women's Center. *University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI. May 1.*

Creative Directors: Jasmine Kiah and Breanna Taylor

● The Humane Experiment is a series of performances that focuses on Blackness and how blackness responds and interacts in the face of whiteness and/or white supremacy. The Humane Experiment also asserts pessimistic elements that ultimately prompts its audience to a pessimistic state of mind leading to revolution. Using artistic mediums such as acting, poetry, dance, song, movement, visual arts, and film to demonstrate its purpose, we believe this is something that the UW-Madison campus and community can greatly benefit from.

'Draping' Series. *May 2018*

Choreographer and Performer

Afro-American Studies Department. *University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI.*

Creative Directors and Creators: Tiffany Ike and Kennedie King.

● 'Draping' is a seven-episode short film series that examines the complexity of Black femme identities and the durag as a cultural artifact, while serving as an exploration of interdisciplinary cinematography. The project seeks to increase representation of intersectional Black womanhood on screen and challenge conventional approaches to storytelling and visual composition via a multi-medium platform that includes: film, photography, poetry, dance, fashion etc.

UW-Madison Dance Department Elective Showing. *May 2017*

Performer

University of Wisconsin-Madison Dance Department. *University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI.*

Choreographer: Ariel Juarez

- Visited the foundations of freestyled movement, rooted in the foundations of high-energy, precise, Hip-Hop movement.

Line Breaks Festival Presents, "Kaleidoscopes" *April 2017*

Performer

Office of Multicultural Arts Initiatives'. *University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI.*

Choreographer: John Paul Alejandro.

Show Curator: Rain Wilson.

● This dance theatre work explores the idea that difference is beauty. Often, the world makes us become someone else and we start to forget to just be ourselves. This piece is representative of a challenge to societal expectations by exploring what is possible in our society for the betterment of our own communities.

Chris Walker Presents, "Moonshine" *February 2017*

Choreographer and Performer

University of Wisconsin-Madison Dance Department. *University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI.*

- Visited a vast range of movement styles such as Afro-beat, Hip-Hop, and Jazz.

UW-Madison Dance Department Elective Showing. *December 2016*

Performer

Dance Department. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI.

Choreographer: Liz Sexe

- Visited the foundations of beginners Ballet through freestyled choreography.

UW-Madison Dance Department Elective Showing. *December 2016*

Performer

University of Wisconsin-Madison Dance Department. *University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI.*

Choreographer: Maya Kadakia.

- Visited the foundations of Guinean-based movements such as Kakilambe, stemming from the Baga-River tribe.

5th Annual Kloepper Dance Concert. “In/Visible” *December 2016*

Choreographer and Performer

University of Wisconsin-Madison Dance Department. *University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI.*

- Visited the foundations of contemporary and modern-styled movement through freestyled choreography.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

J. Ndukaku Amankulor Memorial Award for Academic Excellence 2020

Tisch School of the Arts. Department of Performance Studies, New York, NY. New York University.

A memorial award dedicated to the uplift and continuation of work in Black Studies.

- Awarded at the completion of the Masters Program.

Tisch School of Arts Scholarship (TSOA) 2019-2020

Tisch School of the Arts. Department of Performance Studies, New York, NY. New York University.

Scholarships, Fellowships and Grants for Students in the Arts is intended for students currently pursuing degrees at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

- Partial scholarship awarded for the duration of the MA program 2019-2020.

Ginsberg Family Awards 2019

Morgridge Center for Public Service, Madison, WI. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

This award is given to a student who has made outstanding contributions in leadership and service to campus and community, while maintaining a strong and consistent academic performance. This award is one of the highest honors the University of Wisconsin-Madison offers to undergraduate students.

- One time award presented May 2019.

Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program, Scholar 2017- 2019

Division of Diversity, Equity, & Educational Achievement. Madison, WI. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The McNair Scholars program is a federally-funded program designed to prepare undergraduate participants for doctoral studies and graduate education through involvement in research and other scholarly activities.

- Funded September 2018-May 2019
- Funded June 2018-August 2018

Pre-College Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence Scholarship 2016-2019

Division of Diversity, Equity, & Educational Achievement. Madison, WI. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Full tuition, academic-based merit scholarship.

- Fully funded September 2018-May 2019
- Fully funded September 2017-May 2018
- Fully funded September 2016-May 2017