



# Center for Black Diaspora

DePaul University  
College of  
Liberal Arts & Social  
Sciences

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

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# mission & purpose

The Center for Black Diaspora supports the production of scholastic, collaborative, cultural and creative work related to the experiences of peoples of African descent worldwide.

The Center provides space for scholars from diverse disciplines to share their expressive and intellectual work and also to critically examine issues.

We encourage the study of the Black diaspora, as well as comparative perspectives to illuminate the particular experiences of African people both on the continent and in the diaspora.

# Message from the Director

*Dr. Julie Moody-Freeman*



When I took on the role of Director in July 2019, I wanted the year's programming to focus historically on trauma in Black communities and how these communities have always found ways to resist oppression and to heal. Therefore, we planned a series of speakers and events that would center on the theme, "From Trauma to Resilience: Healing Body, Mind, and Community." I had no idea how much more trauma Black communities would endure this year because of violence enacted on Black bodies by the police, because of violence due to homophobia and transphobia, and because of deeply entrenched economic, social, and political policies that disenfranchise Black

communities, which became even more evident during the Covid-19 pandemic. My love and support are extended to the freedom fighters who have put their lives on the line and for those whose loved ones —Ahmaud Arbery, Iyanna Dior, George Floyd, Toni McDade, Nina Pop, and Breonna Taylor and more—were recently killed.

## **Scholarly Programming (2019-2020)**

In fall 2019, we organized four events that focused on yoga by Black practitioners, on Black Joy as a means of healing, on the historical and political reasons for forced migration, on Ubuntu as a means of healing in Rwanda and Burundi, and on using Community Circle as healing support for community organizers. I want to thank Dr. Ogenga Otunnu, a Center Advisory Board Member and Professor of History, for organizing and leading the panel on "The Causes and Consequences for Refugee and Forced Migration from Africa and the Black Diaspora." My thanks also to John Zeigler, another Advisory Board Member and the Director of the Egan Office of Urban Education and Community Partnership, for leading the Community Circle for community organizers. Finally, we partnered with the Department of African and Black Diaspora Studies to hold our annual Open House.

We continued with our theme in winter 2020. Our first event, co-organized with Dr. Billy González, the Director for the Center for Latino Research, were readings and conversation with award winning Haitian American writer Edwidge Danticat. Our second event, a

lecture Performance with Rhodel Castillo and the Garifuna Band, focused on Garifuna history and the resilience of their language and culture. The third event, a “Tribute to Toni Morrison” which took five months of planning, was a collaborative endeavor between faculty and staff from African and Black Diaspora Studies, English, the Women’s Center, and the Theatre School. Thanks to Dr. Amor Kohli, the Director of the Department of African and Black Diaspora Studies, Dr. Francesca Royster, a Center Advisory Board Member, Dr. Ann Russo, Dexter Zollicoffer, a Center Advisory Board Member, Juelle Daley, and Zachary Crewse who helped to develop this tribute. To honor the legacy of Toni Morrison, we re-read her books, looked at her documentary, and at her photography to develop a script that captured the essence of her life through themes: "loving black women"; "telling/loving Black history"; "creating literary community"; "nurturing spirits"; and "she was loved." The Center closed out the quarter with a Healing Justice Retreat for Black People and People of Color, co-organized with the Women’s Center and led by Dr. Misty DeBerry.

The Center closed its doors on March 17 when measures were taken for us to vacate the campus and go into quarantine to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. Nevertheless, we delivered five live online events in spring 2020. Two of the events on “Black Public Health in the Era of Covid-19” were delivered via Zoom and were led by Dr Uché Blackstock and Dr. Joy St. John who focused on the impact of Covid-19 on Black communities in the United States and the Caribbean. We teamed up with Ann Russo at the Women’s Center to co-organize two Zoom events on non-Western Holistic healing practices that can be useful to Black populations disproportionately affected by the Coronavirus: one led by Sonya Seifert and Khadijah Kysia; the second led by Adaku Utah. Juelle Daley, the Assistant Director of the Center, also delivered a Zoom event on Unyimeabasi Udoh’s artwork.

### **Reading Room and Support for DePaul Students and Faculty Scholarly and Creative Activities (2019-2020)**

Established in 1993, the Center for Black Diaspora has served DePaul University’s mission for twenty-seven years. As one of its core missions DePaul University is committed to preparing students for “global citizenship and success.” In 2019-2020, the Center for Black Diaspora achieved this particular mission by delivering innovative programming about Africa, the United States, and the Caribbean and Latin America in all their complexities. We developed programming which enhanced the curriculums of various Departments and Schools, including: African and Black Diaspora Studies, English, French, Forced Migration Studies, History of Art and Architecture, Political Science, International Studies, Latino/Latin American Studies, the Music School, the Theatre School, and Women’s and Gender Studies.

The Center for Black Diaspora was an essential resource that supported the intellectual life of Black students, but it also supported Black students' need for community and resources. Our Reading Room Library on the fifth floor of Schmidt Academic Center was a hub for student group meetings and for students seeking books, films, and articles on Africa and the Black Diaspora when they were writing research papers for classes. Students and alumni of DePaul stopped by the Center for advice about various topics, including classes, financial aid issues, financial problems, jobs, and about their encounters with racism. We performed this unseen labor, which doesn't normally show up in an Annual Report. However, I think it is important to highlight the invisible labor that the Center staff performed for our students, beyond our job descriptions, because we care and because of our commitment to them.

The Center for Black Diaspora was an essential resource that supported the intellectual life of DePaul faculty's teaching and scholarship. Faculty used the Center Reading Room to teach their classes and to introduce students to the Center's resources for research papers. In addition, faculty who were working on developing courses, writing articles, book chapters, and manuscripts came from many parts of the university—including African and Black Diaspora Studies, Catholic Studies, English, Political Science, and Religious Studies—to borrow books and films.

### **A Look to the Future and Infrastructure Building**

The infrastructure in place in July 2019 when I began my role as Director included a budget to support robust programming, to support the Center's Reading Room, and to support a staff. Missing when I arrived as Director was the infrastructure to achieve the Center's mission "to support the production of scholarly, cultural and creative work. To begin to develop that infrastructure, I am working collaboratively with scholars at DePaul and other universities to produce one issue of a journal based on the Center's programming. I'm also working with the Center for Latino Research and The Women's Center—with support from the Dean's Office for Liberal Arts and Social Sciences and the Faculty Scholarship Support Center—on initiatives that will hopefully help to build the infrastructure for scholarship and creative activities by faculty and students.

*Julie E. Moody-Freeman, Ph.D.*

*Director of the Center for Black Diaspora*

*Associate Professor, Department of African and Black Diaspora Studies*

# Message from the Assistant Director

*Juelle Daley*



I am honored to serve as the Assistant Director at the Center for Black Diaspora over the last twelve years.

Throughout this time period, I have witnessed our evolution as a cultural and intellectual space at the university that dedicates itself to creating the scholarly programming of events that explore the Black experience in the United States and the rest of the world. This has included rich and diverse themes like "Black Presence in Latin America", "Black Europe", "Black Storefront Churches in Chicago" and most recently, "Black Public Health in the era of Covid-19" and its impact on the Black Diaspora.

The Center is not only a venue that welcomes the DePaul community, but it also fosters relationships with other Chicago-land cultural institutions. These cultural stakeholders have included the South African and French Consulates, WBEZ radio station, museums, theater companies, Little Black Pearl Art Center and the Chicago International Film Festival, to name a few.

I'm deeply proud of the Center's special collection reading room that contains books and films that explore every aspect and issue that relates to the African & Black Diaspora. I remain committed to ensuring that this rich resource is up to date with new acquisitions for our DePaul faculty and students.

I aspire to inspire our students to learn from the events hosted by our Center and to work effectively and collaboratively with other units and centers at the university. We look forward to furthering our growth trajectory and to meet the students who grace our space with their presence.

It is very gratifying to meet former DePaul students, who shared ways that an event organized by the Center was transformative and shaped their outlook, perspective and life of the mind.

At this time, in the wake of racial upheaval in the country, our presence and role has become even more important as an entity where all DePaul students, faculty and staff can engage in a robust dialogue on issues of race, identity and culture.

*Juelle Daley*

*Assistant Director of the Center for Black Diaspora*

# Center



# Staff

Farrad DeBerry

Office Assistant



Jessica Williams

Student Assistant



Jennifer Ogwumike

Student Assistant



# Advisory Board



**Cory Barnes**, Coordinator - Black Cultural Center

Mr. Barnes joined DePaul University in October 2017 as coordinator of the Black Cultural Center in the Office of Multicultural Student Success. In his role he is the primary resource for information, referrals and advocacy to address the needs of all, while directly supporting Black students. Cory received a BA in sociology and an MS in education in counseling, adult and higher education from Northern Illinois University. He is pursuing a PhD in higher education administration at Illinois State University.



**Dani Blackwell**, Administrative Assistant - New Student and Family Engagement

Ms. Blackwell, Sr. Administrative Assistant in the Office of New Student and Family Engagement. I have been a part of the DePaul family for over 15 years and also an alumna. I joined the board almost 2 years ago and it has been a great experience. I am very involved within the DePaul community also serving on DPUBLIC, Staff Council as the Chair of the Diversity, Mission and Inclusion committee and the Human Resources committee within the Division of Student Affairs. I am dedicated to the growth of our students and staff at DePaul University.



**Mark DeLancey, PhD**, Professor - History of Art and Architecture Department

Dr. DeLancey is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of History of Art and Architecture where he teaches courses in African and Islamic art with specialties in Islamic Africa and African architecture. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 2004, and his BA from Oberlin College in 1995. He is the author of *Conquest and Construction: Palace Architecture in Northern Cameroon* (Leiden: Brill, 2016) and co-author of multiple editions of *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 5th ed. 2019/4th ed. 2010/3rd ed. 2000). He has published in *African Arts*, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, *Islamic Africa*, and *Cahiers d'études africaines*. Current research interests include calligraphy, manuscripts, and contemporary art in Mauritania.



**Dana Hall**, Professor - Music School

Dana Hall is the Director of Jazz Studies. Born in Brooklyn, New York, drummer Dana Hall has been an important musician on the international music scene since 1992. After completing his education in aerospace engineering at Iowa State University, he received his Bachelor of Music degree from William Paterson College in Wayne, New Jersey and, in 1999, his Masters degree in composition and arranging from DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. He is presently a distinguished Special Trustees Fellow completing his PhD in ethnomusicology at the University of Chicago.



### **Valerie Johnson, PhD**, Associate Professor - Political Science

Dr. Johnson received her PhD. from the University of Maryland, College Park, and is Associate professor and Chair of the Political Science Department at DePaul University in Chicago. She is the author of *Black Power in the Suburbs: The Myth or Reality of African American Suburban Political Incorporation* (2002), and co-editor of *Power in the City* (2008). Her current book project is entitled, *At the Water's Edge: The Unfinished Business of Black Equality*. Her research and teaching interests include African American politics, urban politics, and education policy.



### **Amor Kohli, PhD**, Associate Professor - African and Black Diaspora Studies

Dr. Kohli is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of African and Black Diaspora Studies at DePaul. He received his PhD in English at Tufts University and taught at Tufts, Middlebury College, and the University of Vermont before coming to DePaul in 2003, the first year of the African and Black Diaspora Studies Department's existence. Kohli's publications include the co-edited book *Uprooting Urban America: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Race, Class, and Gentrification* (Peter Lang, 2014). His scholarly essays on Black writers such as Bob Kaufman, Ted Joans, W.E.B. Du Bois, George Schuyler, Kamau Brathwaite, and Major Jackson have been published in the journals *Callaloo*, *MELUS*, *African Identities*, *Harvard Review*, and *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. His work has also appeared in a number of edited collections as well as the *Encyclopedia of African American Literature*.



### **Shiera el Malik, PhD**, Associate Professor - International Studies

Dr. el-Malik is an Associate professor in the Department of International Studies at DePaul University in Chicago. She teaches and writes on themes of coloniality, politics, and theory. Her research is guided by an interest in the intersection of politics of knowledge and lived experience. Her work is published in the *Review of International Studies*, *African Identities*, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *Irish Studies of International Affairs*, *Critical Studies on Security*, *African and Black Diaspora*, *Contexto* and *Journal of Narrative Politics*, amongst other journals and edited volumes. She co-edited (with Isaac Kamola) *Politics of African Anticolonial Archive*.



### **Julie Moody - Freeman, PhD**, Associate Professor - African and Black Diaspora Studies

Dr. Moody-Freeman received her Ph.D. in Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Moody-Freeman's publications include co-edited books *The Black Imagination, Science Fiction, and the Speculative* (Routledge, 2011) and *The Black Imagination: Science Fiction, Futurism, and the Speculative* (Peter Lang, 2011) as well as a co-edited special issue of *African and Black Diaspora Studies: an international journal* (Routledge, July 2015) on "Remapping the Black Atlantic: Diaspora, (Re) Writings of Race and Space." She has also published in *Canadian Women's Studies/les cahiers de la femme's*, *Macomerè: journal of the Association for Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars*, *African Identities*, *Seeking the Self-Encountering the Other: Diasporic Narrative and the Ethics of Representation*, *Romance Fiction and American Culture*, *the Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora*, and the *Dictionary of Caribbean and Afro-Latin American Biography*.



### **Ogenga Otunnu, PhD, Professor - History**

Dr. Otunnu (PhD, York University) is a Professor of History. He teaches the causes and consequences of forced migration, migration and forced migration in Africa, humanitarian emergencies, comparative genocide, refugee camps and containment, contemporary global issues, African history, comparative slavery, and Africa and Black Diaspora studies. He is the co-founder of the Center for Forced Migration Studies at Northwestern University. He has lectured at the summer program on refugees and forced migration at the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University for 15 years.



### **Francesca Royster, PhD, Professor - English**

Dr. Royster is a Professor of English at DePaul University, where she teaches courses in Shakespeare Studies, Performance Studies, Critical Race theory, Gender and Queer Theory and African American Literature. She received her PhD in English from University of California, Berkeley in 1995. She is the author of *Becoming Cleopatra: The Shifting Image of an Icon* (Palgrave/MacMillan in 2003) and *Sounding Like a No-No: Queer Sounds and Outrageous Acts in the Post-Soul Era* (University of Michigan, 2013).



### **Chernoh Sesay, PhD, Associate Professor - Religious Studies**

Dr. Sesay, Jr. is an associate professor in the Religious Studies Department, where in 2018, he received an Excellence in Teaching Award from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. An historian of North American and the Atlantic World, he has authored book chapters and has had articles appear in *The New England Quarterly* and the *Journal of African American Studies*. He has also written book reviews for the *Journal of American History*, the *Journal of Africana Religions*, and the *Journal of Women's History*.



### **John Zeigler, Director - Egan Office of Urban Education and Community Partnerships**

John Zeigler Jr. is Director of the Egan Office of Urban Education and Community Partnerships (UECP) and adjunct faculty in Community Service Studies. He provides guidance in the Steans Center's goal of advancing DePaul faculty and student engagement with public agencies and community-based organizations and schools. John focuses UECP on critical social issues through innovative scholarship, technical assistance and educational programming in schools and communities.

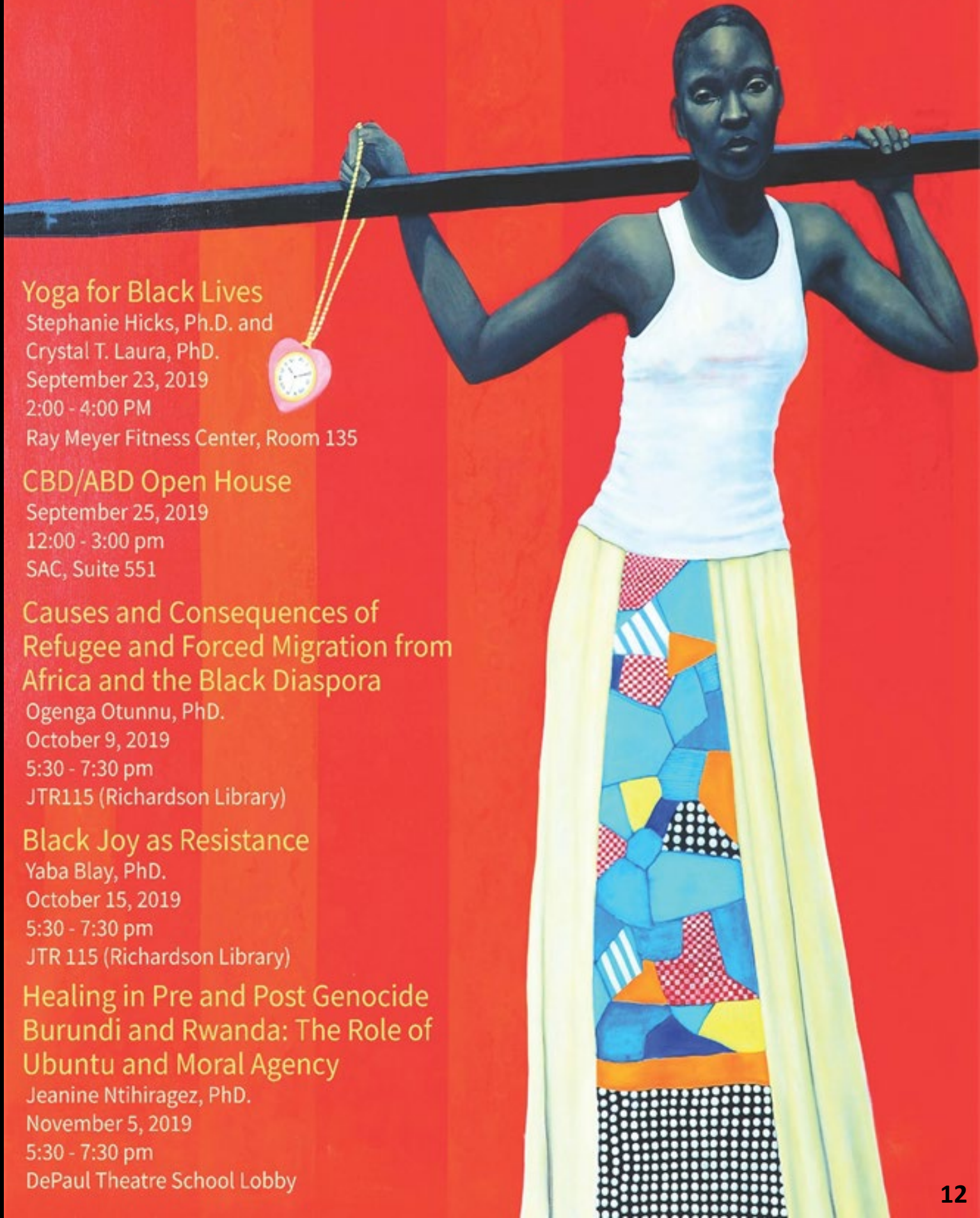


### **Dexter Zollicoffer, Diversity Advisor - DePaul Theatre School**

Mr. Zollicoffer serves as the Diversity Advisor at The Theatre School and is a recipient of the 2011-2012 Sprit of DePaul award. Along with administrative duties, other activities include mentorship to students and supporting the school in graduating young artists who will be prepared and inspired to enter an ever-evolving multi-cultural society. Dexter also partners with other offices at DePaul University that advocate for DePaul's Diversity mission. He serves as the writer/director for DePaul's Mile Walker summer acting troupe in partnership with the Office of Diversity Education.

# From Trauma to Resilience

Healing Body, Mind, and Community in the Black Experience



## Yoga for Black Lives

Stephanie Hicks, Ph.D. and

Crystal T. Laura, PhD.

September 23, 2019

2:00 - 4:00 PM

Ray Meyer Fitness Center, Room 135

## CBD/ABD Open House

September 25, 2019

12:00 - 3:00 pm

SAC, Suite 551

## Causes and Consequences of Refugee and Forced Migration from Africa and the Black Diaspora

Ogenga Otunnu, PhD.

October 9, 2019

5:30 - 7:30 pm

JTR115 (Richardson Library)

## Black Joy as Resistance

Yaba Blay, PhD.

October 15, 2019

5:30 - 7:30 pm

JTR 115 (Richardson Library)

## Healing in Pre and Post Genocide Burundi and Rwanda: The Role of Ubuntu and Moral Agency

Jeanine Ntikiragez, PhD.

November 5, 2019

5:30 - 7:30 pm

DePaul Theatre School Lobby





**open**

# house

**25 September 2019**  
Schmidt Academic Center,  
Suite 551

with The Department of African  
and Black Diaspora Studies, and  
the Center for Black Diaspora



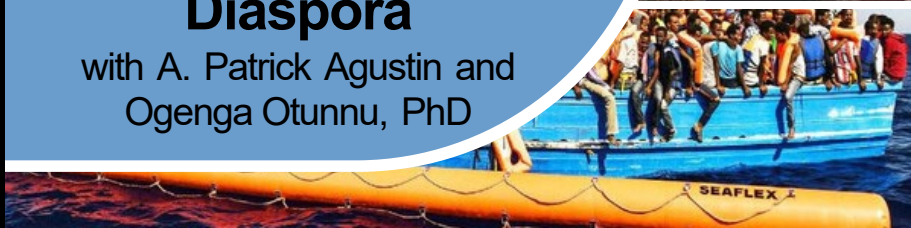
The annual Open House is an opportunity to welcome students faculty and staff to the new academic year. It also serves as an opportunity for people to make connections, especially between students and professors outside of the classroom.

Alive with food, drink, and music, the event increased people's awareness of our space and purpose within the DePaul community.



# Causes and Consequences of Refugee and Forced Migration from Africa and the Black Diaspora

with A. Patrick Agustin and Ogenga Otunnu, PhD



**9 October 2019**  
John T. Richardson Library

A. Patrick Augustin is the Executive Director of the Pan-African Association a nonprofit that specializes in helping recently arrived refugees learn English, develop skills to retain employment, and get proper access to healthcare systems. Augustin's drive for helping refugees derived from witnessing the restrictions his parents faced as they created a new life in America.

In a conversation with Augustin, Dr. Otunnu, a professor at DePaul University, explained the historical causes and trauma of displacement and how preconceived notions of refugee lives hinder their access to valuable resources. Dr. Otunnu and Augustin proceeded to ask DePaul faculty and students their lasting motto, "What can be done?"



# BlackJoy as Resistance

with Yaba Blay, PhD



Dr. Yaba Blay is a renowned author, professor, and creator of Black power social media movements. Blay's work examines the politics behind Black identity and the misconceptions associated with Blackness. In her talk at DePaul University, Blay discussed her life and various topics such as skin color bleaching, Black hair, and pop culture.

Her media platform "Professional Black Girl" showcased unapologetic beauty in the Black community and described what it meant to be Black, beautiful and powerful. Blay's conversation with DePaul and the greater Chicago area reaffirmed positive Black imagery. This talk broke barriers and deconstructed beauty standards.

**15 October 2019**

John T. Richardson Library



Click image above or visit our YouTube Channel to view video.



# Healing in Pre and Post Genocide Burundi and Rwanda

with Dr. Jeanine Ntahirageza, PhD.



**5 November 2019**  
DePaul Theatre School

Dr. Ntahirageza is chair of the Anthropology Department and an Associate Professor at Northeastern Illinois University. She discussed the Burundi and Rwandan genocides, particularly the antagonistic relationship between Ubuntu (an African philosophy about interconnected humanity), individual moral agency, and ethnic group loyalty (Hutu or Tutsi). Ntahirageza interwove her personal stories with her knowledge of the turmoil and conflict. People still struggle in the aftermath of genocide, and for Ntahirageza, remembrance of the event, respect for those who died, community, and the enduring power of Ubuntu can lead to healing.



Click image above or visit our YouTube Channel to view video.

# Community Leaders Circle

with the Center for Black Diaspora and Egan Office of Urban Education and Community Partnerships



John Zeigler kept a healing circle for Chicago Community activists. Troy Harden offered libations and healing messages for the circle participants.

**14 December 2019**  
First Church  
of the Brethren

**Participants:** Sandra Sosa; Caro Guiente; Marie Pike; Dorothee Munyaneza and Nicolas Détrie; Peter Hoy; Aline Kramer; Julie Samuels; Pastor Orlando King; Mary Boria; Jackie Samuels, Pastor Orlando Redenkopp; Demetria Pates; Juelle Daley, Yolanda Cesta Cursach Montilla, Troy Harden, Julie E. Moody-Freeman, and John Zeigler.

# FROM TRAUMA TO RESILIENCE: HEALING BODY, MIND AND COMMUNITY

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## **An evening with Haitian-American writer, Edwidge Danticat**

**Date:** January 13, 2020

**Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** DePaul Student Center, 2250 N Sheffield Ave, room 120

**Co-organized by:** Center for Latino Research

**Co-sponsors:** Departments of African & Black Diaspora Studies and English.

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## **An Evening with poet, Hanif Abdurraqib (U.S.A)**

**Date:** February 13, 2020

**Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** DePaul Student Center, 2250 N Sheffield Ave,

**Organized by:** Dr. Francesca Royster, Department of English

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## **A performance & lecture with Rhodel and the Garifuna Band (Belize)**

**Date:** February 17, 2020

**Time:** 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**Location:** DePaul Student Center, 2250 N Sheffield Ave, room 120

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## **An evening of Tribute to Novelist, Toni Morrison (U.S.A)**

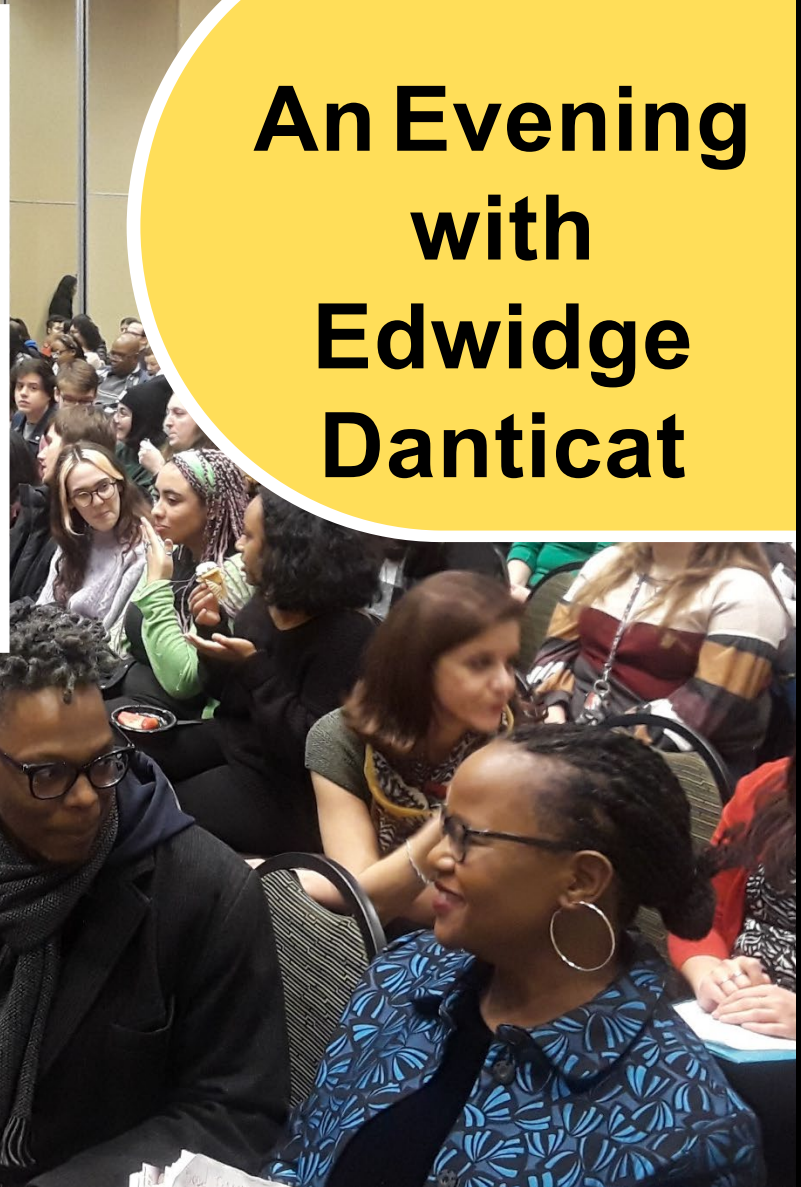
**Date:** February 27, 2020

**Time:** 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** DePaul Theatre School Lobby

**Co-organizers:** Women's Center, DePaul Theatre School,  
Departments of English African & Black Diaspora Studies.

# An Evening with Edwidge Danticat



**13 January 2020**  
**DePaul Student  
Center**

Edwidge Danticat invigorated the room with her compelling words, reading from her well-known books, *Krik? Krak!*, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, and *Everything Inside: Stories*. Danticat reminisced on childhood traditions, and it served as a reminder of what it means to experience authentic storytelling.

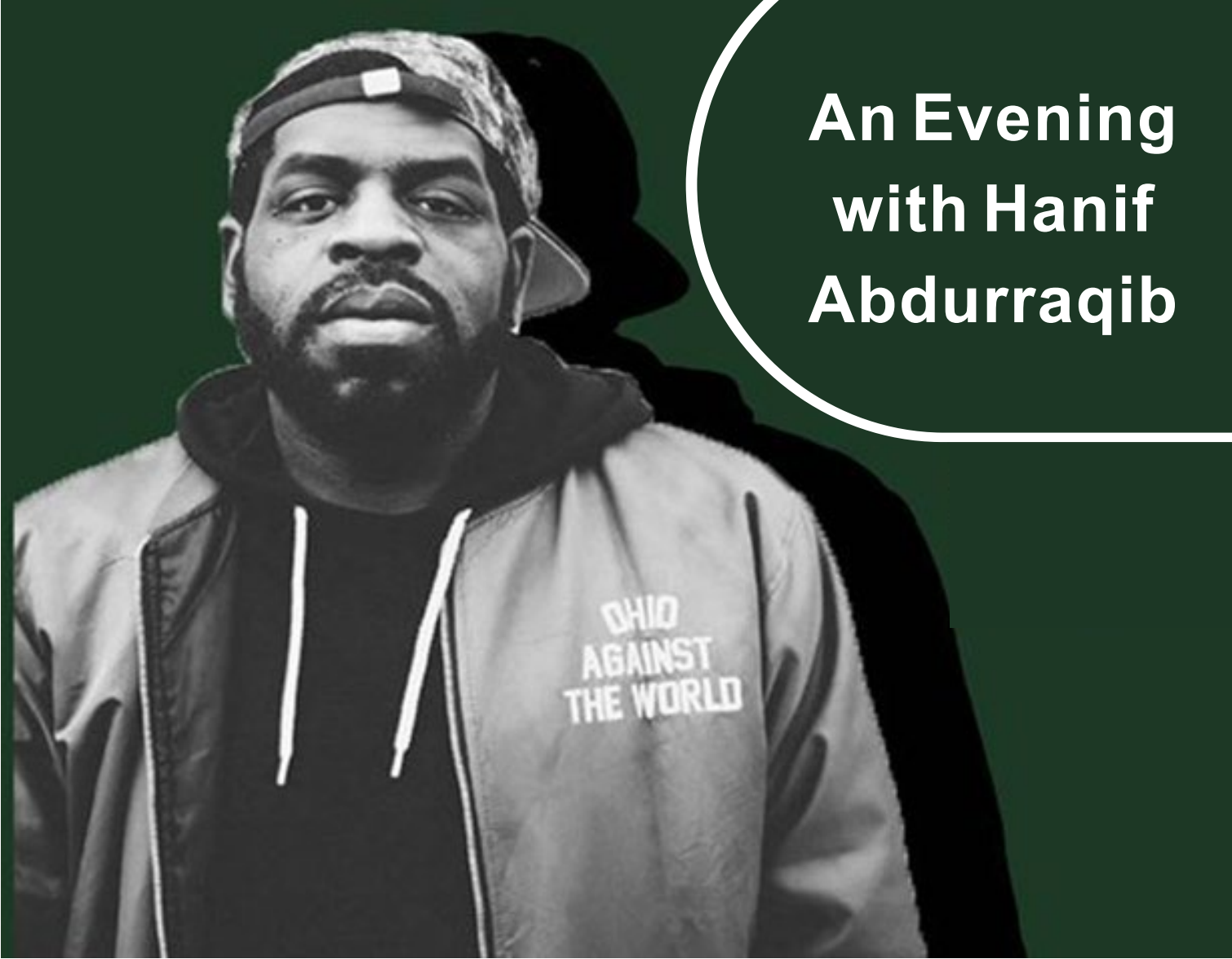
Danticat discussed the path to her success as a writer in a conversation with Dr. Julie Moody-Freeman. The conversation also touched on various topics: how she negotiates history and people's desire for a particular vision or version of history in her writing; her role as a writer; her process for writing in different genres; and what readers might take away from her writing about Haiti, Haitians, and Haiti's role in shaping Latin American and Caribbean cultures, politics, and societies.

co-organized by the Center for Latino Research  
co-sponsored by the Departments of African  
and Black Diaspora Studies, English, and  
International Studies.



**Click image above or visit our  
YouTube Channel to view video.**

# An Evening with Hanif Abdurraqib



**13 February 2020**  
DePaul Student Center

organized by Dr. Francesca  
Royster, Department of English  
Co-sponsored by the CBD

Hanif Abdurraqib is a renowned poet and author of *They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us* (2017). Hanif creates poetry by inserting musical elements such as popular passages from the late and great Marvin Gaye to mirror important issues within the Black community.

In a conversation with Nina Wilson and Dr. Francesca Royster, Abdurraqib discussed the various aspects of his creative endeavors and his love for music. With his warm heart and gentle demeanor, he made sure to engage with the audience to create an intimate atmosphere. His accomplishments prompted an in-depth Q&A followed by a book-signing.



# A Lecture & Performance with Rhodel and the Garifuna Band



winter events winter events winter events winter events winter events winter events

**17 February 2020**  
**DePaul Student Center**

Using storytelling, poetry, music, and dance, Rhodel and the Garifuna band educated the audience of DePaul faculty, staff, students and the larger Chicago community about the legacy of the Garifuna.

The event opened with a lecture/performance of traditional songs and dance by the Laruni Hati Dance Group, which was useful for the audience to understand Garifuna history and culture.

The sound of the drums remained a constant reminder of the legacy of Africa's contribution to New World music and culture, and it brought people together from many cultural backgrounds.

Rhodel Castillo led the remainder of the event with a poetic and musical journey that highlighted the history, culture, and language of the Garifuna: in Yurumein, Saint Vincent before and after colonialism; in exile; and in a continued celebration of the spirit of a people never enslaved.

One student's survey illustrated the value they placed on "[t]he music, narrative, and history being told through art." Rhodel's use of music and spoken word was innovative, enjoyable and impactful.



**Click image above or visit our YouTube Channel to view video.**

# Toni Morrison: An Evening of Tribute

with Misty DeBerry PhD,  
Philip Royster PhD, and  
Kimosha Murphy



**27 February 2020**  
DePaul Theatre School

co-organized by the Department of African and Black  
Diaspora Studies, the Departments of English, Theatre  
School, and the Women's Center.

In collaboration with the Department of African and Black Diaspora Studies, the English Department, The Women's Center, and the Theatre School, the Center for Black Diaspora held a tribute for the late Toni Morrison.

Toni Morrison, who died at 88, published over 11 novels and many children's books. Her novels paved the way for future authors to be fearless and authentic in their purpose. The works of Morrison prove to be timeless and influential, leaving a mark in literary history. Different DePaul communities came together to share memories of their time with Morrison's work and her impact on their lives. Interspersed with clips from her documentary, speaker Misty DeBerry led the audience into commemorative reflections about Morrison's life and legacy. Dr. Phillip Royster, Kimosha Murphy, and Isaiah Easter contributed poetry, art, and music to the celebration, with over a 100 people in attendance.



## Healing Justice Retreat for Black People & People of Color

with Misty DeBerry

**28 February 2020**  
Arts and Letter 412

co-sponsored by the Women's Center

Dr. Misty DeBerry, a graduate in Performance Studies from Northwestern University, conducted a workshop for building support and community within Black and POC

communities. This retreat engaged performance and embodiment in order to understand, explore, and re-imagine sustainable ways of collective being among and for Black people and people of color. The goal for the event was to get a better sense of healing, justice practices, circles, and ways to build supportive communities.



# BLACK PUBLIC HEALTH

SPRING 2020 EVENTS

CENTER FOR BLACK DIASPORA

As the pandemic rages across our nation leaving behind scourges of death, pain and despair in its wake, it became quickly apparent that there were higher incidence of infection and death rate among communities of African descent. The center hosted a series of virtual events dedicated to engaging a dialogue of the state of Black Public Health and to exploring ways that the Covid-19 pandemic lays bare systemic health inequities as well as bringing together a palette of invited speakers on the topic to provide insight and recommendations on how we navigate the current trauma and engage in practices to maintain resilience.

Dr. Uché Blackstock M.D.

Dr. Joy St. John M.D

Khadijah Kysia &  
Sonya Seifert

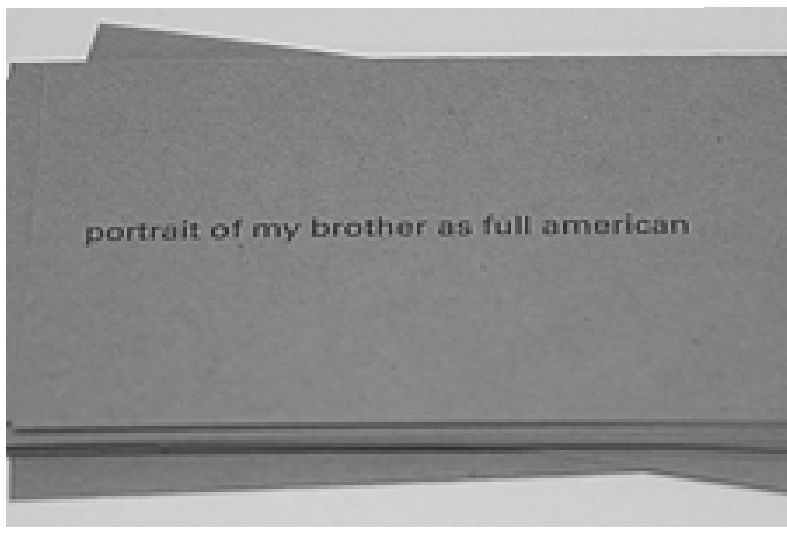
Adaku Utah

BLACK IN A PANDEMIC  
IN THE ERA OF  
COVID-19



# Art at the Crossroads of Memory & Historic Amnesia

with Unyimeabasi Udoh  
Delinda Collier, PhD

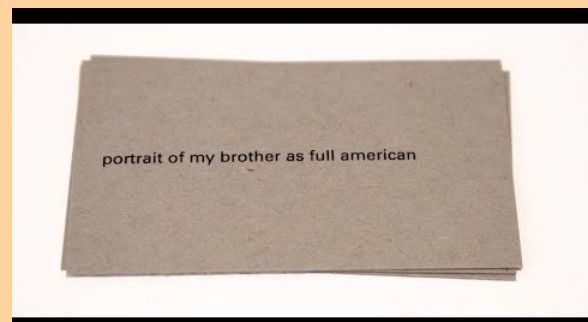


Co-sponsored by the Center for Black Diaspora and moderated by Juelle Daley, Hatch curatorial resident, this event centered around the exhibit *Excavating Memories* at the Chicago Artist Coalition. The exhibit features the work of Katie Chung and Unyimeabasi Udoh.

Udoh discussed their body of work in the show where the theme of the "official history" and remembering was explored. Udoh talked with art historian Dr. Delinda Collier from the Art Institute of Chicago, whose current research interrogates the practice of field work and African Art.

**20 April 2020**  
Zoom Virtual Event

organized by the  
Chicago Artist Coalition



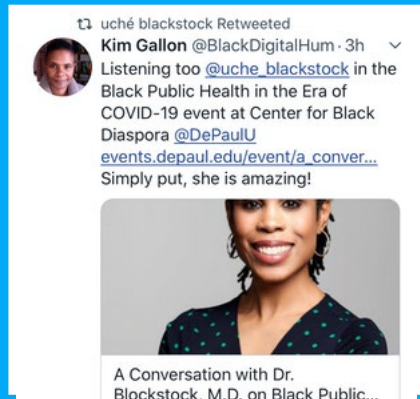
Click image above or visit our YouTube Channel to view video.

# Black Public Health in the Era of COVID-19

with Uché Blackstock MD



public reception:



Click image above or visit our YouTube Channel to view

## 30 April 2020 Zoom Virtual Event

Dr. Uché Blackstock is the Founder and CEO of Advancing Health Equity, which, designs wellness workshops and collaborates with organizations on improving equity and diversity in health. In a virtual conversation with Julie Moody-Freeman, Dr. Blackstock addressed the history of inequality in healthcare and how it connects to the prevalence of COVID-19 within Black communities.

With about 120 viewers present, Dr. Blackstock reminded us of the importance of self-care and community-based outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic. She highlighted her experience as a physician and how individuals within the community should be prioritized when combating the virus and when conducting outreach. When it comes to sustaining the self and health equity, Dr. Uché Blackstock continues her legacy in educating and supporting communities nationwide.

# A Conversation with Joy St. John, PhD



Dr. Joy St. John was the Assistant-Director General of the World Health Organization from October 2017 to April 2019. She is currently the Executive Director of the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA). CARPHA's mission is to achieve healthy spaces and healthy people by initiating preventative and emergency health measures and more.

Dr. St. John discussed how the pandemic has affected the Caribbean. She gave a detailed and informative presentation on the economic, social, environmental, and political challenges Caribbean nations are facing. This conversation contributed to the education of COVID-19 and its impact on Black bodies transnationally.

**7 May 2020**  
Zoom Virtual Event



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# Maintaining Health and Wellness

with Sonya Seifert, LAc and Khadijah Kysia, LAc



**20 May 2020**  
Zoom Virtual Event

co-organized by the Women's Center

Khadijah Kysia and Sonia Seifert are certified acupuncturists and herbalists. Their work explores Chinese healing techniques to balance the mind and body. In this virtual event, Kysia and Seifert discussed essential ways to build health at home during COVID-19.



**Click image above or visit our YouTube Channel to view video.**

The event was arranged into segments allowing both lecturers to convey unique methods of well-being. Seifert explained the ways that “Yang Sheng” is practiced to nourish the soul and the body. This nourishment depends on maintaining a proper diet and sleep pattern to channel inner serenity. Kysia accordingly addressed the qualities and relationship of bodily organs and how to keep them in shape by connecting our breaths to our bodies. After each segment, the participants engaged with Kysia and Seifert’s exercises of breath and movement. The conversation ended with peaceful meditation.

# Cultivating Resilience, Channeling Wisdom from our Ancestors, Plant Allies, and the Ecosystem of the Earth

with Adaku Utah



Adaku Utah (she/him/her/they/black unicorn) is an artist, healer, and teacher who is devoted to nurturing the soul through rituals honoring ancestral lineage.

In the event, Utah talked about how Black "radical" traditions can help us cultivate resilience in ourselves and in our communities. Utah revealed the value of using "I" statements, the customs of self-determination, and the importance of bonding with one another during the crisis of COVID-19.

Utah weighed in on how emotions move like the waves of the ocean, and she cautioned the audience to acknowledge what these sensations reveal about how our bodies respond to triggers, fear, and depression.

Utah demonstrated the ways that music and dance are practiced in Bori culture to encourage the movement of the body and healing. She integrated these techniques with those of Afro-American culture to enlighten the participants on healthy ways to confront and heal themselves.

**28 May 2020**  
**Zoom Virtual Event**

co-organized by the Women's Center



**Click image above or visit our YouTube Channel to view video.**



# the Reading Room

The Reading Room in our center is an immensely valuable resource, housing over 2500 books, 250 films, and music on Black experiences, art, cultures, politics, scholarship, and ideas. Our collection is commonly visited by campus tours and incoming-students looking for access to the Black DePaul community. Many of our books are not found in other DePaul libraries, which makes the collection a unique aid for faculty and students. Our catalog can be accessed at <https://www.librarycat.org/lib/CBDDPU>.

Since its inception, the Reading Room continues to expand with newly written and artistic acquisitions. Among our newest acquisitions this year are *Venus Noire: Black Women and Colonial Fantasies in Nineteenth-Century France* by Robin Mitchell, *Becoming* by Michelle Obama, *Everything Inside: Stories* by Edwidge Danticat, and *Us* directed by Jordan Peele.

The space is open for studying, film watching, or relaxing, and can be reserved for meetings, presentations, and small events.

\*To reserve the space, please contact the Center staff. The Reading Room is open from 9:30am-5:00pm, Mondays through Fridays. Extended hours may be arranged by request. More information can be found on our website.

# Contact

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