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FOREWORD: REFLECTING ON THIS CHAPTER OF *DRJ*

In this our final issue as co-editors, we would like to say that it has been a great honor working together to serve you, our readers. It's been profoundly rewarding to play a role in the development of important and field-defining scholarship in Dance Studies. Here, we take a moment to reflect on our work.

REBEKAH

My experience with *Dance Research Journal* began in 2018, when then-Executive Editor Helen Thomas asked me to join the editorial team working on the *Work With[out] Boundaries* special issue (published in 2019). Soon after, I applied for the role as Associate Editor, collaborating with Helen in this capacity in 2020. My term coincided with Nadine's proposal for, and eventual development of, a special topics issue. At the same time, Helen's term was up in 2020, and she, I, and Sherril Dodds, then DSA VP of Scholarship and Publications, felt strongly that Nadine, for so many reasons, would make a strong partner as I moved into the lead role. I am a collaborator by nature, and as I thought more about it, and in conversation with Sherril and Nadine, decided that if Nadine was willing, I would love to work with her as a Co-Editor, allowing us to bring our distinct perspectives to the table and make decisions together.

NADINE

My deep involvement with *DRJ* began with my special-topics issue, *Arms Akimbo: Black Women Choreographing Social Change*. Following some conference panels, seminar discussions and scholarly presentations, I wanted to curate a conversation in which we could deeply examine the ways in which Black women negotiate the political world through movement. Working with Helen as Editor and Rebekah as Associate Editor was a wonderful experience. Soon, Sherril Dodds asked if I would be interested in joining the editorial board. I was only on the board a few months when the conversation about editorial succession started. During these conversations, I realized that although I had a really positive experience editing the special topics issue, I felt that academic journal publishing on the whole was a complicated site of knowledge stewardship. I thought that this was an opportunity to make an impact on traditional journal publishing practices towards improving the experience for a broader number of artists and scholars.

OUR VISION

From the very beginning of our partnership, we agreed on some key goals for the journal. Above all, we wanted to bring more voices to the table, including artists, historically underrepresented scholars, and those whose primary language is not English. We sought to broaden the range of decision

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makers, while maintaining excellence. And we worked on standardizing our editorial administrative structure and systems for operational stability, succession, and procedural transparency.

OUR TEAMS

As we moved forward with conversations about our vision for the journal, we concluded that the journal would need more administrative support and additional editorial heft. With the financial support of DSA, we were able to build an editorial staff designed for individual growth. In recognition of team labor, we instituted new titles, job descriptions, compensation, and career mentorship. This was the beginning of the formation of an inconquerable group of collaborators that has transformed over the years. Editorial work is a team sport, and we have many players to thank. These include our core editorial team members, Sariel Golomb, who first worked as an Editorial Assistant and then our Editorial Fellow, and Katie Maruca, our longstanding Managing Editor. Michael Landez was our first editorial assistant, followed by Cody Norling, Emily Wieder, and Jennifer Ligaya, who were all funded by The University of Iowa and Northwestern University. We are especially grateful to The University of Iowa's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean's Office for contributing 50% research assistantships for three years. We are deeply grateful to our Book Review Editors, Stacey Prickett, Victoria Fortuna, and Camelia Lenart, whose independent work on this section of the journal contributed to the expansion of representation of authors and scholarly endeavors.

Over the years of our editorship, we collaborated with DSA staff and leadership and Cambridge University Press staff on building broader administrative infrastructure, workflow patterns, and policies and procedures to systematize the editorial process with the goals of making the journal run more smoothly and efficiently while attending to our community of scholars and artists with care. These included developing:

- an internal division of labor that allows for collaborative decision making;
- a regularized and streamlined production process;
- Conflict of Interest guidelines to govern anonymous peer review for members of the DRJ editorial team, and members of the DRJ editorial and advisory boards;
- guidelines and a timeline for the publication of special issues;
- numerous correspondence templates for our communication with authors and reviewers;
- expanded pathways for receiving substantive feedback on work regardless of its ultimate publication readiness;
- adaptations to the production process in support of the diverse forms research takes in Dance Studies.

Sariel and Katie played a huge role in these efforts and deserve significant recognition and appreciation.

We have also partnered with the members of the *DRJ* Editorial Board in deliberating questions about the production of knowledge that arise through an academic journal. We are indebted to them for their generosity of spirit and the giving of their time toward the advancement of scholarship: many of them served two terms in their roles. We thank them for their guidance and wisdom, and for initiatives they took to advance the work of the journal and our mission. In 2022, we created an Advisory Board to expand the areas of the world and dance studies sub-fields represented in making decisions pertaining to peer review. Working as a peer reviewer takes time and attention, and we extend gratitude to everyone who served in this capacity on behalf of the journal and also the development of our authors, many of whom were publishing for their first time ever in *DRJ*.

This robust support network associated with the journal allowed us to continue a tradition we admired from previous editorial teams: soliciting special issues through open calls in which

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the guest editors have administrative support but editorial autonomy. The special issues published during our tenure were *Arms Akimbo: Black Women Choreographing Social Change* (53:2 2021), edited by Nadine George-Graves; *Queering Dance Modernism: Sexuality and Race on Stage* (54:2 2022) edited by Mariama Diagne, Lucia Ruprecht, and Eike Wittrock; *Assembly, Gathering, Being with Dance* (55:2 2023), edited by Thomas F. DeFrantz, Jasmine Johnson, and Eric Mullis; and *Dance, Mobility, China*, (57:2 2025) edited by Fangfei Miao. These curated forums brought more voices into the intellectual conversation and illuminated the complexity of their topics.

EXPANDING OUR GLOBAL SCOPE AND REACH

One of our primary intentions as an editorial team was to expand the author pool represented by *Dance Research Journal*, both geographically and professionally, by building a robust, equitable, and inclusive model for assessing submissions and facilitating manuscript revision. As DSA seeks to expand its reach toward a more transnational vision of a dance research community, we regard these steps as the journal's contribution to a more dialogic, deconstructive approach to building the literature in our field. There is no time like the present to advocate for excellent scholarship from outside of the US getting its due from English-language publications and readers. And for researchers in our field, we encourage you to name the political stakes of your research explicitly and the epistemic worlds it draws from so that readers can follow in your footsteps.

The results of this are evidenced by journal issues that feature articles by emerging, independent, and established scholars from across the globe. We facilitated work by researchers residing in Kuwait, Japan, Poland, England, Australia, Spain, Canada, Ukraine, Israel, the Bahamas, Germany, Belgium, and the US, who, in their writing, address forms of movement out of each of those nations as well as China, Argentina, Cuba, Mexico, Algeria, Greece, the former Yugoslavia, South Africa, the Philippines, Indonesia, France, India, Brazil, and Nigeria. Our conversations with *DRJ* author Fangfei Miao about her April 2022 article's momentousness as the journal's first by a Chinese author led to broader discussions with her and others on the epistemic significance of using the journal's resources and platform to elevate authors in China. This led to our collaboration with her on the August 2025 special issue dedicated to the publication of research by Chinese scholars.

We also discovered the joy and significance of working with scholars outside of dance studies—including anthropology, legal studies, literary studies, musicology, religious studies, philosophy, and area studies— who find themselves encountering movement, gesture, and embodiment in their own projects. Here, we provided methodological guidance: how might the body play a more central role in this line of inquiry? Where could thick description be employed to focus the reader's gaze on motion? In that sense, we challenged our own understanding of the boundaries of "dance studies" toward more interdisciplinary perspectives.

This diverse array of research articles is already yielding critical recognition from the field. Royona Mitra's "Unmaking Contact: Choreographic Touch at the Intersections of Race, Caste, and Gender" (December 2021 issue) won DSA's Gertrude Lippincott Award in 2022, and Alexander H. Schwan's "Queering Jewish Dance: Baruch Agadati" (August 2022) received honorable mention for the Lippincott in 2023. Tia-Monique Uzor's "Tidalectic Un/Mapping" (December 2023) was short-listed for the 2025 Lynette Goddard Award, and Ariel Nereson's "Myself, Dancing: Choreographies of Black Womanhood in US Dance and History" (August 2021) won the Vera Mowry Roberts Award for best essay in theatre studies from the American Theatre and Drama Society in 2022.

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WORKING WITH AUTHORS

We have made a concerted effort to optimize the journal's feedback model and to demystify and humanize the journal editing process.

- Every single article that was submitted received some level of personalized feedback.
- We elevated the quality of feedback authors received by expanding the pool of peer reviewers and providing them with clearer instructions, rubrics and correspondence templates for giving constructive criticism.
- When written feedback was not enough, we met directly with authors to help make a good article great through deeply-engaged scholarly dialogue.
- We increased editorial support for authors for whom English is not a primary language.
- We worked to address positional blind spots in Dance Studies research toward greater reflexivity vis-a-vis subject matter.
- We participated in symposia at conferences and in webinars to educate the Dance Studies community on best practices for submitting articles as well as giving and receiving feedback.
- In order to increase accessibility, we held office hours at conferences for authors at any stage in their writing.
- Some Editorial Board members also made themselves available to serve as scholarly mentors and developmental editors for some of our authors.

This enhanced interactive relationship with authors was aimed at creating a more ethical and less transactional process for developing scholarship in the field and we hope it provides a model from which our systems for producing knowledge can continue to grow.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

The team took on a number of special projects over the years.

- Curated by *DRJ* Editorial Fellows Sariel Golomb, Jennifer Ligaya Senecal, and Emily Wieder, and inspired by the DSA conference call for papers *Cartographies of Movement*, we sponsored a digital showcase of *DRJ* articles that engage with kinesthetic and epistemological sites of indigeneity.
- We elevated the "Artist Speaks" series as a standing option for submissions–including auto-ethnography, performative writing, interviews, etc.
- We participated in Cambridge University Press's central Core collection for International Women's Day 2023 with the theme: Innovate. Demonstrate. Elevate. Advance. (I.D.E.A.): Bringing communities forward for sustainable and equitable development.

DRJ BY THE NUMBERS

Dance Research Journal has seen an exciting increase in manuscript submissions since our editorial team began its work in 2021. Over the last five years, authors have submitted more than 400 manuscripts. In 2025 alone, we received over 110 new submissions. Our team has worked as diligently as possible to handle each one with care, resulting in longer review periods but greater investment in authors and their work. Readers from more than fifty countries have found their way to *Dance Research Journal* on Cambridge Core, Cambridge University Press's online journal platform. The number of articles downloaded on Cambridge Core has nearly doubled from 2021. We are grateful for the ease of access to the journal by way of DSA membership or many authors' institutions supporting open access of their papers.

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To *DRJ* authors, readers, and the dance studies community… thank you! It takes everyone's participation to make this important ecosystem of knowledge thrive. It has been a profound responsibility and honor to be stewards of this endeavor.

"With gratitude for your time and labor,"

The *DRJ* Editorial Team
Nadine George-Graves, Rebekah J. Kowal, Sariel Golomb, and Katie Maruca

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