

The Dancer-Citizen

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ENGAGEMENT, BELONGING, OBLIGATION **Call for submissions to Issue 6 of *The Dancer-Citizen***

The Dancer-Citizen is an online, open-access, peer-reviewed scholarly journal exploring the work of socially engaged dance artists. This endeavor grew out of our belief in the role of the artist as public intellectual, our curiosity about how dancers observe, explain and comment on the world, and an understanding of the obligation we hold to seek and develop solutions for the challenges facing the communities in which we live and work. We recognize that our diverse roles, experiences and perspectives as practitioners constitute a unique body of knowledge in the world.

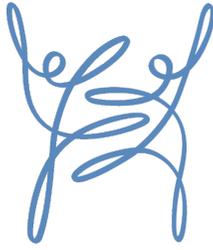
Two years into the publication, we begin to define and describe a field of practice. A discussion has begun as to how notions of “social engagement”, “citizenship”, “belonging” and “obligation” develop and are understood in and by dance scholar/artists—and also in our colleagues and collaborators in other disciplines.

We now issue a call for submissions to Issue 6 of *The Dancer-Citizen*: a special issue exploring the ways these concepts are formed, understood, and instigate in practice.

We invite the participation of artist/scholars who identify as dancer-citizens and artist-citizens in other disciplines to reflect on experiences and practice driven by an individual understanding of belonging and obligation. Further, we invite the contribution of those based in other disciplines whose experience and practice is concerned with citizenship, belonging, obligation to others, or obligation to an ideal or being that manifests itself in practice/scholarship/daily being.

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Submissions are welcome in any form: written, video, other. Information may be found at dancercitizen.org/submissions.

Please consider:

- To whom/to what is one's primary obligation?
- Citizenship above, beyond, and other than national identity
- The artist as public intellectual; as other; as revolutionary; as scientist; as prophet?
- Keeping it "true": can a discipline confer morality?
- On clarity, recognition, and identity:

I realized that to be with [Companhia Urbana de Dança] was and is everything to me. They give me joy, they give me a political way to look at the world. I feel myself with a mission to be here with them. Every day is a day to talk about things. Every rehearsal is a day and an opportunity for change. Every performance is a chance to show their potential as citizens and as human beings. Really. I am not being naïve and sweet—two things I am not, for real. But it's a chance to be good as people, as a human being, to be better, to dance.

—Sonia Destri

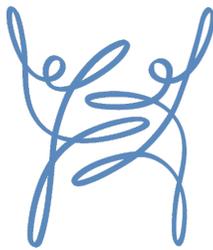
-On role, collaboration, and exploration:

Dancer-Citizen formulates a problematic. It goes beyond the ways communities are formed around activities, where, for example, professionally trained dancers might offer and participate in classes with non-professionals for health as much as for pleasure. It suggests codes of behavior, and therefore, as an artistic discipline it challenges its sibling arts with Actor-Citizen, Artist-Citizen, Musician-Citizen, etc.. What are our codes? How are they circumscribed? Are they the same or different? These are some of the thoughts I've been wondering about with the formulation Dancer-Citizen, and the journal's idea to put its research into action with its first public events.

I am not a dancer, so my thoughts have been more abstract, unanchored to some of the traditional notions that dancers might have about

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citizenship. And it has also helped to unmoor myself from my own musician's orientation. But the tone of these times—with so many social norms challenged by polarizing ideas, attitudes and behaviors—cannot but influence how Dancer-Citizen proposes a response to the problematic.

The hyphenated artist (dancer-citizen, activist-artist) is a kind of announcement or proclamation that attaches a social consciousness to their practices, where abstract painter, ballet dancer and conceptual artist might appear not to. Yet, while one doesn't preclude another, the roots of our generation's hyphenated artists stretch back to those of Anna Halprin and John Cage. And institutions like Khmer Arts in Long Beach, CA, demonstrate that they are not dominated by any one cultural sensibility. My own response is to hybridize our disciplines, to open creative work in ways that are inclusive (work not restricted by professional level skills), inquisitive, and do not compromise artistic integrity. Artistic integrity occupies a vague cornerstone of our practices; however, predicated on inquisitiveness, artistic integrity becomes a function of exploration, inquiry, experimentation, and the necessary work (i.e. discipline) to achieve what it demands.

— Daniel Rothman

-On engagement and ethical development:

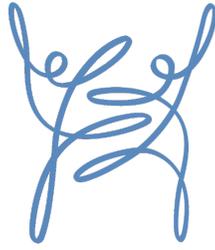
It seems to me that some of the most important social benefits associated with artistic citizenship stem from active practical (which is to say, ethical) engagement. Appreciatively observing others' ethical/artistic habits and dispositions may be beneficial but is not nearly as potent as direct personal engagement. Without minimizing the importance of presentational artistry's potential to exemplify responsible citizenship, then, we would do well to acknowledge and honor the importance of participatory artistic practices in which cooperative action, not appreciative reception, is key.

— Wayne D. Bowman

-On diasporic, migratory, and/or borderless identity:

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Where is the beginning of a conversation about the contemporary migrations of diasporic movers (performers, teachers, artists)? I think it is home—a birthplace or a place where most of the rearing of childhood occurred. For many of us home is a location in the world that is a part of a nation. The United States of America or the nationality 'American' requires some black and/or African American women to struggle through their identity as a citizen of the U.S. The journey is not clean and dry and it is not over. It is a continual migration from one identity marker to the next and making decisions sometimes in a swift moment about who you are or will be - and this is also sometimes decided by others for you. This is a constant for those who have committed to a life of engaging with black/African diasporic dances and movement cultures.

— Lela Aisha Jones

Works Cited

Jane Alexandre, *Dance Leadership: Theory into Practice*. Palgrave Macmillan: London (2017)

Wayne D. Bowman, "Artistry, Ethics, and Citizenship," in *Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Praxis* by David J. Elliott, Marissa Silverman and Wayne D. Bowman, (eds.). Oxford University Press, 2016: 59-80

Lela Aisha Jones, "Citizenship-Where do We Begin" in *Diasporic Movement Practices: black/African Embodied Translineages and Contemporary Migrations*. Unpublished dissertation, 2017.

Daniel Rothman, email message to the author, August 14, 2017

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