

*It's About Time: Dancing Black in
Canada 1900 – 1970 and Now*

Otoniya J. Okot Bitek | Justine A. Chambers

Adriana Contreras | Ceilidh Munroe

Support Material

OCT 13 - DEC 9, 2022

TECK GALLERY

Presented at both Audain Gallery and Teck Gallery

AUDAIN GALLERY

SFU Goldcorp Centre for the Arts
149 West Hastings Street, Vancouver BC, V6B 1H4
778.782.9102

TECK GALLERY

SFU Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings Street
Vancouver BC, V6B 5K3
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Exhibition Text

It's About Time: Dancing Black in Canada 1900 – 1970 and Now illuminates the largely undocumented dance history of Canada's Black population before 1970, with responses from contemporary performing and visual artists reflecting on how the archival resonates in this moment, and in British Columbia. Guest curated by Seika Boye, PhD, this archival exhibition exposes the representation of Blackness on Canadian stages, as well as audience and media reception of Black performance in Canada during this era. *It's About Time* also explores legislation of leisure culture, dance lessons and the role of social dances at mid-century. Featured are individual dance artists such as Leonard Gibson, Ola Skanks, Ethel Bruneau, Joey Hollingsworth, and Kathryn Brown. This is the fifth presentation of the archival materials in *It's About Time*, and includes new commissions from dance artist Justine A. Chambers, visual artist Ceilidh Munroe, poet and scholar Otoniya J. Okot Bitek, with a graphic response by Adriana Contreras.

It's About Time was originally commissioned by Dance Collection Danse (2018) and further developed in partnership with Mitchell Art Gallery (2020). Partners: SFU School of Contemporary Arts; Mitchell Art Gallery; MacEwan University; Dance Collection Danse Gallery.

Guest curated by Seika Boye

dancingblackincanada.ca

Events

Opening Reception

WED, OCT 12 / 5 - 7PM

Spotlight Presentations: Miss Coco Murray and Emilie Jabouin

FRI, OCT 14 / 2PM

Tour: Seika Boye and Ceilidh Munroe

FRI, OCT 14 / 5PM

Talk: Otoniya J. Okot Bitek

SUN, OCT 23 / 2PM

The Bernard Reading Circle: led by SFU Galleries Director
Kimberly Phillips

THU, NOV 24 / 12 - 1:30PM

Performance: Justine A. Chambers

FRI, DEC 2 / 7PM

Teck Gallery

Biographies

Seika Boye is a scholar, writer, educator, and artist whose practices revolve around dance and movement. She is an Assistant Professor and Director of the Institute for Dance Studies at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies, University of Toronto. Seika curated the archival exhibition *It's About Time: Dancing Black in Canada 1900–1970* and co-curated *Into the Light: Eugenics and Education in Southern Ontario*. Her publications have appeared in numerous academic journals and magazines, and she was an Artist-in-Residence at the Art Gallery of Ontario (2018). She was the Toronto District School Board's African Heritage Educators' Network Arts Honoree (2019) and in 2020 was the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Heritage Trust Award for her work on *Into the Light*.

Otoniya J. Okot Bitek is a poet. Her *100 Days* (University of Alberta 2016), a book of poetry that reflects on the meaning of memory two decades after the Rwanda genocide, was nominated for several writing prizes including the 2017 BC Book Prize, the Pat Lowther Award, the 2017 Alberta Book Awards and the 2017 Canadian Authors Award for Poetry. It won the 2017 IndieFab Book of the Year Award for poetry and the 2017 Glenna Luschei Prize for African Poetry. *A is for Acholi* (Wolsak and Wynn 2022), a new collection of poetry, is her most recent publication. Okot Bitek is an assistant professor at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

Justine A. Chambers is a choreographer, dancer, and educator living and working on the traditional and ancestral Coast Salish territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm, S_kw_xwú7mesh, and səliłwətaʔɫ. Her movement-based practice considers how choreography can be an empathic practice rooted in collaborative creation, close observation, and the body as a site of a cumulative embodied archive. She is Max Tyler-Hite's mother.

Adriana Contreras is an Interdisciplinary Artist, bilingual Graphic Recorder and Illustrator (English and Spanish), born in Bogotá, Colombia, living and working with respect and gratitude on the unceded, traditional territory of the x^wməθk^wəy^əm, Sk^wxwú7mesh, and səlilwətaʔ Nations. Artistic expression has always been a central part of Adriana's life but became an essential tool for navigating the world as a first-generation immigrant. Her migration journey profoundly informs her work and commitment to social justice at a local and global level. Adriana completed her BFA at SFU's School for the Contemporary Arts in 2006 and has worked at numerous local Arts organizations for over the past 20 years.

Ceilidh Munroe is a Jamaican-Canadian artist living and working on the unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wəy^əm, Sk^wxwú7mesh, and səlilwətaʔ Nations. She works primarily in print media with a focus in relief and monotype printing, although this does not exclude experiments with other media. She typically engages with print media in unusual and thoughtful ways, taking the printing process away from paper and using it to explore other methods of production. Her work often engages with the architecture of its surroundings, drawing closely on the contexts in which it is presented. Her practice is partnered with a passion for fine arts education that manifests itself in developing workshops, writing, facilitating discussion, leading tours, and more.

Adriana Contreras

from a dialogue of a dancing life: Ashley Perez, 2020

vinyl

Graphic response of dialogues with Seika Boye and Ashley Perez

Adriana Contreras' creative process is one of witnessing, deep listening, sense-making, and translation, to weave oral history into visual language. Zooming in and out of stories, Contreras created large-format graphic responses of audio recordings of Seika Boye in dialogue with Ashley Perez (2020), and Justine A. Chambers (2022), and mapped out their artistic trajectories. This process works to centre artist involvement in the documentation of their dancing lives. The graphic response as a record and art object is offered back to the artist as a gift of thanks for sharing their stories.

Ashely Perez (she/her) is a teacher, dancer and choreographer. She is the Co-Artistic Director of Mix Mix Dance Collective. Mix Mix has showcased work at Fall For Dance North (2017), Contemporaneity 3.0 (2019), and represented Canada at the Jeux de la Francophonie (2017) in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire). Perez's talent was awarded the 2018 Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Performance, Ensemble in the Dance Division for Floor'd presented by Holla Jazz in 2018. Perez continues to teach street dances with her enterprise, Class with Colours. Perez has recently completed her MA in Dance at York University.

Adriana Contreras

from a dialogue of a dancing life: Justine Chambers, 2022
vinyl

Justine A. Chambers will create a movement-based work in response to a graphic recording derived from 4 hours of oral history interviews focused on her dancing life. Her performance will close the exhibition on December 2, 2022 at Teck Gallery.

Adriana Contreras' creative process is one of witnessing, deep listening, sense-making, and translation, to weave oral history into visual language. Zooming in and out of stories, Contreras creates large-format graphic responses from audio recordings of Seika Boye in dialogue with Ashley Perez (2020) and Justine A. Chambers (2022), mapping out their artistic trajectories. These visuals are a growing series for Seika Boye's archival exhibition *It's About Time: Dancing Black in Canada 1900-1970 and Now*. This process works to centre artist involvement in the documentation of their dancing lives. The graphic response as a record and art object is offered back to the artist as a gift of thanks for sharing their stories.

Bibliography

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