

Statement on the Inviolability of Movement as a Right

As scholars and artists in dance we investigate, theorize, and practice movement in all its expansive meanings and possibilities. Therefore, this statement expresses our deep concern for those moving across borders who seek safety from violence, slavery, military occupation and poverty resulting from colonialism, disaster capitalism, and trans-border exploitative economic policies. These policies have violent outcomes for people whose movements are conducted to survive conditions of precarity; these policies disproportionately harm and destroy populations made vulnerable through ongoing conditions of coloniality and imperialism, including Indigenous peoples, people of color, children, women, queer and trans persons, and others. As a field, we also point out the serious implications for artists and scholars--especially those who are stateless or from underdeveloped countries--who travel to share their work, to research, and to learn, and whose ability to travel freely has been curtailed by travel bans and xenophobic policies.

As such, we extend our support to all those affected by these policies around the world, including artists, students, faculty, and staff in our field and beyond.

We stand in solidarity with the inviolable right and freedom to move.

We move to live, to survive, to thrive, to connect, to exchange, to celebrate, to mourn, to protest, to escape. Movement conducted in respectful relationship to earth and Indigenous peoples and caretakers of land--as well as other-than-human beings inhabiting the land--is an imperative of our existence as a species, and one that must never be compromised.

We regard the possibility of shifting in space, and the altering of our physical and social conditions of being, as a basic tenet of our political existence and a connective thread across species as we strive to live in greater harmony with the planet and each other.

Furthermore, we demand that governments across the world recognize the inviolability and even sacredness of willful and respectful bodily, spiritual, and intellectual movement, reminding authorities (and each other) that nation-state "borders" have been arbitrarily set on native or tribal lands across this entire continent, and beyond.

Moreover, as a professional association rooted in colonial histories and Eurocentric paradigms, we commit to overturning the historical racism, homophobia and transphobia, ableism, and discourses and practices of appropriation in the field of dance studies, by recognizing, underscoring, and supporting the many forms of internal and external movement as an inviolable human right.

Thus, we join The Council of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association statement issued on August 5th 2019, which in turn echoed an Open Letter by Maya scholars (May 31, 2019) directed at the governments of the United States, Mexico, and Guatemala. These statements called for an end to violence and disappearance of Native American and Indigenous people, and for formal investigations and accountability, as well as acts of reparation by the states involved in the many violations of the right to movement as self-determination at these borders.

We join the UC Davis Asian American Studies statement on DACA from September 2017, condemning “the Trump administration’s decision to revoke the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the anti-Muslim/Arab/African travel ban,” and plans to further militarize and segment the U.S.-Mexico border.

Lastly, we echo the American Anthropological Association statement of June 19, 2018, which states that “the recent order to separate nearly 2,000 immigrant children from their parents now delves deep into the realm of cruel, malicious, and inhumane. The American Anthropological Association resolutely rejects the decision to hold children hostage as an outright mean-spirited political ploy that will have repercussions well into the future on both sides of the border.”

So Moved,
The Dance Studies Association

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