

CICELY A. KELLEY, MFA

CHOREOGRAPHER | EDUCATOR | CREATIVE



CONTACT

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 www.cicikelley.me

 CiCi Kelley, MFA

PROFILE

Dance educator with over 25 years of comprehensive experience in film and television, choreography, dance history, adjudication, and theoretical application. Consistently acknowledged for excellence in performance and significant contributions to the fine arts, as well as for providing mentorship and guidance to emerging artists. Proven strengths in leadership, collaborative projects and extensive technical expertise in Jazz, Contemporary, Modern, and Hip Hop dance techniques. Specified research focus within Black Performance Theory.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

MFA in Dance
The University Of The Arts

BA Dance Performance & Choreography
Spelman College

CERTIFICATIONS

Florida State University
Professional Certification In
College Student Wellbeing,
Trauma & Resilience

Emory University
Women In Leadership: Driving
Transformation Through
Innovation And Resilience
Professional Certification

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIP

CADD Presenter:
That's My Phenotype!

The Collegium for African
Diaspora Dance.
Duke University

**Mellon Grant: Black Queer
Social Dance In ATL**

Co-producer & collaborator In
partnership with Northwestern
University & Slippage Lab.

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

INTERIM DEPARTMENT CHAIR
Spelman College | Current

Department Of Dance Performance & Choreography

- Oversee and manage the departmental budget, ensuring alignment with academic and operational priorities throughout the academic year.
- Advocate for annual budget increases to enhance educational resources and student experiences, supporting the department's growth and innovation.
- Foster collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders to create experiential learning opportunities for students, enriching their academic and professional development.
- Design and implement recruitment strategies and programming initiatives to attract prospective students to the Department of Dance Performance & Choreography, highlighting academic opportunities and department offerings.
- Develop and coordinate opportunities for students to fulfill community service requirements, contributing to their academic and professional growth while strengthening community ties.
- Contribute to the development of a diverse and dynamic curriculum, enhancing student engagement and supporting measurable learning outcomes.

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Dance/USA

2025 Finalist for the Dance/USA Fellowships to Artists Program

KONTROL MAGAZINE

Choreographer Of The Year

Bronze Lens Film Festival

Official Selection, That's My Phenotype!

Lifetime Experience Scholar

The University Of The Arts

Dance Fellow

The University Of The Arts

GRANTS

Faculty Development Grant - Spelman College

Grant to develop a trans temporal conversation between the past and present dispositions of Black womanhood

PUBLICATIONS

Black Social Dance: Geographies of Freedom

In Press
SLIPPAGE publications,
October 2025

Le corps d'une femme noire américaine

A body of work focused on the black female body in American culture from past to present, through a trans-temporal lens of a Fictive Sisterhood Kinship

ArtsATL

Q&A: CiCi Kelley on choreographing the roots of jazz in Bolden, the motion picture

- Serve as an advocate for institutional academic integrity, ensuring adherence to policies and maintaining accountability within the department.
- Contribute to the successful coordination and logistical planning of the department's transition to the new Center for Innovation & the Arts, ensuring a smooth relocation for faculty, students, and departmental operations.

SENIOR LECTURER

Spelman College | (Adjunct 2017 -2021) 2021- Current

Department Of Dance Performance + Choreography

- Designed and implemented syllabi that delve into dance histories, emphasizing Africanist performance history and Black womanist theory, to enrich students' understanding of cultural contexts within dance practices.
- Facilitated rigorous technical training in Jazz, contemporary, and commercial dance aesthetics, fostering a comprehensive skill set in students within an academic environment.
- Cultivated career centered pipelines for professional opportunities, helping students translate their academic learning, theoretical insights, and artistic expression into real-world choreographic applications.
- Organized engaging global lectures and research initiatives focusing on Black womanist dancers and choreographers, enhancing interdisciplinary connections between film studies, stage performances, and historical research.

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SPELMAN DANCE THEATRE DIRECTOR

Spelman College | Current

Department Of Dance Performance & Choreography

- Directed the artistic vision for a series of resident guest artist collaborations, and student works, with an intense focus on research and theoretical concepts acquired within related coursework, to culminate in choreographic works for semester-end performances.
- Curated digital media content to effectively showcase company members, promote company initiatives, and preserve archival materials.
- Facilitated rehearsal processes for both company members and guest choreographers, ensuring a smooth creative workflow.
- Developed graphics, film reels, and digital artwork for departmental presentations, enhancing visual communication.
- Oversaw the production of end-of-semester performance concerts, managing all logistical aspects to ensure successful events.
- Established student leadership roles and responsibilities, to enhance learned skill sets from the classroom to in the field application.

PERFORMANCE STUDIES WORKING GROUP | SPELMAN COLLEGE

Faculty Learning Community | Spring 2023-Fall 2024

Sponsored By The Office of Research, Innovation, and Collaboration (ORIC), Teaching Resource and Research Center (TRRC), & The Provost Office

- Collaborated with fellow scholars to develop an interdisciplinary curriculum centered on performance theory.
- Conducted scholarly and creative research through the cultural perspectives of Latin America, the Afro-Caribbean, and the African American Diasporas.
- Partnered with peers to organize a college-wide symposium focused on sharing research findings and insights.
- Presented embodied practices to the senior leadership team and student body, emphasizing the principles of performance studies and the associated work.

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ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT CONTINUED

STUDENT ADVISOR

Spelman College | 2021 - Current

Service To Institution

- Delivered high-quality advisory support to first-year students, fostering a positive transition into college life.
- Assisted students in developing class schedules aligned with their intended major and minor, while ensuring compliance with general education requirements.
- Offered tailored guidance on course sequencing for matriculation, addressing socio-emotional needs, and providing mentorship to facilitate student success and graduation.
- Educated students about available college services, including counseling, tutoring, and career fairs, to enhance their academic experience and personal development.

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE ADVISOR

Spelman College | 2021 - Current

Student Success & Advisement

- Facilitate the engagement of first-year students through coursework that supports their academic progression and promotes essential life skills applicable in everyday scenarios.
- Develop and implement course modules, lead class discussions, and mentor students in the compilation of their first-year writing portfolios.
- Foster constructive and collaborative discourse among students on contemporary political and societal issues while encouraging solution-oriented approaches to instigate meaningful change and personal growth.

RESIDENT GUEST ARTIST

South Carolina School Of The Arts | 2023

Creative Practice. Repertoire Curation. Mentorship

- Restaged the personal archived repertoire piece "Bashiri" for the senior company, culminating in an end-of-season performance.
- Served as a guest speaker and panelist for performing arts majors, discussing career aspirations, challenges, and pathways to success in the arts.

GUEST ARTIST + REHEARSAL DIRECTOR

The University Of The Arts | 2020 - 2021 AY

Creative Research & Practice

- Collaborated with Mr. Wayne St. David, the Curricular Head of the Jazz Dance Department, to implement a Frank Hatchett "VOP" style jazz dance for dance major students.
- Directed the rehearsal process and offered creative oversight for the filming and editing of our joint project for the spring concert premiere.

GUEST ARTIST + SPEAKER

Kennesaw State University | 2020 - 2021 AY

Black Voices Movement Panelist

- Conducted a master class series for dance majors and ensemble participants, focusing on advanced techniques and performance practices.
- Served as a panelist alongside esteemed dance historians and scholars for the KSU Dance Collective: Black Voices in Movement, aimed at amplifying Black voices and celebrating Black excellence in the arts.

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RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, & PRACTICE

GUEST ARTIST

South Carolina Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance | 2019

Research In Action

- Conducted master classes and workshops for students and faculty within the South Carolina school district, focusing on Fine Arts and recreational dance.

OWNER + ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dare Dream Dance | Established 2013

Theory In Practice + Success

- Developed and implemented comprehensive commercial dance education programs for pre-professional youth dancers, spanning from elementary to high school levels, in partnership with classical ballet, Horton, and tap dance methodologies.
- Facilitated mentorship and collaborative initiatives with industry professionals, providing graduating high school students with essential guidance, networking opportunities, and leadership development.
- Offered a variety of professional opportunities and scholarships, alongside SAG-AFTRA credits, to enhance each student's résumé and career prospects.
- Organized and conducted seminars and workshops focused on brand awareness, industry practices in film and television, as well as audition and stage etiquette to enrich student understanding and preparedness.

CHOREOGRAPHER + CASTING

KING Bolden Movie | 2013-2014

Research, Development, + Production

- Led the research and development of innovative choreographic content for a major film production.
- Employed historical Black social dance vocabulary to design phrase and gestural work for over 300 dancers and principal talent.
- Organized and facilitated auditions, overseeing the hiring and casting of more than 300 dancers across New York, Atlanta, New Orleans, and Wilmington, under SAG contracts for a three-month production period.

MASTER CLASS INSTRUCTION

Georgia State University | 2013

In Practice

- Conducted a master class series for the Dance Ensemble at Georgia State University, enhancing students' performance skills and techniques.
- Facilitated a Q&A session for Georgia State University students and community members, addressing industry standards and best practices in the dance field.