MARSAE LYNETTE MITCHELL

Performance Studies · Choreography · Environmental Humanities
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RESEARCH INTERESTS AND METHODOLOGY

Afro-diasporic and Indigenous performance; cultural preservation and ecological stewardship; environmental justice; critical performance ethnography; practice-as-research; ritual and ceremony; ecowomanism. Creator of the AARCC Approach: Acknowledge, Activate, Refine, Ceremony, Continue.

EDUCATION

PhD Candidate, Performance Studies, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL — Expected 2028
- Dissertation: Performing Preservation: Choreographing Resilience, Restoration, and Cultural Transformation
- Advisor: Thomas F. DeFrantz; Committee: D. Soyini Madison and Marquis Bey
- Qualifying examinations successfully completed (2026); dissertation prospectus completed (2026).

MFA, Dance, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI — 2023

Graduate Teaching Certificate, University of Michigan — 2023

Graduate Certificate, Arts Entrepreneurship and Leadership, University of Michigan — 2023

Graduate Certificate, World Performance Studies, University of Michigan — 2023

BFA, Performing Arts, Marygrove College, Detroit, MI — 2009

RESEARCH APPOINTMENTS AND FIELDWORK

Fulbright U.S. Student Researcher, Trinidad and Tobago — 2026–2027
- Dissertation research on Afro-diasporic and Indigenous ecological performance, cultural memory, and community-centered environmental stewardship.
- Developing fieldwork through the AARCC Approach and research-through-performance in collaboration with Trinidad and Tobago arts and community organizations.

Graduate Research Fellow, Center for Native American and Indigenous Research (CNAIR), Northwestern University — 2025–2026
- Supported Indigenous-centered research, scholarly exchange, and dissertation development.

Kaplan Public Humanities Graduate Practicum Fellow, Northwestern University — 2025–2026
- Public humanities and community-engaged ecological arts programming.

ACADEMIC TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Choreographer and Instructor, The Stage School, Chicago, IL — 2024–Present
- Designed movement instruction and choreography for youth musical theatre; 2026 production assignments included Aladdin and The Addams Family.

Graduate Assistant, Black Arts Consortium, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL — 2024–2025
- Directed communications and digital outreach; coordinated scholarly programs, artist talks, and events.

Teaching Artist in Residence, REACH Culturally Inclusive Arts Integration, Chicago, IL — 2024–2025
- Designed arts-integrated curricula and facilitated sustained educator professional development.

Choreographer and Instructor, Interlochen Center for the Arts, Interlochen, MI — 2023

Graduate Student Instructor of Record, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI — 2020–2022
- Courses: Body Language; Introduction to Tap; Magnetism, Manifestos, and Movement. Designed syllabi, instruction, and digital course sites.

Dance Instructor and Performing Arts Program Coordinator, Detroit Public Schools (Mumford High School), Detroit, MI 2016–2020
Directed dance instruction, student performances, and four showcase programs annually; developed technique, choreography, and performance curricula.

Director of Adult Dance Ministry, Triumph Church, Detroit, MI 2016–2018
Taught dance technique and choreographed congregational performances across church locations.

Director of Events, 24grille at the Westin Book Cadillac, Detroit, MI 2014–2016
Managed event staff, promotions, public events, and performance metrics.

Director of After School Programs, Woodward Academy, Detroit, MI 2012–2014
Designed K–8 programming, supervised six instructors, and managed budgets.

Substitute Teacher, Paraprofessional, and Administrative Assistant, Midwest Staffing and Woodward Academy, Detroit, MI 2010–2014
Supported K–8 classroom instruction and long-term teaching assignments.

PUBLICATIONS AND CREATIVE SCHOLARSHIP

Mitchell, Marsae. "Spirit of Water." Public: A Journal of Imagining America, vol. 7, no. 1.
Mitchell, Marsae. "The River Score." In Dance We Must: Choreographies of Time and Uncertainty, edited by Charli Brissey. Wesleyan University Press. (Forthcoming.)
Lynette, Marsae, and Shawn Antoine II. "Spelling." Emergent Literary, Issue Six: Vivarium.

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS AND CONFERENCES

Public Humanities Symposium, Northwestern University. Public-facing dissertation and ecological arts research. May 29, 2026

CNAIR Symposium, Northwestern University. Research on Afro-diasporic and Indigenous ecological performance practices. Apr. 9–10, 2026

CNAIR Emerging Indigenous Research & Knowledge Gathering, Northwestern University. Dissertation research presentation. Feb. 21, 2026

"Performing Preservation: Choreographing Resilience, Restoration, and Cultural Transformation." Rex Nettleford Arts Conference, Kingston, Jamaica. Oct. 15–17, 2025

"Reconnecting Currents." Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference, St. Petersburg, FL. May 30–Jun. 2, 2024

"Spirit of Water." Dance Studies Association Conference, Vancouver, BC. Oct. 24–26, 2022

"Body Language Movement Class." American College Dance Association, Athens, OH. Mar. 5–7, 2022

"Reflecting Connecting Currents." Collegium for African Diaspora Dance, Durham, NC. Feb. 18–20, 2022

SELECTED CREATIVE WORK

In the Time of the Butterflies, Josephine Louis Theater, Evanston, IL. Choreographer; directed by Mariana Parejo Molinares. 2026

Beauty and the Beat: A Warrior Reborn, Ayodele African Drum and Dance Annual Concert. Guest artist. 2026

Aladdin and The Addams Family, The Stage School, Chicago, IL. Choreographic assignments listed for June 2026. 2026

Geografías Líquidas, Sankofa Danzafro, Colombia. Guest artist and performer during international residency. 2025

Honeypot: Black Southern Women Who Love Women, Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts, Evanston, IL. Choreographer and folkloric music/vocal arrangement. 2025

For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf, Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre, Evanston, IL. Choreographer. 2024

Reconnecting Currents: Limnol Memories, Lake Michigan, Chicago, IL. Writer, director, choreographer. 2024

Reconnecting Currents, Erie, PA. Site-specific iteration; writer, director, choreographer. 2023

Reconnecting Currents: Women of the Rivers, Flint River, Flint, MI. Writer, director, choreographer; shoreline cleanup with Freshwater Futures. 2023

Reconnecting Currents: A Healing at the Huron, University Musical Society, Ypsilanti, MI. Participatory performance; writer, director, choreographer. 2023

SpellING (Green Bay), experimental dance film. Writer and choreographer; Best Experimental Short, Astoria Film Festival (2025). 2023

Reconnecting Currents: Women of the Rivers, Detroit River at Belle Isle, Detroit, MI. Writer, director, choreographer. 2022

Reconnecting Currents: Women of the Rivers, MFA thesis, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. Writer, producer, choreographer. 2022

Hastings Street, Detroit Music Hall, Detroit, MI. Choreographer. 2022

The Magnolia Ballet, Williamston Theatre, Williamston, MI. Choreographer. 2022

Spirit of Water, commissioned screen dance, Sidewalk Festival, Detroit, MI. Writer, producer, choreographer. 2021

Reflect. Black. Times., screen dance, Kresge Foundation / Detroit Sidewalk Festival. Writer, producer, choreographer. 2020

My Hair, My Story, My Glory, Charles H. Wright Museum, Detroit, MI. Co-writer, co-producer, choreographer. 2016

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS AND AWARDS

Fulbright U.S. Student Award, Trinidad and Tobago 2026–2027

Buffett International Pre-Dissertation Research Award, Northwestern University 2026

Graduate Research Grant, Northwestern University 2026

Robert S. and Gertrude B. Green Memorial Award, Northwestern University 2026

Breen Memorial Award, Northwestern University Performance Studies 2026

Kaplan Public Humanities Graduate Practicum Fellowship, Northwestern University 2025–2026

CNAIR Graduate Research Fellowship, Northwestern University 2025–2026

Best Experimental Short, Astoria Film Festival (Green Bay / SpellING) 2025

Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) Individual Artist Program Grant 2025

Global Water Dances Site Lead 2023

Language Study Scholarship Award 2022

Center for the Education of Women+ (CEW+) Scholar 2021

Gupta Scholar 2021

Rackham International Research Award 2021

African American Studies Center Research Award 2021

Rackham Merit Fellowship 2020

Center for World Performance Studies Fellowship 2020

Detroit Public Schools Outstanding Educator Award 2018

Kresge Foundation Gilda Snowden Award 2016

Marygrove College Outstanding Dancer of the Year 2009

Marygrove College Student Leadership Award 2007

SELECTED ARTIST RESIDENCIES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BADS Lab Artist Residency May 2026

SoulWork Intensive with Dr. Cristal Truscott. Selected / accepted. 2026

Sankofa Danzafro Guest Artist Residency, Colombia. Geografías Líquidas; Medellín and Bogotá, including Bogotá Biennial participation. Oct.–Nov. 2025

Black Ecologies Institute, Black Arts Consortium 2025

Saltwater Road Artist Residency 2024

SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

Elected Executive Board Member, Tapology Dance Festival, Flint, MI 2025–2026

Artist Activist Revolutionary Creative Collective (AARCC): collective organizing, public humanities, performance-based ecological research, and method development Ongoing

Organizer, Spring Warm Up: Conversations with Performance Scholars, Northwestern University Spring 2026

Member, African Diasporic Religions Working Group 2025–2026

SELECTED PRESS

Chicago Reader. “To love oneself fiercely: Fleetwood-Jourdain’s vibrant revival of For Colored Girls lets Ntozake Shange’s poetry sing.” Jul. 24, 2024

WEMU 89.1. “Huron River cleanup in downtown Ypsilanti aims to heal.” Jun. 9, 2023

“A Healing at the Huron”: U-M student-led interactive dance at Ypsilanti Freighthouse. May 2, 2023

CanvasRebel. “Stories and Insights.” Nov. 21, 2022

Saudi Aramco World. “National Arab Orchestra Hits the Right Notes.” Vol. 65. Oct. 5, 2014

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD) | Dance Studies Association (DSA)

LANGUAGES

English (native) | Spanish (intermediate) | Yoruba (intermediate; Levels II–III completed) | Swahili (novice)