

Call for Papers
Contemporary Ballet: Exchanges, Connections and Directions
May 20-21, 2016

An SDHS Special Topics Conference
at the Center for Ballet and the Arts, New York University,
and the Department of Dance, Barnard College, Columbia University

Contemporary ballet is undoubtedly a recognizable genre for most dancers. It is identifiable and it appears to be flourishing. But, what is contemporary ballet? Does it need classification and definition so that we can historicize this moment in dance? The 2015 issue of *Conversations across the Field of Dance Studies: Network of Pointes* began to articulate some of the features of the genre. This conference will further the discussions emergent from the publication and broaden the scope with new voices.

NYU's Center for Ballet and the Arts and the Department of Dance, Barnard College, Columbia University will serve as the locations for this special topics conference. As it stands to initiate conversations about ballet that develop from the theme of exchanges, connections and directions, the conference offers an opportunity for those interested in contemporary ballet to meet in one of the presumed cultural capitals of ballet: New York City. We seek to bring together scholars, dancers, historians, critics, choreographers and teachers. The conference aims to address the following questions:

- What is contemporary ballet? How do contemporary ballet bodies differ and are they redefining the genre? What makes a ballet or company 'contemporary'? Is it a deviation at the level of style, form, or composition?
- How is contemporary ballet interpreted internationally? Which choreographers/companies are working in this genre today?
- Is contemporary ballet a hybrid form? In what ways might discussion be framed that does not reify unproductive categorizations, but helps explain the transitions being shaped?
- How are new ballet histories addressing contemporary ballet and its choreographers and practitioners?
- Has the role of women as ballet choreographers changed when it comes to contemporary ballet? How are women (as choreographers) inserting themselves into a historically patriarchal medium of ballet choreography? Has the vehicle of contemporary ballet done something to instigate or reimagine their role as ballet choreographer?
- "Diversity" is often used to explain the look of contemporary companies...is this at the level of body image/physicality, race, ethnicity, quality of movement? Does contemporary ballet seek to move ballet beyond its Western European hierarchical organization or does it simply re-present in different ways?
- How do choreographers/artists/pedagogues speak about their practices and the current state of ballet? How do the connections between various balletic styles and schools impact the notion of "contemporary ballet"? Is there variation when it comes to training, if so, at what stage?
- How does the contemporary designation shift the discourse in terms of practice, performance, and historicizing?
- How are women's bodies represented in contemporary ballet? Are women's bodies represented in ways significantly different from men?
- How do contemporary ballet choreographers approach issues of emotion and/or music?
- How might new histories of ballet be written? What are the challenges that surround re-naming in the genre of ballet and how do artists and audiences respond when such changes occur?

Please send your proposal of no more than 200 words, accompanied by a biography of no more than 100 words, to the program committee chairs at contemporaryballet2016@gmail.com **by January 18, 2016** stating any technical requirements. For more information, please access <https://contemporaryballet2016.wordpress.com/> or follow on Twitter @ballet2016

Program Committee Chairs: Jill Nunes Jensen, Ph.D., Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles) and Kathrina Farrugia-Kriel, Ph.D., Faculty of Education Royal Academy of Dance (London)
Local Arrangements Chair: Ariel Osterweis, Ph.D., Skidmore College