

Re/membering Bamboula Embodying Home

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Artist Statement

Inspired by Katherine Dunham's theory of memory of difference, Ushindi Niwetu uses dance performance, dance-making, and dance education to educate, connect, and empower the African Diaspora. The creation of her work is guided by African culture, and the centrality of dance to it. She utilizes an Afrocentric approach to dance which is centered on polyrhythmic and polycentric movement, the connection to spirituality and nature, Diasporic narratives, and ultimately the African human being.

Artistic Manifestation

I'm an embodied cultural historian and artist. I've traveled throughout the African continent and the African Diaspora studying the dances and now I'm studying the dances of my immediate home, of my Diasporic pinpoint. I'm uncovering Bamboula and embodying home.



Precis

I'm thinking about how we as African people/people of the African Diaspora decide what a dance or rhythm will be, what purpose it'll serve, how it will be danced, etc.

Doing this helped me to understand a potential process my ancestors went through in the dance-making process.

How similar or different is it from mine/ours of today?

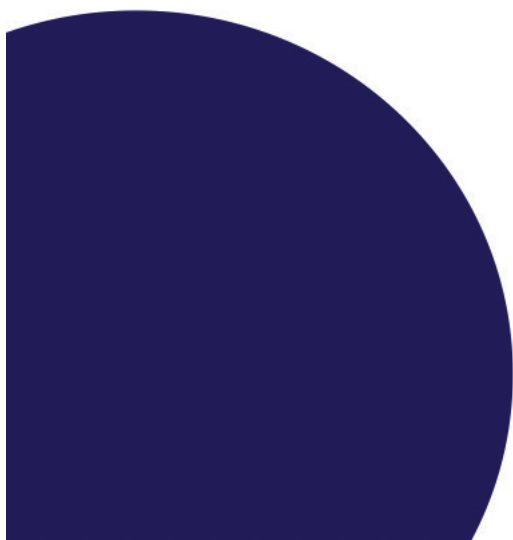
Different or another manifestation? What elements were used to construct the dances? How did they shift depending on how a person understood it based on her/his cultural manifestation? Were certain body parts emphasized over others? Certain practices and techniques?

I've been interested in "dancing" in ways that I haven't typically danced, and with this, I decided to allow my hands to do the dancing by mapping and writing and documenting genealogies. This has allowed me to interpret the texts

I'm reading on Afro-Louisiana dances, their ancestors, descendents, and relatives. In order to learn the Bamboula dance for example, I've accessed the primary sources that were written about the dance, and literally danced out the descriptions. This openness in the interpretation of dance has allowed me to not be as stifled in understanding what my ancestors were doing. It has also allowed me to imagine new ways in which the Africans, regardless of location, maintained their dances and also learned new ones.

This is important to me so that I can share them out, so I can re/member my (d)ancestors and their movements.

Maybe they're still here. I want to know what they were doing, so that I can understand that process of creating new forms and sharing them and maintaining them. How can I create, share, and maintain as my ancestors must've done.



location

house

home

room

place

space

sacred and social

race

the location of home

its location in the body

inside my body

home in my body

home is my body

body is home

home is body

memory

cultural memory

lives in my body

the place is outside and inside

the memory is here and there

the dance is here

embodied

in my body

regardless of place

location

arrived

emerged

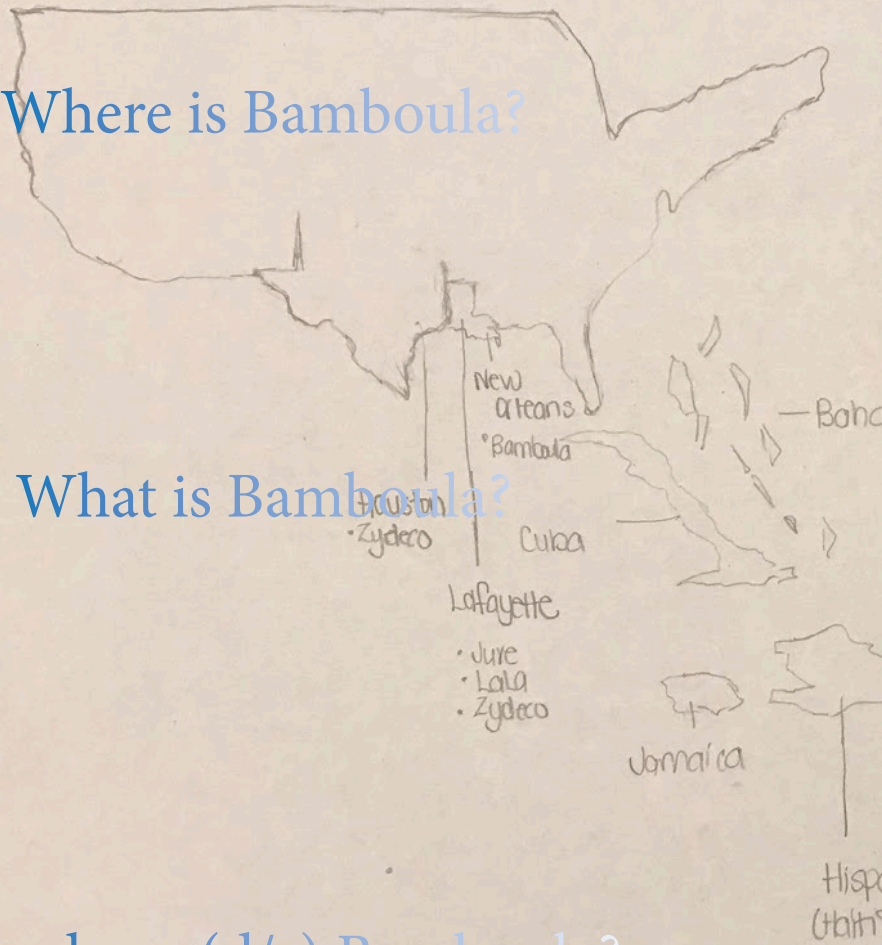
indigenous

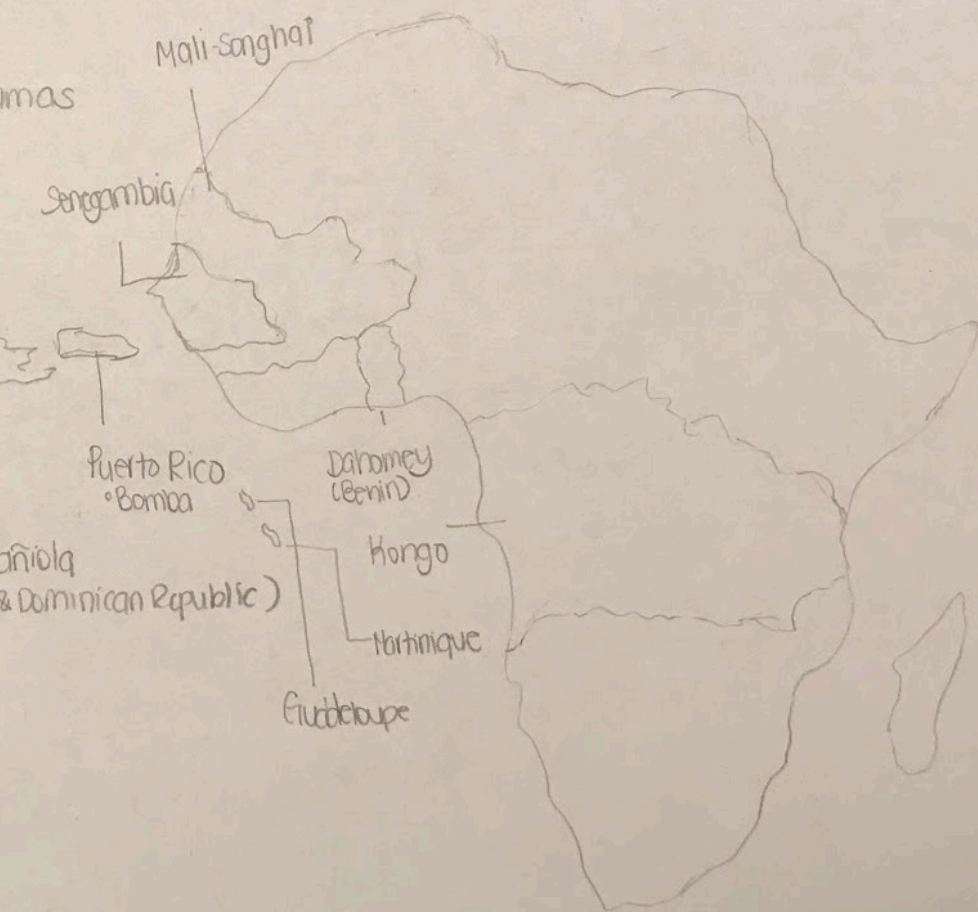
continuous

Where is Bamboula?

What is Bamboula?

Who dance(d/s) Bamboula?





To Bomba

To Bamboula

to Bamboula

TO DANSE CODAN

To Juré

to lala

To Zydeco

To Dance

To Houston

To Louisiana

to St. Croix

To Puerto Rico

through Yemaya

To Africa(s)

Process and Texture: Bomba to Bamboula



Scan to view video.

“Bomba to Bamboula” relates to the process and texture of Afro-Louisiana and Afro-Puerto Rican dance. I chose ten words that I’ve been in conversation with throughout my practice. These words are both verb and noun. I chose to include the verbs and convert the nouns into actions. I drew a map of the places I’m in conversation with for my research and practice and mapped these words on their respective regions. I recorded myself throughout this process.

Lately I’ve been interested in “dancing” in ways that I haven’t typically danced, and with this, I decided to allow my hands to do the dancing by mapping and writing. This has allowed me to interpret the texts I’m reading on Afro-Louisiana and Afro-Puerto Rican dance. In order to learn the Bamboula dance for example, I’ve accessed the primary sources that were written about the dance, and literally danced out the descriptions.

This openness in the interpretation of dance has allowed me to not be as stifled in understanding what my ancestors were doing. It has also allowed me to imagine new ways in which the Africans in Louisiana and Puerto Rico maintained their dances and also learned new ones.



A Memory

Inspired by Katherine Dunham's
Theory of Memory of Difference,
this research seeks to apply a
memory of continuity in re/
membering Louisiana Bamboula.

VéVé Clark's study of the significance of African-American art in motion—black dancers and their dances—is also a theoretical “intervention” that is pointedly critical of Nora. Questioning Nora's view of memory and history as dissociated, Clark shows how Katherine Dunham, in her work as ethnographer–historian and choreographer, stressed instead memory and history's *continuities*. Like Hurston, Dunham is an intellectual–artist who offers interpretations of the folk memory: here again we find the tension and interplay between individual and collective, folk and elite.

It seems that where difference presents
itself, so does continuity, as it relates
to African/Black dance. Louisiana
Bamboula is an Afro-Louisiana dance,
musical form, and gathering which was
popular during the colonial period.
The rhythm and musical form are still
known but some argue that the dance
isn't.

of Continuity

... result of her sharp awareness of class and color antagonisms. Based on her observation of these conflicts and oppositions, the syntax of Dunham's choreography evolved out of both her research methods and her performance principles—of oxymoron and paradox. It comprises a critical reappraisal of the history of the British West Indies and the French West Indies, seen in their specificity but also in their close relation to the southern United States. In her dances, some of them boiling with political rage, Dunham expresses the contradictory history of New World acculturation: “the memory of difference.”

1



Through utilizing memory of continuity, this research explores how the people of colonial Louisiana indeed remembered the rhythms and dances of Africa, and how due to cultural continuity, this dance still exists somewhere, in places, in bodies, in memories.

Where is Bamboula situated within this?

What did the dance look like?

How did it feel?

What did it mean?

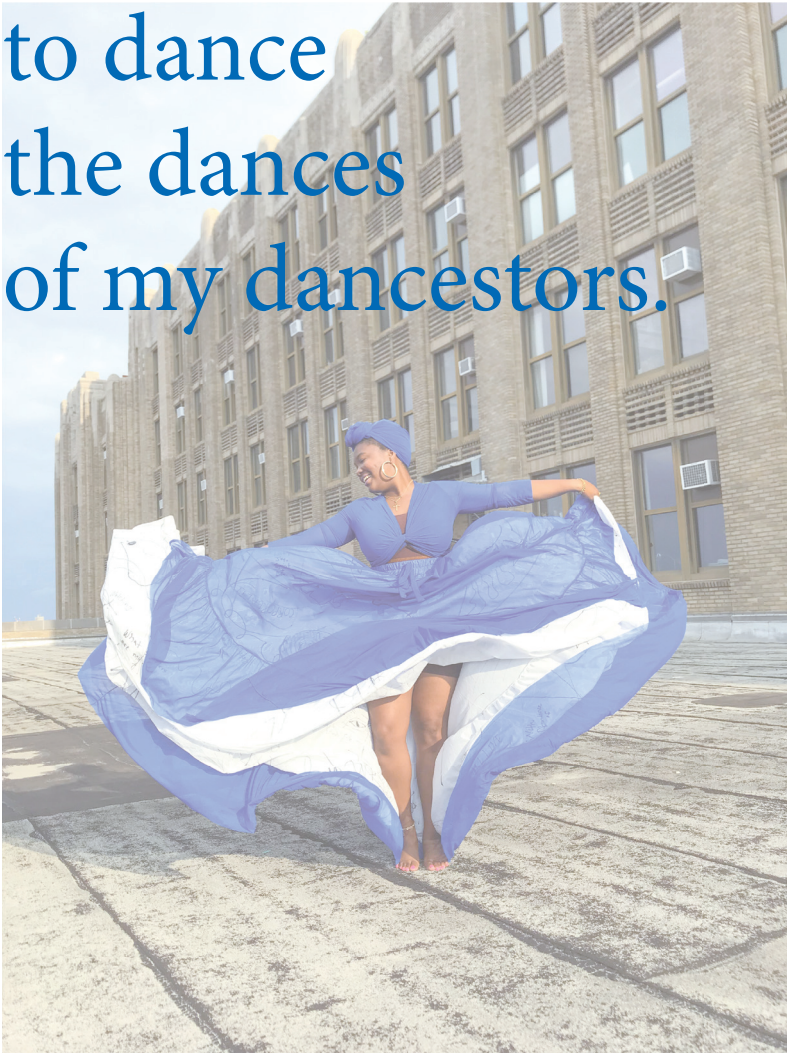
How did Africans arriving from different places share
their dances and learn others?

What emerged?

What continues to emerge?

How can genealogies of Bamboula's
ancestors and descendants, and relatives in
other places, answer these questions?

I
want
to dance
the dances
of my dancestors.



Am I
doing it already?



Isn't it funny that
Bamboula means
memory?

Continue the journey...



Great Great Great Grandmother(s): Africa(s)

intergene

Great Great Grandmother: Yemaya

Great Grandmother 1: Puerto Rican Bomba

Great Grandmother 2: St. Croix Bamboula

Great Grandmother 3: Louisiana Bamboula

Great Grandmother 4: Danse Codan

MUSIC

Grandmother: Jure

Mother: La La

Daughter: Zydeco

Granddaughter:

dance

erational

intergenerational

DANCE

MUSIC

DANCE

GATHERING

dancestors

stors



[illegible]

Continue the journey...

What dances were our great great great grandmothers doing in Africa?

In Kongo?

In Senegambia?

In Benin?

In Mali?

The locations of our Bamboula dancestors

What were their gatherings and rhythms that gave birth to Bamboula?

Was Bamboula already being done on the African continent?

What does the term Bamboula mean?

memory in Kinkongo

bula meaning drum

Bam

ban ma: those who would not be colonized

Bamako

Bambara

Bamana

mbula meaning rain in Lingala

bambula plural of mbula

huge rain

Africa(s)

Great Great Great Grandmother(s)

a dance for rain?

WE BROUGHT OUR DANCES

Bawu Naan

Interview with Pape Ibrahima “Kaolack” Ndiaye

Scan to listen.



Continue the journey...



On the Ocean/Yemaya Great Great Grandmother

Across the waters
Perfect, perfect bodies
For days we travel
His fringe, her fringe, just escaping ruin, soaked and blended with seaweed
Her DNA, his DNA melting into the waves
My toes wrinkled
But when we arrive, I know I am finally home
The drum beats I heard in my dreams were not from the radio
The people I saw were not my neighbors
But my ancestors calling me home
I'm glad I came
The masquerade told me I'd be happy

I I saw
ent clim

I
want
to dance
the dances
of my dancestors.

Great Great Grandmother: Yemaya
the dances
of my dancestors.

Great Great Grandmother: Yemaya
the dances
of my dancestors.

Anything
Except them
Until I saw it enclosed in the clearest of glass
In the corner, near the trees, a different climate, centuries later, but the same
They joy
I felt
I feel
When I remember that day, the day of our reunion
In my eyes, before my feet and hands
The masquerade reminded me of the promise
To bring me home
Take me to the water
masquerading waters

I
want
to dance
the dances
of my dancestors.

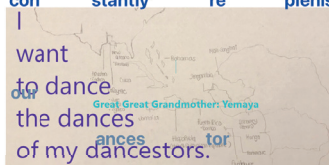
They're calling me
 My dancestors are
 To come home
 They welcome me with open arms and the ever-lingering
 sounds of drum beats
 I want With tender smiles and anxious hands
 to dance the dances of my dancestors. With the sweet smell of okra and *fufu*, the natural smells of
 earth engraved into every ounce of their perfect, perfect
 bodies
 So do I do
 I'm led by the masquerade so tall and colorful and vibrant
 Masked ancestor
 Eggun

Anything
 Except them
 It enclosed in the clearest of glass
 mate, centuries later, but the same
 They joy
 I felt
 I feel
 Over that day, the day of our reunion
 my eyes, before my feet and hands
 erade reminded me of the promise
 To bring me home
 Take me to the water
 masquerading waters

Truth
 in
 Liberation
 travel on her own, his own
 Dare
 Not
 y frightening to the enemy
ushindi ni wetu
 And that ivory
 That ivory tusk
 ful, perhaps even innocent
 fear-invoking, frightening
 ost honest of all intentions
 rning repeating, repeating
 the dead with its sharpness
 Light to the darkest cave with its beauty
 The thing she and he so carved could stop anything

Anything
 Except them
 Until I saw it enclosed in the clearest of glass
 In the corner, near the trees, a different climate, centuries later, but the same
 They joy
 I felt
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 I want When I remember that day, the day of our reunion
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 the dances The masquerade reminded me of the promise
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the Yemaya is the guide an ances tor
 water is con stantly re plenish ed
 y is I
 folds the want
 orisha the to dance
 of the dances
 mother hood tor
 water it
 of remem bers
 Atlantic ocean be comes mother and child
 the

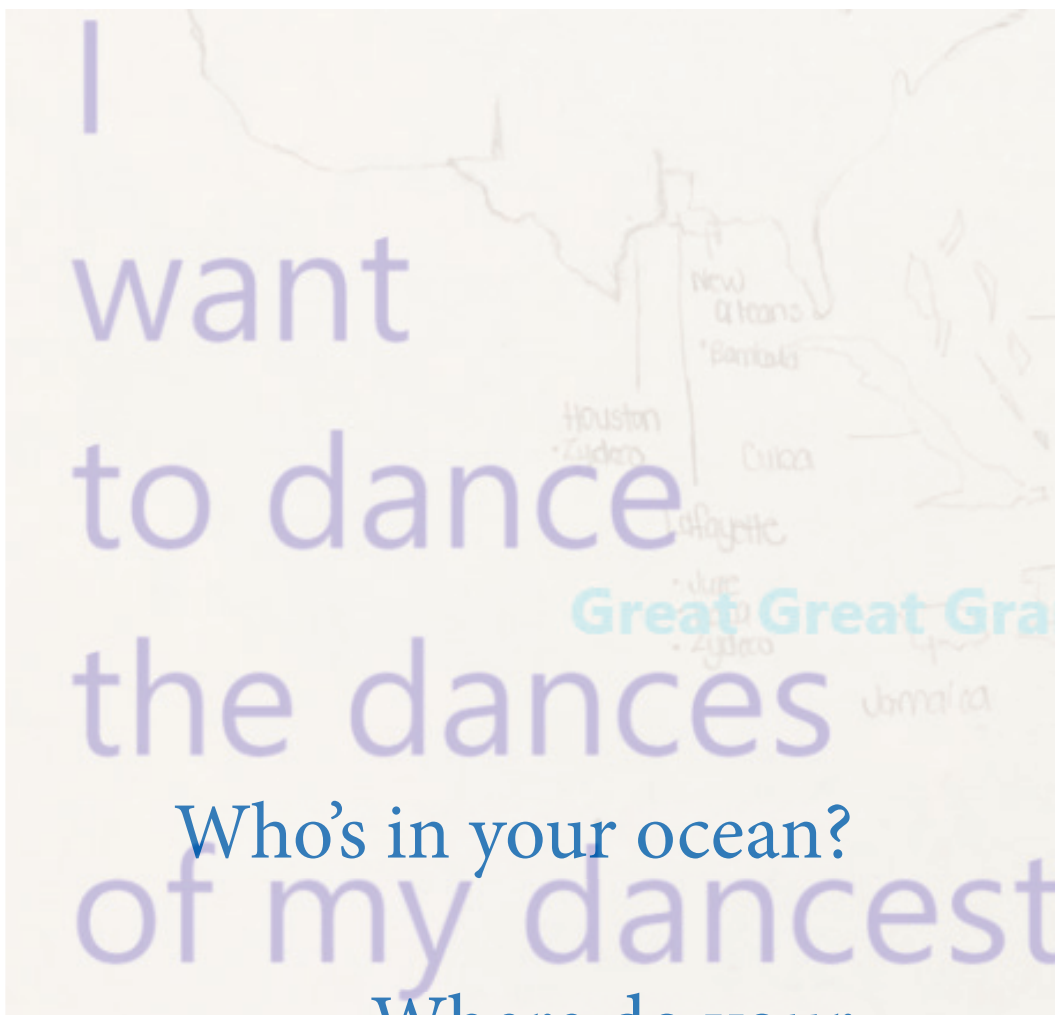


in
 are
 move ment of the spirit ances tors
 across place to want place souls our
 and to dance is soles
 into the dances in
 and our
 around bodies like water
 the Louisi ana swamp
 Diaspor a Goree shore
 Carib bean sea





the
colors
of
the
ocean
change
depending
on
the
depth
but
the ocean is
still the
ocean



Who's in your ocean?

Where do your
dancestors reside?

Continue the journey...

Puerto Rican Bomba Great Grandmother



Scan to watch and listen.

Militeri Tucker: My family roots! Bamboula from New Orleans and bomba from Puerto Rico have their roots in the Congo. Bomba dance stemmed from the African slaves that were

Militeri Tucker: My family roots! Bamboula from New Orleans and bomba from Puerto Rico have their roots in the Congo. Bomba dance stemmed from the African slaves that were brought to Puerto Rico. It has been molded to its current form of execution through the influences of "criollos" and from neighboring Caribbean Islands. Bamboula dance (from the Kikongo language, which means "to remember and honor our ancestors") still preserves the movement, as compared to Puerto Rico's modernized style. Having the same root music in New Orleans, bamboula was danced in much the same way, with the exception of the "calinda", another dance and rhythm found in both cultures. There exist threads of connectivity between the two styles and reunifying them to showcase their shared African root was very successful.

Bomba
bula
maraca
pique
bombasa
primo
paseo
saludo
sicá
yubá
seis corrido
corvé
bambule

"Bailes de bomba" for example, were originally group dances celebrated by a community in Puerto Rico, unlike today where the presentational stage form of one dancer advancing to the drummers at a time seems to be the norm. It is known that in these "bailes de bomba", the lead drummer would pick up on the accents of various dancers dancing in unison. Just as in New Orleans, bamboula was danced in much the same way, with the exception of the "calinda", another dance and rhythm found in both cultures. There exist threads of connectivity between the two styles and reunifying them to showcase their shared African root was very successful.

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Afro-Puerto Rican dance form
 low-pitch drum played with constant beat
 Taino-influenced percussion instrument
 dance step
 bomba gathering
 high-pitch, improvising drum
 dancer's entrance
 reverence to the drum
 one of the most popular Bomba rhythms
 a two-step rhythm originally for funerals
 very fast rhythm
 war-like rhythm
 rhythm adapted for congas

Continue the journey...

St. Croix Bamboula Great Grandmother

Oral history has it that slaves often practiced the traditional bamboula art form in the “bush.” Bamboula is a dance that originated from Africa and spread throughout the West Indies, South, Central, and North America, and other regions of the Western Hemisphere where Africans were imported as slaves. The bamboula dance is the soul beat of the drum on goatskin, which players pounded with fingers and the heels of the hand to alter the timbre. It is a powerful rhythm sound, transcending you physically and spiritually.

Perhaps most importantly, slaves also used bamboula as protest. In September 1892, Queen Coriah led a protest with 200 bamboula dancers at the port in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. The business people on St. Thomas were cheating the female mine workers out of their pay with a Mexican currency. Here are some of the lyrics to the bamboula song: “All went to the shop with a quart to buy 15-cent thing. When all look in each hand Dem shepinner gimme tally for change, Roll, Isabella, roll, Roll (beat) the drums! Call the people to action!”

Richard Haagenzen, a Danish observer, mentioned the slaves and their dances on the island of St. Croix in a small pamphlet published in 1758, titled *Beskrivelse over Etylandet*: “Drums sounded in the warm dark night and the jungle came to life again ... Here something was happening which the white people did not understand and which they feared ... At first the planters laughed at the monotonous music and the violent dances, but deep down they feared that this recreated jungle atmosphere might create rebellion ... so they passed numerous laws forbidding these dances.”

He said, “youngsters showed as much devotion and deep feeling for these Negro domestics and slaves as they did for their parents and relatives.” On New Year’s Day, the bamboula dance was a tradition in the islands where the enslaved population rang in the year of joys, laughter, or just socializing with their best outfits for the year. Victor Schoelcher, a French humanitarian who devoted his life to the abolition of slavery in the French colonies, also wrote about the bamboula dance when he visited St. Croix in the 1840s.

In the West Indies, and wherever the bamboula dance ritual was performed during the colonial period of the West, white planters were afraid of the enslaved Africans’ music. They felt threatened that a slave revolt might occur, impacting the plantation economy. Case in point, on Aug. 8, 1672, Gov. Jorgen Iversen banned bamboula dancing on the island of St. Thomas. Slaves who were caught dancing bamboula risked imprisonment at Fort Christian and a public lashing.

Laws or no laws, slaves found ways to keep their bamboula dancing alive throughout the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries in the Danish West Indies. Although the older generation of white planters in the Danish West Indies was fearful of the bamboula dancing, many of their children returning from Europe to the islands with sophisticated musical educations began to search and publicly revive the African rhythms of the music. On top of their list was the “bamboula music.”

As times changed in the Danish West Indies, the dance that appeared in the ballrooms of the great houses was the bamboula dance. Planters selected teams of talented enslaved Africans to perform the dance because no white man could. At times, some of the planters’ children, who were taught by enslaved teachers how to dance bamboula, along with their parents and friends, joined in on the dance floor of Danish parties on the islands.

Andre Pierre Ledru, a French naturalist born in Charente-Maritime, France, in 1751 (also a great deal about the bamboula and its origin). His lengthy study of habits and customs of enslaved Africans in the West Indies appeared in two volumes under the title *Voyage aux Isles de l'Inde, de la Trinité, de la Saint-Thomas, de Croix et Petit-Rien, recueilli par ordre du gouvernement Français depuis le 30 septembre, 1798*.

According to Ledru, bamboula came from off the coast of Guinea. Then it moved north, becoming popular among the colonists of North Africa and the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa. He first saw bamboula performed in Tenerife, the largest of the Canary Islands. Ledru said, strange to say, the performance was not by Africans but by Spaniards. In 1800, Ledru saw bamboula performed in a church as part of the religious ceremony.

Ledru could not believe his eyes by what he called violent pagan manipulations of the body incorporated into Catholic religious services. The nuns also danced bamboula on Christmas night on a platform sitting in the yard of the church. The only difference that distinguished the dance from when Africans danced bamboula was that men in church were not permitted to join in with the women, Ledru said. Later on, the church turned against bamboula dancing because of what it saw as physical and sensuous exaggeration of the body movement.

The young generation of white children in the Danish islands often showed deep feeling for their servants and plantation slaves. Slaves who raised white children played an important role in their childhood. Thus, the bamboula dance was not only handed down from slaves to slaves, but also to white planters’ children. Robert Ramsay, who visited St. Croix in 1820 and stayed as a guest at Schimmelmann’s plantation at La Grande Princesse, observed how white children admired their enslaved nannies.

<p>Bamboula Dance by J. Antonio Jarvis</p> <p>Can I in pride mock sad buffoons</p> <p>Who ape ancestral circumstance?</p>	<p>Reimagined Bamboula I by Ushindi Niwetu</p> <p>Can I in pride mock sad buffoons</p> <p>Who ignore ancestral circumstance?</p>	<p>Reimagined Bamboula II by Ushindi Niwetu</p> <p>No pride, these sad buffoons</p> <p>Who ignore ancestral circumstance.</p>
<p>My fathers, too, these thousand moons</p> <p>Cavorted in some tribal dance.</p> <p>I still can feel, when drumbeats call,</p>	<p>My mothers, too, these thousand moons</p> <p>Cavorted in this indigenous dance.</p> <p>I still can feel, when drumbeats call,</p>	<p>My mothers and fathers, too, these thousand suns and moons</p> <p>Cavorted in this familiar dance.</p> <p>I still can feel, when drums yell,</p>
<p>The pulsing blood new rhythms take;</p> <p>As garment-like refinements fall</p> <p>Unconscious longings spring awake!</p>	<p>The pulsing blood new rhythms take;</p> <p>As colonized refinements fall</p> <p>Unconscious longings spring awake!</p>	<p>The pulsing blood new rhythms take;</p> <p>As colonized refinements fail</p> <p>Conscious longings stay woke.</p>
<p>My honored sire now would say,</p> <p>For all his solemn high degrees,</p> <p>That drums recall Nigerian play</p>	<p>My honored daughter now would say,</p> <p>For all her solemn high degrees,</p> <p>That drums recall our African way</p>	<p>My honored daughter and son now would say,</p> <p>For all their solemn high decrees,</p> <p>That drums recall our African way</p>
<p>And drown out later dignities.</p> <p>Few naked tribesmen yet remain</p> <p>To dance the sacred dance for rain! ⁴</p>	<p>And drown out imposing perplexities.</p> <p>Many of us do remain</p> <p>To dance the sacred dance for rain!</p>	<p>And bury imposing perplexities.</p> <p>Many of us do remain</p> <p>To dance this sacred dance, no suffering or pain!</p>

Continue the journey...

Danse Codan Great Grandmother

An Afro-Louisiana dance and music tradition, like Louisiana Bamboula, which was also performed at Congo Square in New Orleans.

Step 1: Listen to “Danse Codan” by Bruce “Sunpie” Barnes

Step 2: Find the words below that describe Danse Codan.



Scan to listen.

Y	M	O	N	K	E	Y	G	E	P	A	H	A	R
F	Z	D	X	I	A	Y	R	T	Y	M	W	R	I
Y	J	A	N	E	Q	F	Q	U	B	A	E	H	K
O	A	N	C	S	X	K	E	S	Z	Q	Q	L	S
L	F	C	V	E	Y	J	J	P	Y	H	Q	F	T
F	R	E	Y	U	V	J	W	L	M	N	C	H	R
M	I	Q	H	U	R	E	D	A	P	Y	K	G	I
X	C	S	Q	U	A	R	E	Y	F	U	U	N	C
D	A	C	V	E	K	N	T	I	B	P	C	J	K
R	N	W	Y	I	B	T	G	N	B	Q	O	T	S
L	Z	T	S	Q	O	B	H	G	Z	K	N	A	T
P	I	V	O	O	W	L	I	E	L	R	G	L	E
A	F	X	L	S	L	S	I	R	J	M	O	E	R
E	S	E	B	H	E	X	O	N	S	V	P	L	H

Continue the journey...

Jure
Grandmother

Not only did many of our dances emerge from the spiritual, but the spiritual is intertwined with the social. The spirit comes everywhere. It's at the funeral. It's at the house. It's at the la la. It cannot be separated.

Jure is to testify. Jure music followed Bamboula. From Jure, came Zydeco (originally Lala). Jure music is comparable to Spirituals, but sung primarily in *Kouri Vini* (Louisiana "Creole"). They were often sung at funerals in the home, and involved call and response, dancing, stomps, and claps. People would also go from house to house performing Jure during the Lenten season.

"Jure is a genre of Louisiana Creole music that is Zydeco's immediate ancestor, both as a sacred idiom and later as its secular music and dance cousin called Lala."

--Greer Mendy

author of *Black Dance in Louisiana: Guardian of a Culture*

5

Jure Interview

with Mrs. Virginia Broussard Ballard of the
Broussard Sisters of Opelousas, Louisiana

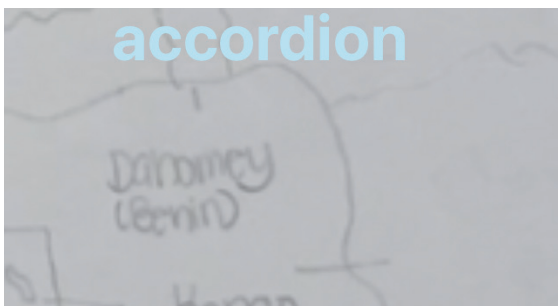
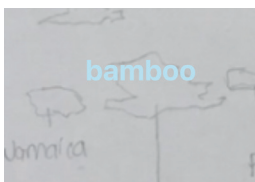
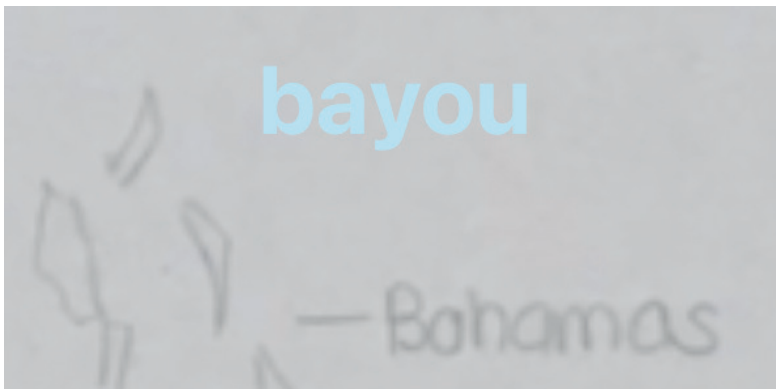
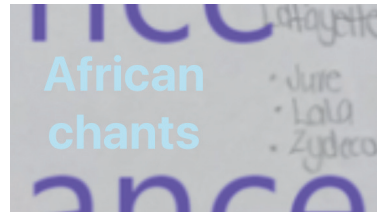


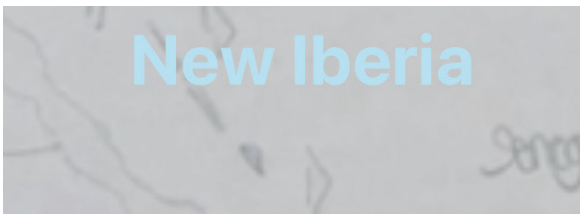
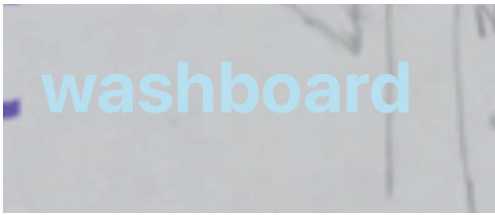
Scan to listen and watch.



Continue the journey...

La La Mother





Continue the journey...

Zydeco Daughter

“

“When you go to the Zydeco to dance Zydeco to Zydeco music, remember the dance traditions of our African ancestors, including the Bakongo, where couple dancing existed ceremoniously and for social gatherings. The instrumentation in all percussive forms was made for joyous impromptu dances--men and women in lines opposite each other or moving as couples in a counterclockwise circle. The vest frottoir* is our reinvention of the knotted gourd rubbed with a stick used throughout Africa. Choose your partner!” (97)

Bamboula
Zydeco
Waltz
vest frottoir

traditional Zydeco rhythm (i.e. *Melinda* song)
"The snap beans are not salted" (Afro-Louisiana proverb)
style of Zydeco dance based on, possibly in mockery of, European culture
percussive Zydeco instrument made from a washboard

symmetrical
complementary
grounded
break-cuing
smooth
hip-swaying
improvised
bouncing?

"Zydeco is the traditional social music and dance of the Creoles, the Black people of southwest Louisiana, who may sing in French Creole, but dance and sing the spirit of Africa..." (87)

6

Continue the journey...



Her

home is body

body is home

home (is body) feels like Bamboula like Bomba like
Jure like LaLa like Zydeco

like Kongo like Mali like Senegal like Gambia

like rhythm like stomp like clap like sing like hum like
pray like dance nonstop

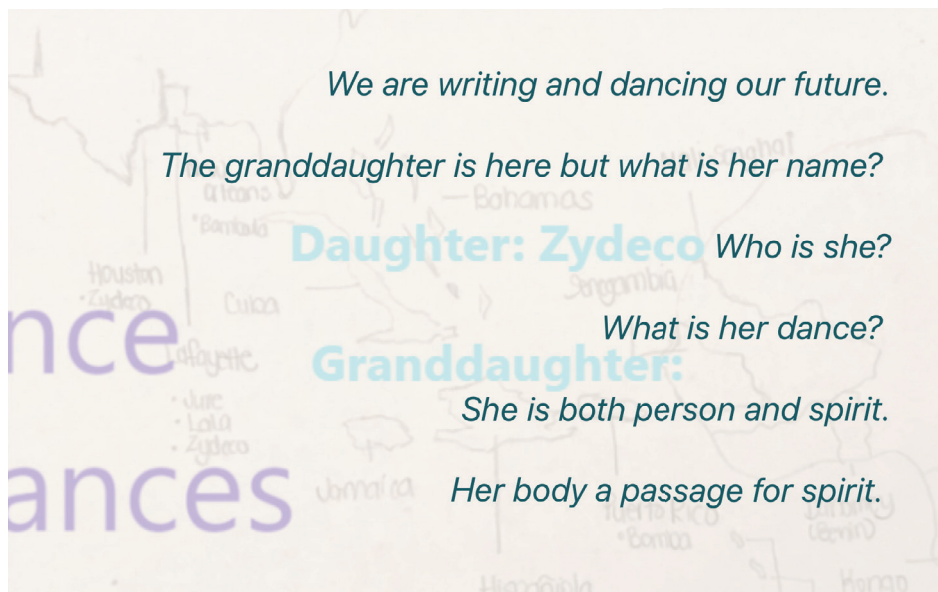
they shift they move they bubble they boil they bump
they touch

they touch they touch they touch

they reach

who

Grann-fiy Granddaughter



She is

depths of the ocean--Annie Corrao

genealogy manifest

the recipe--Arabia Richardson

the map

the guide

guide



She has

an earthy temperature

pride and freedom in her
movements

passion and extroversion

openness

gentleness

independence--Can Wang

I am writing. But it is already written. The seeds planted in 2014, in 1990, in 1989, in times unknown, blossom, to fruition, today and tomorrow. **The Temne to the Ganga.**

Big Africa to the other Africas--in Cuba, Brazil, Haiti, Louisiana, and in our hearts. **Our hearts. Our hearts. Our bodies. Our minds. Our spirits.**

Our souls. **Our soles. Our feet. Our toes.** We dance on the ground barefoot just to feel them. **Digging heels. To acknowledge them. We thank them. The seeds. The roots. The ancestors.** To remember them.

An unforgotten remembrance. A live archive, living, danced and felt. An unending history dripping and leaking and flooding into the next.

What does it mean when we get chills? **We know.**

I am writing. But it is already written. The seeds planted in 2014, in 1990, in 1989, in times unknown, blossom, to fruition, today and tomorrow. The Temple to the Ganga.

Big Africa to the other Africas--in Cuba, Brazil, Haiti, Louisiana, and in our hearts. Our hearts. Our hearts.

Our bodies. Our minds. Our spirits.

Our souls. Our soles. Our feet.

Our toes. We dance on the ground barefoot just to feel them. Digging

heels. To acknowledge them. We thank them. The seeds. The roots.

The ancestors. To remember them.

An unforgotten remembrance. A live archive, living, danced and felt.

An unending history dripping and leaking and flooding into the next.

What does it mean when we get chills? We know.

Continue the journey...

WE BROUGHT OUR DANCES

*from rain
from body
from oceans
from land
from memory*

Bamboula as memory.
Dance as history.

It's inside of us.

WE MADE NEW DANCE-MANIFESTATIONS

*the same as the ones from yesterday
the same as the ones from today
the same as the ones from tomorrow
yet different parts of one ocean, one genealogy, one map*

Louisiana Bamboula
Great Grandmother

WE SHARED

*in dungeons
on ships
in Congo Square
in swamps
on plantations
in the bayou
on shores
in oceans*

We are our
dancestors.

"According to Cable, the orchestra that could be seen on Congo Square consisted of a drum set composed of long and smaller drums, the latter being called bamboula, gourds filled with pebbles or grains of corn, triangles, Jew's harps, jawbones with teeth that were rattled with a key...the bamboula was not just the name of a drum but also that of a dance, which he imagined to be a furious dance between men and women of different African origin." (17)

A "Congo dance" performed on a plantation: "...chiefly a sort of shuffle, and a violent agitation of all the muscles of the body." (14)

7

Performed in a New Orleans house: "...two females whose 'ambition seemed to be to move their feet rapidly but still with the leas possible visible motion.'" (15)

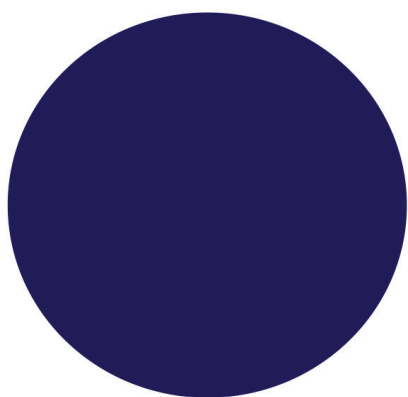
Primary and Secondary Sources on Louisiana Bamboula --From the Kingdom of Kongo to Congo Square in conversation with Cable's Creole Slave Dances

"He called the dance he had witnessed on Congo Square a 'bamboula' and compared its 'ludicrous contortions and gyrations' to 'the equally famous Voudou dance.'" (17)

Singing: Danse Calinda, bou doum, bou doum and Eh eh!
Bomba, hen, hen! Canga bafio te, Canga moune de le,
Canga do ki la Canga li. (17)

Research As Action: Performing an Embodied Re-Enactment of Louisiana Bamboula

exploring how these dances, music, and
gatherings were:
brought
shared
manifested



Journey complete.

Blood memory

Collective re-imagining re-membling

What an adventure

My sister thank you for this journey in and out of practice. You've drawn me closer to me. <3

Disjointed lineage is diaspora.

Ancestry in progress.

How are we making and remaking history together?

Travelling knowledges

Collective recollecting

Tracing journey together in imagination creativity w/ detail, lens, imagery

Hating in the Now, Channeling the ancestry.

QUEEN of the galactic ocean...

Physical journey—transversing through space as dance/s traveled-- picking up nuances based on location

The command of joy in a life well lived

LOVE

Horizontal/Lateral Gathering of Information

Magic

DNA

The feeling! Remarkable feeling! Of coming together in collective imagining

Around the world in 30 mins a sort of time travel

Across the world in 20 minutes essences grasped and propelled to create-->a deeper way to learn, unlearn Appreciate commonalities + embrace difference

Seeds continuity memory lineages Dancestors

vibrate #Ushindi

Beauty. Radiant beauty. Divine Research. Dine connections. Beautiful facilitation of space.

An Environment of Learning and Beauty

That Dress That Smile That Generosity That Brain Those ancestors

LIVE!

HISTORY-->TRUTH-->DANCE

mapping filling out filling in history

Image and Video Credits

Images of artist in blue regalia: courtesy of Reid Bartelme

Collage portrait, map image, and altar image: courtesy of Ushindi Niwetu

Katherine Dunham portrait: Hulton Archive/Getty Images

Video stills: courtesy of Monica Hill and mik Phillips

Endnotes

1 Clark, Veve. 1994. "Performing the Memory of Difference in Afro-Caribbean Dance: Katherine Dunham's Choreography, 1938-87." In *History and Memory in African-American Culture*, by Geneviève Fabre, 188-204. Oxford University Press, USA. 13-14

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6 Mendy, Greer E. 2018. *Black Dance in Louisiana: Guardian of a Culture*. Tekrema Center for African Diasporic Cultural Literacy.

7 Dewulf, Jeroen. 2017. *From the Kingdom of Kongo to Congo Square: Kongo Dances and the Origins of the Mardi Gras Indians*. University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

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Giving voice. Creating knowledge. The genealogy of text. My elders are my libraries. My ancestors are my bibliography. Performance as a research space. My life is an archive. My history is my internal archive.--Ushindi Niwetu

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Scan to visit Ushindi Niwetu's Thesis Website.

