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## **Black Dance Stories & Amistad Research Center Announce Long-term Collaborative Partnership Preserving Access To Invaluable Digital Content**

The new partnership serves to preserve Black dance's history and impact

(February 2, 2022/NEW YORK, NY)—**Black Dance Stories** and **Amistad Research Center** today announced their new collaborative partnership, which will preserve and safeguard the web series' vital digital content and make the episodes more readily available to the public through Amistad's digital projects virtual archive.

Under the collaborative partnership, Black Dance Stories and Amistad Research Center will showcase the legacy of Black dance during Black History Month through highlighted clips from the extensive collection and throughout the year.

Conceived and co-created by Charmaine Warren in June 2020, the series showcases and initiates discussions with Black creatives. Alive and ever-vibrant from the everyday and iconic, the conversations explore social, historical, and personal issues and highlight the African Diaspora's humanity in the mysterious and celebrated dance world. Since its launch, Black Dance Stories has produced more than 45 episodes featuring over 80 of the most decorated Black dancers, choreographers, movement artists, and others who use their work to raise societal issues and strengthen their community.

In the spirit of Black Dance Stories' mission, the new partnership reflects its continuing growth as a cultural presence and the Amistad Research Center's commitment to preserving the history, culture, and stories of the African Diaspora.

“We are thrilled to embark on this new chapter of Black Dance Stories with the Amistad Research Center. Together we are cultivating a rich, meaningful, and sustained cultural dialogue in the dance world's field of history, and Black voices with exciting perspectives are joining that conversation,” said Black Dance Stories co-creator **Charmaine Warren**. “Our mission in partnering with the Center is to give voice to those stories while providing authentic representation and inspiration to transformative growth

for Black people, Black creatives, and Black artists everywhere. To develop such a unique partnership with a mecca of Black and African Diasporic history is a significant step for BDS and its community.”

The partnership between Black Dance Stories and Amistad Research Center was orchestrated by Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) Olga Garay-English and visionary arts leader Colleen Jennings-Roggensack.

"It was a match made in heaven," reflected **Olga Garay-English**. "I met Charmaine Warren decades ago when she was part of David Roussève / REALITY, a highly regarded contemporary dance company I had the pleasure of presenting in Miami. And I met Kara Olidge [at Amistad Research Center] more recently as a fellow Board member of the South Arts Regional Arts Organization. Kara talked to me about wanting more archival documentation on the arts experience, and I knew it was kismet—the two of them should meet. A few weeks later, we had a Zoom call with Charmaine and other Black Dance Stories leaders to explore the possibility of archiving that body of work at Amistad."

"Amistad Research Center's distinguished reputation for telling the story of America makes it the perfect place to honor these invaluable stories. Black Dance Stories is pivotal to our nations' cultural education, history, and forward path. Charmaine Warren has carefully curated the histories of Black choreographers and those who have been in service of their art. This national treasure will be made available to students, young artists, educators, writers, historians, and all people around the globe," said **Colleen Jennings-Roggensack**.

"We are honored to serve as a program partner and the repository for this outstanding collection. Black Dance Stories offers a rare opportunity to engage with the Black creative process in movement. These stories contribute to the wonderful holdings we have in Black theater, literary arts, and visual art," said Executive Director of Amistad Research Center **Kara Tucina Olidge**.

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#### **About Black Dance Stories** ([Press Kit Here](#))

Black Dance Stories (BDS) is a community working together to support, uphold, highlight, and celebrate Black creatives. They are committed to providing a platform to amplify Black creatives' voices and stimulate conversations around timely issues across the African Diaspora. Through its free, public weekly story-sharing series and a variety of education and networking programs, Black Dance Stories fosters community, solidarity, cultural exchange and highlights the work and humanity of Black artists. It launched in June 2020 in response to Black dance artists' need to talk about life during COVID-19 and support the Black Lives Matter movement. The series is consistent with Black artists' tradition of finding a way to amplify their voices during turbulent times. When civil, moral, and social freedoms are challenged and stifled, Black artists find ways to use their talents as activism. Founder and co-creator Charmaine Warren reminds weekly viewers: "Black dance artists have not been quiet since. Black dance artists have been doing the work. Black dance artists continue to make work. To stay involved, we will hold weekly

impromptu discussions and tell stories—Black Dance Stories. This is one action—we will stay involved."

Black Dance Stories has featured pioneering dance and movement artists including Kyle Abraham, Oluwadamilare "Dare" Ayorinde, Camille A. Brown, Ayodele Casel, nora chipaumire, Lorenzo "Rennie" Harris, Raja Feather Kelly, Bebe Miller, Kyle Marshall, Maria Bauman Morales, Okwui Okpokwasili, David Roussève, Abdel R. Salaam, Jason Samuels Smith, Marjani Forté-Saunders, Jawole Willo Jo Zollar, Joan Myers Brown, Mikki Shepard, Reggie Wilson, Rena Butler, Robert Battle, Angie Pittman, and more. The producing team consists of Black creatives in the arts, including BDS Founder and Co-Creator Charmaine Warren and Co-Creator Kimani Fowlin, Tony Turner (Graphic Designer), Cynthia Tate (Publicist), Gabe Dekoladenu (Web Designer), Makeda Smith (Digital Media), Travone Geovonie (Live Stream Manager), and Renee Redding-Jones (Finance and Development). Antonio Burkett (International Interpreting) and Shannon Morrison (Morr Interpreting) have worked together to provide ASL interpreting services for Black Dance Stories. Find us at [blackdancestories.org](http://blackdancestories.org) and on socials @blackdancestories

### **About Amistad Research Center**

Amistad Research Center is the nation's oldest, largest, and most comprehensive independent archive of America's ethnic and racial history. It is a repository of culturally significant historical collections and opens its archives to all to learn about the fundamental underpinnings that make the diaspora and our country's complex, rich and beautiful ethnic tapestry.

Amistad Research Center is one of the largest centers for preserving records of the history and civil rights struggles of African Americans and other groups in the United States since the 1800s. Amistad's records include rare newspapers, magazines, artwork and private papers from organizations and individuals who fought tirelessly for civil and human rights over the past 150 years. Amistad provides invaluable and unmatched resources to scholars, students and many other interested parties in a secure, freely accessible environment.

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