

## Black Theater Association (BTA) | ATHE 2019

### “Scene Changes: Performing, Teaching and Working through the Transitions.”

August 7-11<sup>th</sup> 2019 | Orlando, Florida

“If you are silent about your pain, they’ll kill you and say you enjoyed it”- Zora Neale Hurston

Black Theatre Association (BTA) Focus Group of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) invites panel proposals for the 2019 ATHE conference theme, “Scene Changes: Performing, Teaching and Working through the Transitions.” In the history of African American struggles for civil rights, the state of Florida has played a central role in undermining the possibilities for black self-determination and freedom. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Florida lead the nation with the highest number of lynchings per capita (Florida Memory 2018). Black communities near Orlando such as Eatonville, home of Zora Neale Hurston, and Ocoee, site of the Ocoee massacre in which over 60 black people who wanted to vote in the presidential election of 1920 were killed by the Klu Klux Klan are scenes of rejection and subjection of anti-black violence. The complex relationship between black life and death in Florida continues to alter scenes of black subjection in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Transition to 2018-2019. Black artists and activists continue the fight to make their art, politics and humanity visible and audible in public and theatrical stages. Florida has a rich history of black performance. Black performance acts from blues to theater traveled the Chitlin’ Circuit in Florida. Florida has the highest number of Black women running for political office in the age of Trump. Andrew Gillum is the counter narrative to “Stand Your Ground” in the aftermath of Trayvon Martin’s murder and the rise #Black Lives Matter. Dade County, Florida produces the highest number of black pro football players in the country. A rising number of juvenile convictions in the South continue to feed the prison industrial complex in Florida. The film *Moonlight*, set in the Liberty City projects in Miami, is the first film to celebrate Black same-sex loving men in the wake of the Orlando night club tragedy of 2017. The city of Orlando and the state of Florida have over the years experienced dramatic scene shifts, often prescient to national scene changes in performance and politics. How can Black artists, scholars and allies work to proactively change the scenes of the theatrical climate and structure? How can we work together to ensure that Black theater and representations of black life in television and film challenge and redress histories of anti-black violence? How might we use theater to imagine new futures that allow black artists “to be,” without campaigning for opportunities to live without the threat of physical or social death? The Executive Board of BTA seeks thought provoking investigations of Black cultural production that span theatre and performance theory research, practice, praxis, activism and politics.

Ideal **full panel submission** should have the following elements:

1) a clear abstract that ties the papers together with no more than 4 panelists with a chair comment for a traditional panel for a total of 5 for both traditional panelists, roundtable, or performances) ; 2) an investigation of the major and/or minor themes of the conference; 3) sponsorship of BTA(achieved by emailing the BTA Conference planner, Veronda Carey (btacareycp18@gmail.com); 4) consideration of co-sponsorship (not necessary, but suggested if submitting MULTIDISCIPLINARY panels ) with one other subgroups; 5) **do not submit papers to more than two panels**, as ATHE requires that someone not participate in more than two panels within the conference. Panel proposers will then decide which paper proposals best serve the goals of their sessions.

Please note that **individual paper submissions are highly discouraged and have a very low acceptance rate**. If you presented on a panel last year, we suggest you reconnect with fellow panelists to plan another panel or we suggest posting requests for panelists on the BTA list serve and/or Facebook page. Panel ideas may consider, but are not limited to, the following broad interrogation of the conference theme:

- Diffusion of terror
- Teaching and performing social activism

- Addressing anti-black violence
- Trans/formation and identity
- Transidentities
- Yokes
- Gender inclusivity
- Aesthetic changes in practice, training, and performance
- Interdisciplinary performance
- Intersectional considerations of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality and dis/ability.
- Academic transitions to professional theater practice
- Theatre's intersection with television and film performance
- Teaching actors to work between performance genres
- Directing transitions
- Performing transitions as dissidence
- Performance activism
- Trauma and reconciliation
- Duration and time
- Disruption
- Restructuring MFA and PHD training to include scenes of business, equity and inclusivity.

***SUBMISSION procedures to BTA Conference Planner***

1. For BTA panel endorsement please submit a two to three sentence-length **proposal description with full panel** participants to BTA Conference planner, Veronda Carey no later than October 20<sup>th</sup> 2018.
2. **Submit completed and endorsed panels by November 1, 2018. Designated Panel Chairs should** submit your session proposal **directly** to ATHE online at [www.athe.org](http://www.athe.org). **Your panel is not submitted if you send it uniquely to the BTA Conference Planner.**
3. The Executive Committee of BTA will track all panel submissions. ATHE will also forward all panels submission or the BTA Executive board ranking for conference acceptance. Please note that each focus group is given a limited number of panels due to conference spacing and a strong conference application rate. We will favor those panels with 1) a strong connection to the conference thematic; 2) a strong theoretical and methodological point of departure that ties all of the panelists together and ; 3) innovative approaches to interrogating black performance scholarship and performance. “Low-tech” and “no AV” panels are also highly considered by the ATHE conference planners.
1. Go to the ATHE homepage ([www.athe.org](http://www.athe.org)).
2. Sign into your ATHE account. (If you don’t remember your username or password, use the “Contact Us” function at the very top of the page.) Once you are logged in, continue to Step 3
3. Hover over the “Groups” tab.
4. Hover over “Focus Groups A-B.”
5. Select “Black Theatre Association Focus Group.”
6. Please note that if you are accepted to ATHE 2019 that you are required to be a CURRENT MEMBER AND REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE. You cannot participate in the conference if you are not a dues paying members of ATHE. You will be required to join and register before you can participate.