

Djola Branner

dbranner@gmu.edu

djolabranner.com

EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts, Playwriting

Actors Studio Drama School/The New School for Drama, 2006

Master of Arts, Creative Arts, Interdisciplinary Studies

San Francisco State University, 1990

Bachelor of Arts, Psychobiology

University of California at Santa Cruz, 1980

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Director of the School of Theater

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA 08/21 to present

- serve as a liaison between administration, faculty and staff
- supervise daily operations of the School including management of staff employees
- collaborate with marketing and communication to promote the mission and image of the School
- allocate funds to academic programs, productions, and balance the annual budget
- facilitate faculty and staff searches, hires, reappointments, and promotions
- serve as artistic director to the student managed production season
- seek out opportunities for the advancement of the School and production season
- serve as the primary liaison to donors
- spearhead efforts to bolster diversity, equity and inclusion
- represent the college at public events

Interim Vice President for Student Affairs

Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 08/19 to 06/20

- served as a liaison between Academic Affairs and Student Life
- supervised two Deans of Students, the Assistant Dean of Students and Assistant to the VPSA
- allocated funds to programs within the division, and balanced the annual budget
- served as a steward to the Board of Trustees
- represented the college at public events
- implemented new federal, state, and institutional health and safety directives
- revised sanctions for student conduct in relation to new health and safety directives
- evaluated applications for student emergency funds during the health pandemic

Dean of the School for Interdisciplinary Arts

Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 07/12 to 06/15

- served as a liaison between administration and faculty
- supervised daily operations of the School including management of two staff employees
- allocated funds to academic programs, and balanced the annual budget
- facilitated faculty searches, hires, reappointments, and promotions
- represented the college at public events

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Universities & Colleges

Professor of Theater

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA 08/21 to present

- design and teach theater courses
- advise undergraduate students in all phases of production
- develop and support programmatic strategies
- participate in college governance and community service

Professor of Theater

Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 07/07 to 07/21

- designed and taught theater courses
- advised undergraduate students in all phases of production
- developed and supported programmatic strategies
- participated in college governance and community service

Visiting Associate Professor of Theater

Brown University, Providence, RI 01/21 to 06/21

- developed virtual acting and directing curriculum
- taught virtual acting and directing courses
- advised undergraduate and graduate students

Visiting Assistant Professor of Theater

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 01/00 to 06/03

- developed acting curriculum for BA students
- taught beginning and intermediate acting
- choreographed main stage productions
- advised BA students

Visiting Assistant Professor of Creative Writing

Minneapolis College of Art & Design, MN 09/98 to 12/01

- developed liberal arts curriculum for BFA students
- taught dramatic writing
- advised BFA students

Adjunct Professor of Theater & Dance

Macalester College, Saint Paul, MN 03/96 to 12/02

- taught traditional Haitian dance and folklore
- choreographed and directed dance performances for annual concerts

Visiting Adjunct Professor of Dance

Stanford University, Menlo Park, CA 03/94 to 06/94

- taught traditional Haitian dance and folklore
- taught Dunham technique

TEACHING EXPERIENCE cont.

Universities & Colleges

Adjunct Professor of Dance

City College of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA 01/91 to 06/93

- taught traditional Haitian dance and folklore
- taught Dunham technique
- choreographed and directed student performances

Academies & Community Centers

Artist-in-Residence

Pillsbury House, Minneapolis, MN 08/19 to 08/23

- teach playwriting and performance to emerging artists

American Musical & Dramatic Academy, NYC, NY 10/06 to 06/07

- taught beginning acting and scene study

Patrick's Cabaret, Minneapolis, MN 10/94 to 08/06

- taught acting and writing workshops
- directed student performances

The Loft, Minneapolis, MN 04/97 to 07/03

- mentored young writers of color
- taught dramatic writing

Performing Arts Workshop, San Francisco, CA 09/90 to 06/93

- taught creative process to children (K-6)
- developed and staged personal narratives with youth (ages 14-17)

Institute of Choreography, San Francisco, CA 06/90 to 6/94

- taught traditional Haitian dance and folklore
- taught Dunham technique

School of the Arts, San Francisco, CA 09/89 to 06/94

- taught traditional Haitian dance and folklore
- taught Dunham technique
- choreographed and directed student performances

Third Wave Dance, San Francisco, CA 03/87 to 06/90

- taught traditional Haitian dance and folklore
- taught Dunham technique

Cadaqués Dance Center, Barcelona, Spain 06/85 to 12/85

- taught traditional Haitian dance and folklore
- taught Dunham technique

CONFERENCES

Panels & Performances

When the Soul Looks Out: Selections from Dr. Yusef Lateef's Creative Writing,

a virtual performance curated by Dr. Priscilla Page, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 2020

- Performer

Tell That: For Laurie Carlos, Augusta Savage Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 2019

- Writer/Performer – with Dr. Priscilla Page & Ben Davis

CONFERENCES cont.

Panels & Performances

Tell That: For Laurie Carlos, Soundworks Gathering #6, Easthampton, MA 2018

- Writer/Performer – with Dr. Priscilla Page & Shakeel Sohail-Gibran Cullis

Robbie McCauley Symposium: A Convening, Emerson College, Boston, MA 2017

- Writer/Performer – “A Tribute to Robbie McCauley”

Merit by Lenelle Moise, Smith College, Northampton, MA 2017

- Performer – staged reading

Fire & Ink: Witness, Advocacy for GLBT People of African Descent, Detroit, MI 2015

- Presenter/Workshop: “Writing/Embodying Autobiography”

- Performer: *sash & trim* – staged reading

- Performer: *The Messiah Complex* by Nia Witherspoon – staged reading

Festival of Original Theater: Queering Performance, University of Toronto, ON 2015

- Panelist/Performer: Verbatim Theater and Black Queer Narratives

Fire & Ink: Cotillion, Festival for GLBT Writers of African Descent, Austin, TX 2009

- Performer: *Delta Dandi* by Sharon Bridgforth – staged reading

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Playwright

Sutta

- George Mason University, Fairfax, VA 2022

sash & trim

- University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 2008

cover

- Samuel French One-Act Festival, NYC, NY 2006

oranges & honey

- The New School for Drama, NYC, NY 2005

Queen Nanny, Queen Nanny

- In the Heart of the Beast, Minneapolis, MN 2002

Mighty Real: A Tribute to Sylvester

- National Black Theater Festival, Winston-Salem, NC 2001

- Boston Center for the Arts, Boston, MA 2000

- Intermedia Arts, Minneapolis, MN 2000

The House That Crack Built (with Aaron Barnell)

- Pillsbury House, Minneapolis, MN 2000

Where I'm At

- Southern, Minneapolis, MN 1998

Forever Hold Your Piece (with Patrick Scully)

- Illusion, Minneapolis, MN 1997

- Dance Theater Workshop, NYC, NY 1996

Sweet Sadie

- Dixon Place, NYC, NY 1997

- Patrick's Cabaret, Minneapolis, MN 1997, 1994

- Out North, Anchorage, AK 1996

- Josie's Cabaret, San Francisco, CA 1994

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE cont.

Screenwriter*Mighty Real*

- Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 2019

Actor*Oba Queen Baba King Baba* by Sage Ni'ja Whitson

- Saint Marks Church, NYC, NY 2019

River See by Sharon Bridgforth

- Theater Offensive, Boston, MA 2014

...and Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi by Marcus Gardley

- University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 2009

sash & trim

- University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 2008

Fools & Lovers adapted by Moonwork

- Connelly, NYC, NY 2006

con flama by Sharon Bridgforth

- Penumbra, Saint Paul, MN 2001

Black Nativity by Langston Hughes

- Penumbra, Saint Paul, MN 2011 & 1999

Mighty Real: A Tribute to Sylvester

- National Black Theater Festival, Winston-Salem, NC 2001

- Boston Center for the Arts, Boston, MA 2000

- Intermedia Arts, Minneapolis, MN 2000

Angels in America, Part II: Perestroika by Tony Kushner

- Pillsbury, Minneapolis, MN 2001

The Darker Face of the Earth by Rita Dove

- Guthrie, Minneapolis, MN 2000

Blues for an Alabama Sky by Pearl Cleage

- Penumbra, Saint Paul, MN 1999

blood pudding by Sharon Bridgforth

- Frontera@Hyde Park, Austin, TX 1998

Forever Hold Your Piece (with Patrick Scully)

- Illusion, Minneapolis, MN 1997

- Dance Theater Workshop, NYC, NY 1996

Sweet Sadie

- Dixon Place, NYC, NY 1997

- Patrick's Cabaret, Minneapolis, MN 1997, 1994

- Out North, Anchorage, AK 1996

- Josie's Cabaret, San Francisco, CA 1994

Dark Fruit by Pomo Afro Homos

selected venues including:

- Drill Hall Arts, London, UK 1994

- Lincoln Center, NYC, NY 1993

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE cont.

Actor*Dark Fruit* by Pomo Afro Homos

- Wexner Center, Columbus, OH 1993
- Boston Center for the Arts, Boston, MA 1993
- Institute for Contemporary Arts (ICA), London, UK 1993
- Public Theater, NYC, NY 1991

Fierce Love: Stories from Black Gay Life by Pomo Afro Homos

selected venues including:

- Lincoln Center, NYC, NY 1994
- Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA 1994
- Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, MN 1994
- Institute for Contemporary Arts (ICA), London, UK 1993
- Drill Hall Arts, London, UK 1992
- Boston Center for the Arts, Boston, MA 1991

Actor (film)

“Black Is... Black Ain’t”, Marlon Riggs, director, 1994

“Anthem”, Marlon Riggs, director, 1991

“Normal Deviant Behavior”, Adam Chin, director, 1990

“Tongues Untied”, Marlon Riggs, director, 1989

Dancer

Drummers & Dancers of Langa, Morris Johnson, choreographer, Minneapolis, MN 1994 to 1997

Flesh & Spirit, Djola Branner, artistic director/choreographer, San Francisco, CA 1989 to 1994

La Petit Croix, Blanche Brown, choreographer, San Francisco, CA 1985 to 1988

Choreographer*The Sonic Life of a Giant Tortoise* by Toshiki Okada (directed by Kym Moore)

- Brown University, Providence, RI 2019

for colored girls who have considered suicide/ when the rainbow is enuf by Ntozake Shange (dir. by Kym Moore)

- Penumbra, Saint Paul, MN 1999

Director*Sutta*

- George Mason University, Fairfax, VA 2022

Seriously... What Did You Call Me? by Onawumi Jean Moss

- Northwestern University, Chicago, IL 2018
- Powerhouse, Amherst College, Amherst, MA 2017
- Nyack Center, Nyack, NY 2016
- Ko Festival of Performance, Amherst College, Amherst, MA 2015

BFE by Julia Cho

- Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 2010

oranges & honey

- The New School for Drama, NYC, NY 2005

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE cont.

Making Lemonade by Patrick Scully

- Patrick's Cabaret, Minneapolis, MN 2003

Journey/Sanctuary by Cathy Young, Robert Robinson & Mary Easter

- Southern, Minneapolis, MN 2001

The B-Sides by Bianca Pettis

- The Garage, Minneapolis, MN 1998

The Magic of Laughter by Danielle Daniel

- The Fringe Festival, Minneapolis, MN 1997

Esker by Tim Herwig

- Patrick's Cabaret, Minneapolis, MN 1997

Director (film)

Mighty Real

- Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 2019

Dramaturg

Leaves of Grass – Uncut by Patrick Scully

- Guthrie, Minneapolis, MN 2019

Leaves of Grass – Uncut by Patrick Scully

- Dixon Place, NYC, NY 2016

Making Lemonade by Patrick Scully

- Patrick's Cabaret, Minneapolis, MN 2003 2009

PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author

Black Gay Genius (Vintage Entity Press, 2015)

Mighty Real: An Anthology of African American Same Gender Loving Writing
(Effusses/Sangha Publications, 2010)

Voices Rising (RedBone Press, 2007)

In the Life (Redbone Press, 2007)

The Performer's Guide to the Collaborative Process (Heinemann, 2001)

Monologues for Actors of Color: Men (Routledge, 2000)

Staging Gay Lives (Westview Press, 1996)

Colored Contradictions (Plume, 1996)

ZYZZYVA (Vol. VIII, No. 3, 1992)

Contributing editor

Evergreen Chronicles (quarterly, Minneapolis, 1995 to 98)

Bay Guardian (weekly, San Francisco, 1991 to 94)

Collected plays

sash & trim (RedBone Press, 2013)

Collected poems

lyrics of the last born (Magpie Publications, 1996)

GRANTS

Fellowships

Cadence Pipeline Foundation, VA 2022 to 2024
Marion & Jasper Whiting Foundation, Amherst, MA 2016
Bush Foundation, Saint Paul, MN 2000
Performance Artist – McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis, MN 1999
Interdisciplinary Artist – Jerome Foundation, Minneapolis, MN 1998
Playwright – Jerome Foundation, Minneapolis, MN 1994

Production

Mighty Real: A Tribute to Sylvester

- Curtain, UMass, Amherst, MA 2009
- Creative Capital, NYC, NY 2000
- Philanthrofund, Intermedia Arts, Minneapolis, MN 2000
- Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, Saint Paul, MN 1998
- Jerome Foundation, Saint Paul, MN 1998

Forever Hold Your Piece (with Patrick Scully)

- Many Voices Collaboration Grant, Playwrights' Center, Minneapolis, MN 1996

Development

Mighty Real: A Tribute to Sylvester

- Faculty Development Grant, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 2008

The House That Crack Built (with Aaron Barnell)

- Diverse Visions Regional Grant, National Endowment for the Arts, DC 1996

AWARDS

Endowed Chair, Marilyn Levin Professorship, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 2018 to 2021

Millay Artist Residency, Austerlitz, NY 2018

Out on the Edge, Theater Offensive, Boston, MA 2014

Lambda Literary Award (finalist), LGBT Drama, *sash & trim and other plays*, 2014

Best Thespian, Lavender Magazine, Minneapolis, MN 2000

Austin Critic's Circle (nominee), Best Actor in a Supporting Role, *blood pudding*, Austin, TX 1998

Bessie Award, Outstanding Performance, Dance Theater Workshop, *Fierce Love*, NYC, NY 1992

ARCHIVES

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Performing Arts Collections, NYC

- Djola Branner Papers

Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library, New York University, NYC

- <https://hemisphericinstitute.org/en/>

AFFILIATIONS

Dramatists Guild