

## **The Gathering 2017**

#The GatheringCAB

Sunday, January 8, 2017 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Online Resource: [www.camilleabrown.org/TheGathering](http://www.camilleabrown.org/TheGathering)

Conceived by Camille A. Brown

Co-facilitated by

Ebony Noelle Golden and Sydnie Mosley

*2017 Report by J. Soto*

### About The Gathering

Conceived by choreographer Camille A. Brown in 2014, The Gathering serves as an open forum for intergenerational black female artists to support one another and to advocate for greater cultural equity and acknowledgement in the contemporary dance world. As trendsetters and pioneers who merit more widespread public recognition for their innovations, this evolving group of black choreographers meets annually to examine the reasons for this precedent and to embark on a mission to make their work more broadly accessible and appreciated.

### 2017 Goal

Co-Facilitated by **Ebony Noelle Golden** and **Sydnie Mosley**, The Gathering 2017 will focus on sharpening our individual and collective strategies for sustained action to support Black women in the dance field. How can we leverage the work that has already been done into IMPACT moving forward?

### **Introduction and Movement Exchange**

Engaged each other by walking up to someone and saying, "Hi, I am...." translated this into movement making introductions throughout the room.

- How We Do (a.k.a. Community Agreements)
- Default to trust
- Move up/Move back
- Liberated space
- Take care of you
- LISTEN for Understanding

## Opening Statements and Framing Questions by Co-facilitators:

- We know what the issues are and we need to move forward to action
- We are going to talk about ways that we have sustained ourselves and what does sustainability and wellness really look like?

## **Partnership and Collaboration**

### When is a partnership and collaboration working? How does it work?

Combined ways of speaking from words to movement to express ideas of partnership and collaboration, we saw many ways of articulating this:

- Be true about what you need
- Check in over time (needs change)
- Always get clarity around shared values before beginning a collaboration
- Shared artistic vision
- Interested in ways of fostering artists across art forms

### Observations:

Poetic movements

Duos working together and also dissonance

- Figure out where the fire is and be able to come back to it
- Combining the artistic and the logistic
- Find what are you not so good at
- Setting goals and creating a schedule and being committed to that schedule
- Research and learning is a large part of collaboration
- Sitting with the folks that did it before me, understanding the ground that I get to walk on, because of those that came before

### Observations:

Intergenerational dialogue and collaborations

The importance of commitment and checking in with each other, holding each other accountable

## **Economic Viability Conversation**

What does that look like, and feel like, how does it show up and happen in your practice and communities? How is it working?

Holli:

“Who is in the room and where they are as an artist as well as the age range. 21 vs 45, the idea of economic viability has shifted in those twenty years. Worrying about the rent does not help the creative practice. Having some kind of stable foundation is the best thing you can do for your creative process. The more economic stability I’ve had, has only enhanced my creativity and has enhanced my ability to engage in creative practice. Thinking structurally. The vision always outgrows the available resources.”

Bb Miller:

“Is it about the struggle that defines us or is it about finding where our feet are. Being in a field long enough to feel my feet. There is also the daily discovery of where my feet are.”

Emerging Theme: The Seasons of Your Life

- Season of Observation
- Season of Transition
- Season of Synthesis

### **Having a Seat at the Table Exercise**

How are we creating our own tables or are there tables that are already there that we want a seat at?

Feelings/answers/questions expressed to the group about having a seat at the table:

“Certain body type”

“Certain style”

“I am over thinking”

“Because that is what you think the table looks like”

“I got this”

“No, I don’t”

“It is this constant overthinking”

"I think there is someone behind me doing the same thing. Awareness and looking around"

"Making transitions especially when you are known as only one thing"

"Will you listen to me?"

"Will you like me or won't you?"

"Trusting that you will be welcomed into a space."

"We don't realize that we are all in the same space."

"Who is creating these tables right now?"

"Women of color are amazing laborers. How in all of these situations do we manage our labor so that we are not working 27 hours a day and sick and dying?"

"How do we manage the fact that we are such excellent laborers and we labor all the time?"

"Wanting the seat at the table but sometimes being shut out can make you create with the resources within."

"We get to decide what the table is. We have not defined whose table."

"We have some agency and power in deciding where we want to go."

"Sometime you don't want what is on the menu. The table is complicated."

"Sometimes we are at a table and we do not even know it. Sometimes step one is taking stock of where you are."

"What is abundantly rich and beautiful is Black excellence."

"Who is making the table, where are they putting it, and then moving it?"

### **Moving Forward Towards Action- Break-out Groups**

What are the steps you will take in your own communities to make these changes?

To do:

Articulate what the issue is in one statement

Articulate your vision for change

Come up with 3 steps to get here

Find a way to creatively show to the group what those steps are

Dance it out and show us.

Four break-out groups:

1. Black female body
2. Economic viability
3. Partnership and Collaboration

#### 4. Seat at the table

##### → **Black female body:**

Issue: the absence of spaces and communities that support all kinds of the diversity of black female bodies

##### Action steps:

1. Create a workshop targeted to black women dancers
2. "Sister a season" showcase. Showing up for us, a showcase or series focusing on the seasons in our lives
3. Creating opportunities for each other finding time to invite ourselves in

##### → **Economic viability**

Issue: Not enough of us are sustaining and thriving economically

Vision for Change: We have the resources to sustain, grow, and thrive, and the knowledge and understanding of how to gather those resources.

##### Action Steps:

1. Feb 14 - Valentine's day called "Love Your Money": assess your resources and needs including assets, costs, debts to get a total financial picture
2. April 15 - Develop and share a profitability strategy including fundraising skillsets
3. Dec 31 - Research resource partnerships

##### → **Partnership and Collaboration:**

Issue: Not knowing who is out there and doing what. Finding out how to connect.

##### Vision for Change:

Making sure more folks are aware of current and existing databases and have access to them.

Conducting self-directed research

Creating platforms for interaction

Following through on connections

Passing along information and a willingness to collaborate

Visioning strategies for success and decision-making

Action Steps:

1. Create database for volunteers and follow up on it
2. Dance/NYC sends list of pertinent resources
3. Create facebook group of questions and answers

→ **Seat at the Table**

Issue: Not knowing what tables are available to you and how you can identify the table

Vision for Change:

Find the confidence to step up to the the table

Adaptability, shift transform

Be your own table

Action steps:

Start today by talking to our elders

Assess inventory, what do we have to offer?

Decide what the table is in our life

What can we not take in ? Or step up to?

**Co-facilitator Action Steps in Closing:**

Ebony Noelle Golden will create an Actions Calendar that is inclusive of these action steps.

Sydney Mosley will send a monthly check-in email to the group to make sure the action calendar is in motion

## Memorable Quotes

"The next part is to be more confident with those thoughts and collaboration"

"It is really important to be in these stages and to figure out which one you are in."

"This is on purpose an intergenerational place. We are literally talking across time."

"There is something about being in the space at a different time and it is about who is in the room and what we can do collectively."

"My elders are my guide. I don't want to go back and reinvent the wheel. I go back to go forward."

"Ask your elders to make sure you are bringing someone up with you."

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## STAYING CONNECTED

Twitter Handles:

**Camille A. Brown** – @CamilleABrown

**Sydney L. Mosley** – @sydmosley

**Ebony Noelle Golden** – @bettysdaughter1

**NYC Dance/NYC** – @DanceNYC

**The Field** – @TheField

**Gibney Dance** – @GibneyDance

## SPECIAL THANKS

Indira Goodwine

Managing Director, Camille A. Brown & Dancers

Rachel Watson

Company Assistant & The Gathering Coordinator, Camille A. Brown & Dancers

The Gathering 2017 Partners

Dance/NYC, The Field, Gibney Dance

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The Gathering Advisory Board

Cynthia Oliver, Paloma McGregor, Maria Bauman, Marjani Forte-Saunders, Nia Love, Michelle Gibson, Christal Brown, and Amara Tabor-Smith

The Gathering 2017 Volunteers

Emily Anderson, Dani Atkinson, Vanessa Core, Marianna Russell, Mike Walsh

Livestream

Adewumni Oke, Vijay Mathew & HowlRound TV

Photography

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