

Kaja Dunn, M.F.A

Assistant Professor of Theater
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Education

- 2010 **Regent University**, Virginia Beach, VA
MFA Acting with a Directing Concentration
Thesis: The Challenges and Process of Performing Dr. Bearing in Wit
- 2007 **Roosevelt University**, Chicago, IL
BFA, Theatre Performance
Newberry Undergraduate Scholar Thesis: Black Delineations and
Characterizations in the Castas Paintings of Pre-Colonial Mexico
- 1998 **North Carolina School of the Art**, Winston-Salem, NC
High School Diploma, Drama Concentration

Teaching Experience

- 2016- Present **University of North Carolina Charlotte**, Charlotte, NC
Assistant Professor of Theatre, Head of Acting

Taught: Acting 1, Acting 2, Introduction to African American Theatre, Senior
Capstone in Performance, Voice and Movement for the Actor, Acting for Musical
Theatre, Audition Techniques, and Production Practicum
- 2012-2016 **California State University San Marcos**, San Marcos, CA
Senior Lecturer, Theatre

Taught: Acting 1, Ensemble Acting, African American Theatre, Audition, Acting on
Camera, Production Practicum, Theatre for Social Change, Arts in Learning for
Educators, American Theatre Taboos, Women In Theatre
- 2006-2007 **Young Audiences of San Diego**, San Diego, CA
Teaching Artist, Mentoring Artist
- 2005-2007 **Playwrights Project**, San Diego, CA
Program Coordinator, Director and Teaching Artist
Professional Experience
- 2019- Present **Theatrical Intimacy Education**, Baltimore, MD
Affiliate Faculty in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Designing new curriculum, pedagogy and outreach efforts around intimacy
choreography and equity, diversity and inclusion (around ability race and
intersectionality)

- 2014-2016 **Center ARTES Dream Institute for Teachers**, San Marcos, CA
Interim Director, Lead Coach
- 2007 **Ya Tong Theatre Company**, Taipei, Taiwan
Instructor
- 2006-2015 **Moxie Theatre**, San Diego, CA
Artistic Associate
- 2002-2013 **Lamb's Players Theatre**, Coronado, CA
Artistic Associate

Invited Speaker/Scholar

In Process:

Bucknell University: Cultural Competency Consulting: Theatre, Film and Opera Departments, Lewisburg, PA, November 2020.

Princeton University: Workshop, Culturally Competent Actor Training, Princeton, NJ, (rescheduled due to Covid).

Completed:

Summit Organizer, "The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, & Intimacy Initiative (EDIII) Summit," Virtual, August, 2020 (originally hosted by Princeton Pre-Covid).

Foundations in Race and Intimacy, Theatrical Intimacy Education, Virtual, August 2020.

Radical Imagination: Marginalization into Resilience, ATHE All Conference Plenary: Envisioning Resilience in Performance, Virtual, July 2020.

Black Women in the American Theatre, Keynote Panel, Women's Theatre Festival, Virtual, July 2020.

Teaching in Trauma, Keynote, Emergency Virtual Conference on Undergraduate Theater Education, July 2020.

Race and Acting Pedagogy, Keynote Speech, Michael Chekhov Association, July 2020.

Actor's Equity Association, Workshop Series on Race for Actors NYC, NY, January 2020-Present.

Blumenthal Performing Arts, Community Outreach Talks, Diversity in Theatre, Charlotte, NC, February 2020.

Spelman College, Guest Artist, Atlanta, GA, January 2020.

Emory University, Panelist, Carmen Jones, African American Film Series, Atlanta, GA, January 2020.

Bucknell University, Dalal Consultancy, Lewisburg, PA, December 2019.

2018 NCTC Producing Gathering, Keynote Panelist, Charlotte, NC, July 27-29, 2018.

Children's Theatre of Charlotte, Consultant for Last Stop On Market Street, Kindness Project, August 2017.

Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, Talkback Moderator, The Curious Incident of the Dog In the Nighttime, Charlotte, NC, February, 2017.

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

In Process:

Dunn, Kaja, Sharell Luckett and Daphnie Sicre. "Training Theatre Students of Color in the USA." Dance and Performance Training's Special Issue 11.3 "Against the Canon," (commission) 2020. (final approval)

Completed:

Baker, Sylvan, Stephen Buescher, and Kaja Dunn. "Culturally Competent and Trauma-Informed Teaching in the Age of MAGA and Brexit." *Theatre Topics* 30, no. 1 (2020): E-29-E-31. [doi:10.1353/tt.2020.0006](https://doi.org/10.1353/tt.2020.0006).

Hidden Damage: When Uninformed Casting and Actor Training Disregard the Effect of 'Character Embodiment on Students of Color.' Theatre Symposium, vol. 27, no. 1, September 2019.

Peer Reviewed Book Chapter In Process

In Process:

Ed. Jordan-Zachary, Julia. Authors Dunn, Kaja, Tehia Glass, Janaka Lewis, Kendra Jason and Candace Brown. "Black Woman and the 'Rona.'" "Motherschooling: Building the Brilliance of Blackness in Home Education."

Eds. Kirwan and Prince. Hartley, Andrew, Kaja Dunn and Chris Berry. "Decolonizing Shakespeare on Stage: A Case Study." "Arden Research Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporary Performance" London: Arden Shakespeare, 2020.

Peer Reviewed Conference Publications/Presentations

"Mothers of Color as Activists, Artists and Scholars." Session Coordinator, Association of Theatre in Higher Ed Conference, Virtual, August 1, 2020.

"Culturally Competent Pedagogy and Practice in the Age of MAGA and BREXIT." Session Coordinator, Association of Theatre in Higher Ed Conference, Orlando, FL, August 10, 2019.

"Shifting the Landscape: Institutions of Blackness in Theatre, Performance, and Academia" Presenter, Association of Theatre in Higher Ed Conference, Orlando, FL, August 10, 2019.

"Changing Scenes Through Actor Training: Rethinking the Methods of Connecting Black Character Work and European Acting Techniques." Presenter, Association of Theatre in Higher Ed Conference, Orlando, FL, August 9, 2019.

"Decolonizing Theatre Pedagogy." Coordinator and Presenter, Black Theatre Network Conference, Winston-Salem, NC, July, 28, 2019.

"Inclusion and Diversity: Casting for your Stage, Staff, Production Teams, and Board." Presenter, NCTC Producers Gathering, Greensboro, NC, July 22, 2019.

"Highlights of Theatre Symposium 27: Theatre and Embodiment," Presenter of Paper: "Hidden Damage: When Uninformed Casting and Actor Training Disregard the Effect of Character Embodiment on Students of Color," Southeastern Theatre Conference 2019, Knoxville, TN, February 27- March 2, 2019.

"Rendering Representation: Incorporating Diversity in Costume Design," Presenter, Southeastern Theatre Conference 2019, Knoxville, TN, February 27- March 2, 2019.

"Creating Safe Spaces for Theatre Students of Color: Part 2, Taking Action," Session Coordinator and Presenter, ATHE Conference 2018, Boston, MA, August 3, 2018.

"Decolonizing the Acting Classroom: Creating a Culturally Competent Pedagogy," Session Coordinator and Presenter, ATHE Conference 2018, Boston, MA, August 2, 2018. -

"Revolutionizing the Actor's Way In: Rethinking the Methods of Connecting Black Character Work and European Acting Techniques," Presenter, ATHE Conference 2018, Boston, MA, August 4, 2018.

"Hidden Damage: When Uninformed Casting and Actor Training Disregard the Effect of Character Embodiment on Students of Color," Theatre Symposium, Decatur, Georgia, April 13-15, 2018.

"Reimagining Actor Training for Students of Color," On Whose Terms? Ten Years On... Conference, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK, March 22-23, 2018.

"Exploration of 'Safe Spaces' for Theatre Students of Color," Presented with Anjalee Hutchinson (Bucknell) and Ivakristi Pallpier (Teaching Artist, KY), Association For Theatre in Higher Education Annual Conference, Las Vegas, NV, August, 2017.

"Mentoring Diversity In Performance," Panelist, Association For Theatre in Higher Education Annual Conference, Las Vegas, NV, August, 2017.

"Accessing Complex Cross-Cultural Discussion Through Theatrical Technique," The Symposium on Performance of the African Diaspora as Social Change, Georgia College, Milledgeville, Georgia, April, 2016.

"Networking for Women and People of Color," Kennedy Centre American College Theatre Festival, Region 8 Conference, Honolulu, HI, February, 2016.

"Hairlouges, Dialoguing about Theatre and the Black Hair Experience," California Centre for The Arts, Escondido, CA February, 2016.

"Raisin In The Sun and Clybourne Park in the Context of Housing Discrimination," Presented with Dr. Judy Bauerlein (CSUSM), Southeastern Theatre Conference Convention, Chattanooga, TN, March 2015.

"The Sacred in the Profane: Theatre through a Redemptive Lens," Presented with Dr. Judy

Bauerlein (CSUSM), Southeastern Theatre Conference Convention, Chattanooga, TN, March 2015.

"Arts in Learning," with Dr. Merryl Goldberg, Ed. D, (CSUSM), Southeastern Theatre Conference Convention, Chattanooga, TN, March 2015.

"The MFA Artist as Teacher: The Initial Plunge," (Co-Presenter), Southeastern Theatre Conference Convention, Mobile, AL, March 2014.

"Recollections Series," Playwrights Project, with Savannah Sincoff and June Gottlieb, San Diego, CA, January 2014.

Acting, Professional Credits (Stage)

2020	<i>Processing</i> (Reading)	Co-Production	Online
2020	<i>Natural Shocks</i> (Virtual Premier)	Women's Theatre Festival	Online
2019	<i>Tropical Secrets</i> (Workshop)	Children's Theatre Charlotte	Charlotte, NC
2019	<i>Behold A Negress</i> (Workshop)	Playmakers Rep.	Chapel Hill, NC
2015	<i>Every Path</i>	WOW Festival	La Jolla, CA
2015	<i>This Land</i> (Reading)	Amigos Del Rep	San Diego, CA
2015	<i>September and Her Sisters</i>	Out on a Limb New Play Festival	San Diego, CA
2013	<i>Wit</i>	Lamb's Players Theatre	San Diego, CA
2013	<i>River City</i> (Reading)	National New Play Network	San Diego, CA
2012	<i>Around The World in 80 Days</i>	Lamb's Players Theatre,	San Diego, CA
	• San Diego Theatre Critics Circle Craig Noel Award Nomination (Featured Actress) 2012		
2012	<i>Brownie Points</i>	Lamb's Players Theatre	San Diego, CA
2012	<i>A Raisin In The Sun</i>	Moxie Theatre	San Diego, CA
	• San Diego Theatre Critics Circle Craig Noel Winner (Best Ensemble) 2012		
2008	<i>In Our Time</i>	Theatre Underground	Virginia Beach, VA
2007	<i>Piano Lesson</i> (Reading)	Cygnat Theatre	San Diego, CA
2007	<i>Experience Africa</i>	SD Wild Animal Park	San Diego, CA
2006	<i>Vagina Monologues</i>	Celebrity Network	Los Angeles, CA
2006	<i>A Patriot Act</i>	Sledgehammer Theatre	San Diego, CA
2005	<i>Gibson Girl</i>	Moxie Theatre	San Diego, CA
2004	<i>Someone Like Me</i>	Kaiser Educational Touring Co.	Los Angeles, CA
2003	<i>Crowns</i>	San Diego Rep	San Diego, CA
2003	<i>Chickens</i>	Pacific Theatre	Vancouver, CA
2003	<i>Match</i>	Pacific Theatre	Vancouver, CA
2003	<i>One For The Road</i>	Lamb's Players Theatre	San Diego, CA
2003	<i>Best Christmas Pageant Ever</i>	Lamb's Players Theatre	San Diego, CA
2003	<i>American Heroes</i>	Lamb's Players Theatre	San Diego, CA
2002	<i>T.S. Elliot's The Wasteland</i>	Project Danztheatre	Chicago, IL
2001	<i>Angry Gay Black Woman</i>	TriArts	Chicago, IL

Directing, Professional

Forthcoming:

2020 ***Edges of Time*** (World Premier) Playmakers Rep. (Covid-Postpone) Chapel Hill, NC

Completed:

2019 ***No Child*** Cape Fear Regional Theatre Fayetteville, NC

2018	<i>Edges of Time</i> (Staged Reading)	Playmakers Rep.	Chapel Hill, NC
2018	<i>Noms De Guerre</i> (Staged Reading)	Playmakers Rep.	Chapel Hill, NC
2016	<i>Hairalouges</i>	California Center for The Arts	Escondido, CA
2013	<i>Plays By Young Writers Festival</i>	Playwrights Project	San Diego, CA
2009	<i>Drink Me</i> (Asst. Director)	Moxie Theatre/La Jolla Playhouse	La Jolla, CA
2007	<i>Teacups and Palindromes</i>	Underground Theatre	Virginia Beach, VA

Directing, Educational

Completed:

2019	<i>Blues for An Alabama Sky</i>	UNC Charlotte	Charlotte, NC
2015	<i>As It Is In Heaven</i>	Cal State San Marcos (CSUSM)	San Marcos, CA
2015	<i>Stage Kiss</i>	CSUSM	San Marcos, CA
2015	<i>Children's Story Adaptations</i>	CSUSM	San Marcos, CA
2015	<i>Twilight Los Angeles 1992</i>	CSUSM	San Marcos, CA
2014	<i>Seussical</i>	CSUSM	San Marcos, CA
2014	<i>Aesop's Fables</i>	CSUSM	San Marcos, CA
2014	<i>Theatre for Social Change Lab</i>	CSUSM	San Marcos, CA
2013	<i>Theatre for Social Change Lab</i>	CSUSM	San Marcos, CA
2012	<i>Child's Garden of Verses</i>	Ocean Beach Elementary	Ocean Beach, CA
2011	<i>Foster Youth New Play Festival</i>	CSUSM	San Marcos, CA
2010	<i>Seussical Jr!</i>	Regent Summer Mentorship Program	Virginia Beach, VA
2009	<i>The Freak</i>	Regent University	Virginia Beach, VA
2008	<i>In Our Time</i>	Regent University	Virginia Beach, VA
2006	<i>Cinderella</i>	De La Nacion School	National City, CA
2006	<i>This Is Where the Sidewalk Ends</i>	John Otis School	San Diego, CA

On Camera Acting

2020	Duke Hospital	Duke Productions	Mother
2019	Bank Of America		Lead
2019	Press Gainey	Windmill Media	Nurse
2019	Food Lion (national spot)	Spot TV	Lead
2018	Micro-Learning	Center for Leadership Studies	Lead
2011	E-Clips (national)	NASA	Lead
2011	Princess Cruise Lines		Lead
2011	Elephant Auto Insurance	(Multi-ad campaign)	Lead
2010	Career Services,	Regent University	Lead
2010	"Harassment, A New Look"	Coastal Training Tech	Lead
2009	CommUSA	Groovy Like A Movie	Lead
2007	Waterfront Hilton	YNR Marketing	Lead
2007	US Marine & Family Services	Groovy Like A Movie	Teacher
2006	World Vision (national)	IMO Productions	Lead
2000	McDonald's (national)	McDonald's Corp.	Lead

Media Interviews

"Interview with Leaders in the Emerging Field of Intimacy Direction," Special Issue on Intimacy Choreography, Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, expected release in the Spring of 2020. (edited Joy Brooke Fairfield)

"Find Your Light," Featured Guest, Podcast, April 30, 2019.

"Forecasts in Black Theatre in 2019," Interviewed along with Chris Berry and David Shakes on Up Close and Cultural, WAYO FM, Rochester, NY, January 22, 2019.

"Archipelago and Culturally Competent Production," Interviewed along with Caridad Svich and Carlos Alexis Cruz (UNCC) on Up Close and Cultural, WAYO FM, Rochester, NY, October 2, 2018.

"Reshaping Pedagogy for Actors of Color," Guest expert along with Dr. Monica Ndounou (Dartmouth) on Up Close and Cultural, WAYO FM, Rochester, NY, June 26, 2018.

"Thomas and Sally Part 2, Black Women in the United States, a White Supremacist Patriarchal Society, and Theatre That Does Not Harm Them." Guest expert along with Reenah Golden on Up Close and Cultural, WAYO FM, Rochester, NY, November 7, 2017.

"A Conversation About 'Thomas and Sally,' Representations of Women and Women of Color in Theatre" Guest expert along with Mark Allen Davis (San Francisco State University) on Up Close and Cultural, WAYO FM, Rochester, NY, October 31, 2017.

"Understanding Social Justice Through The Arts," Guest expert with Roger Guenveur Smith, Charlotte Talks, WFAE 90.7, Charlotte, NC, January 10, 2017.

Fellowships/Grants

Newberry Library Undergraduate Seminar Fellowship, Chicago, IL, 2002
"The Pan-Hispanic World, 1492-1825," Research Funding and Awards

Peer Reviewed Institutional Grants

2019	UNCC Faculty Research Grant \$8,000
2018	UNCC Faculty Scholarship of Assessment Grant \$1000
2018	UNCC Chancellor's Diversity Challenge Fund, Black Vitality Network at TCG, \$3,500
2017	UNCC Chancellor's Diversity Challenge Fund, Goldsmiths, UK, presentation, \$1000

Editorial Boards/Panels

- 2019 Professional Affinity Group: University Leaders, (co-facilitator with Dr. Sharell Lockett), Theatre Communications Group National Conference.
- 2018 NC State Arts Resources Theater and Grant Presenting Panel, Raleigh, NC.
- 2018 Higher Education Task Group, International Black Theatre Summit, Dartmouth College.

Professional Affiliations/Memberships

- 2020-Present Black Theatre Network, Executive Board, Assitant Secretary
- 2018-2020 Black Theatre Association, Executive Board, Secretary
- 2017-Present Black Theatre Network, Member (Consulting)
- 2011-Present Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Radio and Television Artists Union (SAG-AFTRA)
- 2019- Present Theatrical Intimacy Education, Baltimore, MD.
- 2019 WOCA (Women of Color in the Arts)
- 2019- Present Theatre Communications Group

Intergenerational Leaders of Color

- 2016- Present Association of Theatre in Higher Education
Member (panels, consulting)
As a contributing member of the Acting and Theatre (Liberal Art focus groups of ATHE) I have worked on agendas, collaborated with other scholars, contributed various acts of service, and presented.
- Acting Focus Group
 - Directing Focus Group
 - Theatre as a Liberal Art Focus Group
- 2015-2016 California Center for the Arts, Escondido, CA, Education and Outreach Board Member.
- 2015-2016 Moxie Theatre, Community Board Member, San Diego, CA.
- 2015-2016 Rising Arts Leaders, Member, San Diego, CA.
- 2014-2019 Southeastern Theatre Association, Member.
- 2014-2018 American Association of University Professors, Member.

Community Service

- 2006-2016 Moxie Theatre, Associate Artist, San Diego, CA.
- 2002-2016 Lamb's Players Theatre, Associate Artist, San Diego, CA.
- 2018-2020 Freedom School (West Charlotte location), Theatre Classes and Playwriting, July, 2018.
- 2018-2019 Actors of Tomorrow Educational Theatre, Workshops on Auditioning for College, Harrisburg, NC
- 2018 Freedom School Partners Inc., Harambe Guest Speaker, Charlotte, NC.
- 2018 Freedom School Partners Inc., Playwriting and Theatre Classes, Charlotte, NC.
- 2017 Children's Theatre Charlotte, consultant on Last Stop on Market Street.
- 2017 Mocha Moms International, Boys Booked on Barbershops.

Internal Service

University Committees

- 2019-2020 Confucius Institute College Rep.
- 2017-2019 University Faculty Council
- 2019 UNCC Educators Delegation to China
- 2016-Present African and African American Faculty Caucus
- 2016-2017 Latinx Faculty Caucus
- 2016- Present Chancellor's Diversity Fund Mentoring Circles

College Committees

- 2018-2020 CoAA Faculty Council

Department Committees

- 2017-2021 Curriculum and Assessment Committee
(Chair from 2019-2020)
- 2016-2018 Performance Concentration workgroup head

- 2016-2018 NAST Accreditation Performance workgroup
- 2016-2017 NAST Community Engagement Committee
- 2016-2017 Advisor and Ad Hoc member on 2018 Voice Search committee (attending meetings and interviews after FMLA in Spring 2018 semester)
- 2016-2017 Actors from the London Stage Workgroup

Baccalaureate (Honors) Committees

Isabelle Gonzalez, BA, Honors Thesis Committee, "Diversity in Musical Theatre, Theatre with a Performance Concentration," completion May 6, student graduation May, 2019.

Other Service

- 2020 Backpack Literacy Program for Black Youth
- 2019 SETC, Department Rep.
- 2018 Student Forum on the Black Theatre
- 2018 Summit Conducting Student Scholarship
- 2018 Archipelago
- 2017 Auditions
- 2017 Roger Guenveur Smith Performance
- 2017 Organized Mentoring Circles for Theatre Students of Color

Leadership

- 2016- Present Head of Acting, Theatre Department, UNC Charlotte
- 2017-2018 Chair, Theatre Department Curriculum Committee, UNC Charlotte
- 2016-2021 Theatre Department Curriculum Committee, UNC Charlotte

Professional Affiliations

- Cape Fear Regional Theatre
- Black Ops Theatre Playmakers
- Regional Theatre Corrigan

Johnston Casting Moxie Theatre

JTA Talent Agency

Lamb's Players Theatre