



Kimberly Welch

English

University of Missouri-St. Louis

Kimberly Chantal Welch is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. With an emphasis on the African Diaspora, her research focuses on 20th and 21st century performances and diverse iterations of homelessness and incarceration, questioning the ways in which constructions of gender, sexuality, and race mediate how people navigate said sites of spatial dispossession. Located at the intersections of theater and performance, cultural, black, and gender studies, her work explores the role media plays in gendered dispossession narratives, particularly ones around and about black female subjects.

UMSL

As a black feminist scholar, Welch believes that scholarship must attend to people's everyday experiences, therefore her research and teaching center praxis, positing both experiential knowledge and critical thinking as important aspects in the study of race, gender, and sexuality. She is a strong proponent of service-learning; Welch is active member of UMSL's Service-Learning Community of Practice and teaches courses that focus on socio-political issues affecting communities of color across the U.S. and abroad. In addition, Welch is a member of Performance Studies international's (PSi) Antiracism and Anticolonialism Committee. Through her involvement with both groups as well as speaking engagements and webinars, she hopes that facilitating sometimes difficult conversations will help foster a community in which black precarity isn't normalized, and people become not only aware of how their actions might contribute to said oppression (e.g. through microaggressions), but also ways that they can support black life rather than black death.

At UMSL, Welch has helped implement a campus-wide Black Futurity Group open to faculty, students, staff, and UMSL's broader St. Louis community. The organization's monthly activities range from multi-genre reading group discussions to film screenings with Q&A to poetry readings. Outside of the institution, Welch has also worked closely with the Los Angeles Poverty Department, a theater company that is primarily comprised of homeless and formerly homeless residents of Skid Row, since 2014. From 2016 to 2018, she served as a Humanities Advisor for their "Public Safety For Real" project, which was funded by the California Endowment for the Arts. Most recently, Welch worked with the theater company on their Walk the Talk Archive Project (November 2020).

Welch's work has been featured in Theatre Journal, Theatre Survey, and Cultural Dynamics, for which she recently served as a guest co-editor for the special issue "Transient Performance". Her forthcoming publications include contributions to The Methuen Drama Handbook to Theatre and Gender as well as Modern Drama and Performance Research. Her book manuscript project, Transforming Black Death: Specters of Dispossession in Contemporary U.S. Performance, illustrates the diverse ways notions of race, gender, and sexuality condition spatial practice in prison and homeless spaces, which include the creation and transformation of space through community-building as well as affective processes. Welch received her B.A. in Theater Studies from Duke University and her Ph.D. in Theater and Performance Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles. Before joining UMSL's English Department in 2019, she was a visiting professor of African American Literature at Ramapo College of New Jersey.

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