

Zoë M. Van Gyseghem

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PROFILE

Interdisciplinary scholar, researcher, and program leader at the intersections of **Decoloniality, Puerto Rican Studies, Human Geographies, Critical Dance Studies, Corporeal Politics, and the Black Radical Tradition**. My work investigates **dance and music as transformative practices for worldmaking and resistance within Afro–Puerto Rican communities**, integrating **embodied, feminist, and decolonial methodologies**. Combines **archival research, qualitative analysis, and community-centered engagement** to uncover erased histories and advance equitable knowledge production.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Afro–Puerto Rican dance and music as tools of cultural resilience and spatial imagination
 - Critical human geographies and corporeal politics
 - Decolonial and diasporic research methodologies
 - Black Radical Tradition and embodied resistance practices
 - Intersectional approaches to incarceration, race, and gender
 - Subversive histories and abolitionist frameworks
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EDUCATION

University of California, Irvine (UCI) – *PhD in Global Studies*, Expected 2029

Ohio State University (OSU), Columbus, OH – *B.S. in African American & African Studies; B.S. in Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies*, May 2024

GPA: 4.0

Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle, WA – *B.F.A. in Dance*, 2013

Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor, MI – *A.A.S. in Photographic Technology*, 2010

Institute of Integrative Nutrition, New York, NY – *Holistic Health Coach Certification*

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant — *Ohio Prison Education Exchange Program, OSU* (March 2023–May 2024)

Research Leads: Dr. Tiyi Morris, Dr. Mary Thomas

- Conducted **archival research on racial dynamics within carceral systems**
- Designed and implemented **systematic databases cataloging historical materials and interviews**
- Transcribed, anonymized, and analyzed qualitative interviews, producing **detailed indexing systems**
- Mentored incoming researchers, **strengthening team capacity and research continuity**

Undergraduate Researcher — *Ohio State University* (Aug 2023–Apr 2024)

- Designed and executed **community-engaged qualitative research projects**
- Conducted fieldwork, interviews, and collaborative research with nonprofits and community leaders
- Synthesized and disseminated actionable findings, **informing community programs and advocacy initiatives**

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Executive Director — *Conversations Unbound, Inc., Remote* (June 2024–Present)

- Lead nonprofit operations focused on **language and cultural empowerment for displaced communities**
- Manage teams across **four international regions**, liaising with universities and fostering **strategic partnerships**
- Direct fundraising, marketing, and programmatic initiatives, ensuring **sustainable growth and organizational impact**

Program Manager — *Conversations Unbound, Inc.* (May 2023–May 2024)

- Oversaw **largest program in organizational history**, serving 1,200+ students across multiple universities
- Supervised an **eight-member program team**, optimizing processes and improving outcomes
- Developed program enhancements and feedback mechanisms, **elevating student and tutor satisfaction**

Arabic Tutor Liaison & Program Coordinator — *Conversations Unbound, Inc.* (Jan 2022–May 2023)

- Managed multilingual tutor teams, facilitating **cross-cultural engagement and curriculum integration**
- Acted as primary liaison between tutors, students, and university departments, fostering **collaborative learning and intercultural dialogue**

Office Manager — *Quantum Light Nutrition, LLC* (Feb 2014–Aug 2024)

- Directed internal operations, client relations, and communications, **improving efficiency and client retention**
 - Designed and implemented organizational systems, **streamlining workflows and enhancing team productivity**
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PUBLICATIONS

- **Van Gyseghem, Z. M.** (2024). *Harm Prevention and Systems of Care for Haitian Migrant Women Facing Interpersonal and Intimate Partner Violence*. Ohio State University Knowledge Bank. [Link](#)
 - **Van Gyseghem, Z. M.** (2022). Review of *Reckoning: Black Lives Matter and the Democratic Necessity of Social Movements* by Deva R. Woodly. *Journal of African American Studies*, 26, 523–524. [DOI](#)
 - **Van Gyseghem, Z. M.** (2022). Review of *Teaching Black History to White People* by Leonard N. Moore. *Journal of African American Studies*, 26, 113–115. [DOI](#)
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WORKSHOPS & TRAINING

- **Choreographies of the Liberated: A Street Dance Activism Showcase** — Dr. Shamell Bell, UC Irvine, Feb 13–15, 2025
 - **Camp Faretta** — Youssouf Koumbassa, Yosemite Valley, CA, July 12–20, 2025
 - **Bomba Puertorriqueña Workshop** — Escuela de Bomba y Plena Tata Cepeda, Los Angeles, CA, July 19, 2025
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ACADEMIC & COMMUNITY SERVICE

- **Volunteer** — *Translating Ngũgĩ | Celebration of the Life and Work of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*, UC Irvine, Nov 13–14, 2025
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AWARDS & HONORS

- **CGPACS Summer Research Fellowship / Center for Global Peace and Conflict Studies**, UCI – Summer 2025, \$3,000
 - Conducted **on-site archival research in New York City** at **CENTRO Archive (CUNY)** and **Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture**
 - **Mildred Munday Scholarship**, OSU – \$5,000, 2023–2024
 - **Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society** – Member, Dec. 2022
 - **National Society of Leadership and Success** – Member, Dec. 2022
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SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS

- Advanced **archival research and database management**
 - Expertise in **intersectionality, critical cultural studies, and decolonial methodologies**
 - **Cross-cultural communication, team leadership, and program management**
 - Certified **Holistic Health Coach** (2016)
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LANGUAGES

- **Dutch (Belgian dialect)** – Fluent
- **French** – Elementary proficiency
- **Spanish** – Elementary proficiency