



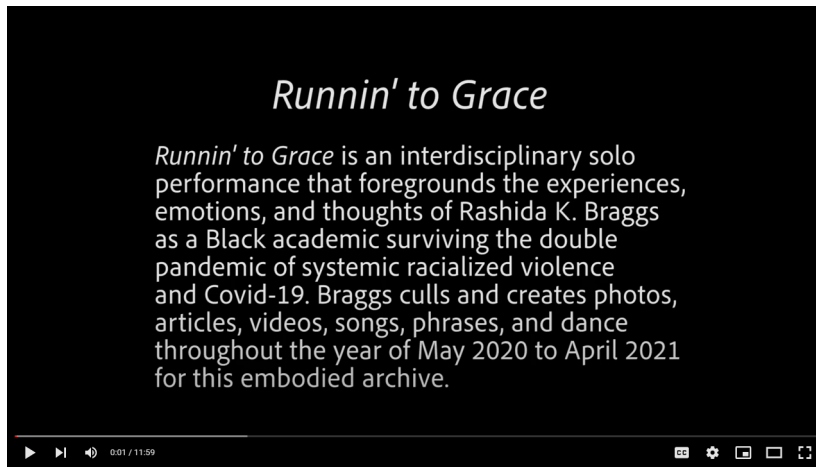
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Runnin' to Grace

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Runnin' to Grace is an interdisciplinary solo performance that foregrounds the experiences, emotions, and thoughts of Rashida K. Braggs as a Black academic surviving the double pandemic of systemic racialized violence and Covid-19. Braggs culls and creates photos, articles, videos, songs, phrases and dance throughout the year of May 2020 to April 2021 for this embodied archive.





Youtube version of *Runnin' to Grace*
<https://youtu.be/FppTebN58jc>

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In this twelve-minute performance, Braggs inquires and articulates how her black body copes in a space and time of persistent mental and social illness. We hear the labor embedded in today's survival as Braggs jogs and dances to a breath-centered baseline. All the while, time passes in parallel and in multiple ways from the timer that symbolises the traumatizing wait/weight of George Floyd's death to months that elapse through posted news articles on the evolution of Covid-19 and anti-Black racialized violence.

Space also plays a major role as she runs on lands stolen from the Mohican, Nipmuc, Očhéthi Šakówinj, Ute, and Cheyenne peoples and in spaces where her black body is simultaneously profiled and invisible. Braggs temporally expands space and community too by culling wisdom from past and present black intellectuals from W.E.B Du Bois to Rhon Manigault-Bryant.

Even technology shapes this narrative, as Braggs frenetically labors to teach to digital Zoom boxes and live-bodied classes, all the while celebrating black joy amidst the depressions of a pandemic. Rather than only constriction, the virtual medium also creates a larger community, as Braggs litters newspaper headlines within the environment that surrounds her—thus visualizing her inner voice and bringing the world into her solo performance. In the end, technology allows *Runnin' to Grace* to reach more people and hopefully to resonate with others beyond Braggs' unique embodied experience.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

Author Information

Rashida K. Braggs is Associate Professor in Africana Studies and Faculty Fellow of the Davis Center and Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Williams College. Her book *Jazz Diasporas: Race, Music and Migration in Post-World War II Paris* investigates migratory experiences of African American jazz musicians in 1946–1963 Paris. Her work has also been published in such journals as *The Journal of Popular Music*, *The Black Scholar*, *The James Baldwin Review* and *Praxis: The Journal for Theatre, Performance Studies, and Criticism*. Braggs is also a scholar-performer, who acts, sings, dances, and writes and performs spoken word poetry.

