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Loyola Marymount University

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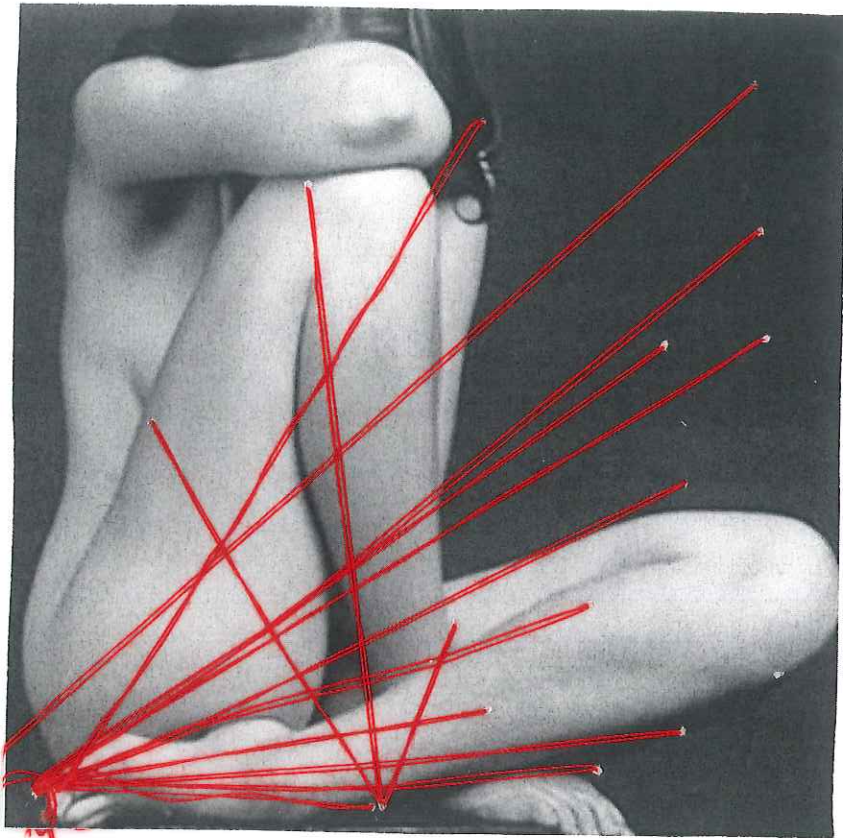
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Alaina Williams
Choreographic Thesis
Spring 2009



**For
Your
Viewing
Pleasure**

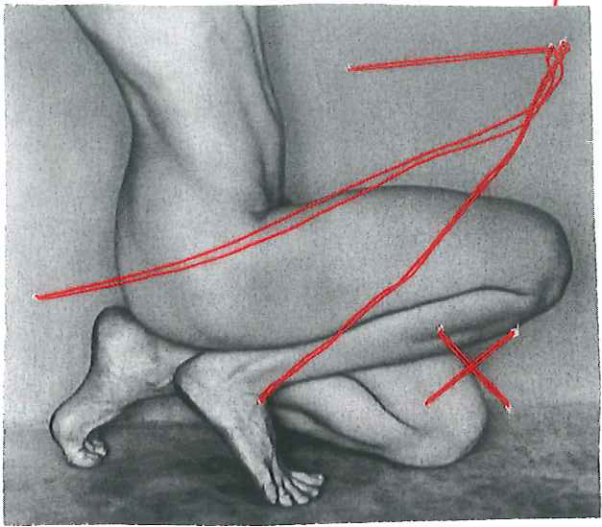
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Thesis Class Work

Aesthetic Statement

Over the course of my study of a dance at a university, the boundaries of my perspective on dance have been expanded, challenged, and enriched. My understanding of dance in its technical aspect has increased, though the deeper I got into my exploration of myself as an artist and as a human, I find I harder and harder to understand dance in a context that is not about relationships, relating, and creating. More than anything, I have seen how dance can be a vehicle to understand our expression, aspects of our condition as humans, as well as connecting to people whether they are in the audience or fellow dancers. Through dance we can connect to ourselves, and our world both spiritually and in a socially responsible way.

Therefore, my approach to dancing myself and towards the dance I view is one that feels pulled toward similar understanding. I appreciate work that aims to speak to audiences about social issues, as well as the injustices felt in their own hearts. I believe in work which recognizes a responsibility we all have to each other, in utilizing our given talents and passions to create and speak to each other. I believe we can explore these values while working within any dance vocabulary which best speaks to us, whether it is the athletic and gestural movement I have become familiar with here or any other. In this vein, I find I appreciate work of companies like David Dorfman Dancers. Dorfman incorporates social messages within his work that are presented in a clear and simple manner that is easily understood. The company also incorporates theatrical aspects that although I am not the most comfortable performing myself, add to the dimension of the work.

Aesthetically, I have come to enjoy movement that has both lyrical and gestural qualities while maintaining a high level of athleticism. I am interested in work that explores weight and movement in and out of the floor, spinal articulation and the spirals of the body. As I have experienced difficulty myself in terms of the range of joint articulation as well as flexibility and fluidity, I am intrigued by movement that expressed the most intricate articulation of the spine and joints, that which pushes the human body to it's greatest range and exploration. I am also enlivened by dance that pushes also the range of one's strength. The exhibition of rigorous athleticism and virtuosity in movement demonstrates another range of limits: an exploration through which I see a genuine display of the power and divinity within the creation of our human bodies. Other the past few years I have been able to see both the Stephen Petronio Company as well as Batsheva. These companies stand out to me in the fluidity and intense articulation of their movement. I believe art should encourage us to view our lives and our selves in a different context, to present to us another version of ourselves. The work of these companies fully explores humans moving at a heightened mastery of their technique that is intoxicating to watch.

Prior to university training, I came from a highly jazz based background. I have since found a more serious commitment to genres that cater less to the entertainment industry as it disagrees with my belief in the purpose of dance as art—however, I do believe there are aspects to jazz that should not be forgotten in contemporary work. Movement that demonstrates a fusion of jazz and modern can express a broader range of vocabulary with more possibilities for exploration. Movement that is typical of jazz dance can be re-explored and re-defined through the specific kinesthetic intelligence unique to modern to find a new expression of both.

I have also recently become interested in dance for film. I have always been fascinated by the way we as humans see and interpret our world, and similarly share a fascination with visual arts and film work. Film work is interesting in that through manipulating the camera angles, the style of editing, even lighting, you can create a million different stories with the same choreography. Collaborative artistic work can be rich in the exchange of information that takes place between disciplines as well. Keeping with my understanding of humans as existing in community, I appreciate the idea of artists creating together, utilizing their personal talents to add to the whole.

Dance Education Philosophy

My philosophy as a teacher and choreographer extends from my deepest beliefs on life, those being: 1. as humans we are interconnected, and in understanding that we understand a responsibility to help each other, and 2. each person has individual gifts and that these gifts can all serve a purpose in the betterment of our society. Combined with an emphasis on technical development and an intellectual approach to dance as an art, I hope to help students realize their potential and encourage each student to challenge themselves and the world around them. Similarly, within my choreography, I hope to harness the communicative power of this art to raise awareness on social issues in a way that is relatable to a broad audience.

As a dance educator, I will work to integrate the many facets of dance into my teaching. Along with an emphasis on technique and the importance of understanding the organization of the body and alignment, I create a safe and supportive environment within which students can further develop and experiment with their skills as artists. Critical thinking, dialogue, and reflection are an important aspect to the cognitive development of the students and will be included as an aspect of each lesson. As encouraged by national standards, within my classroom dance will be discussed not only in terms of artistic development, but also in terms of its role in a healthy lifestyle and its expressive, communicative qualities. Above all else, students will be encouraged to pursue their fullest potential and encouraged to participate in group work and discussion to best utilize the resources at their feet.

I believe strongly in attending to each student's specific learning needs and incorporate different methods of teaching to better assist my class. Specific themes for technique will be established early on in the learning outcomes for the class so students are aware of what is expected of them, and both formative and summative feedback will be employed to help students maintain their goals. Concepts introduced in the beginning of class will act as the building blocks from which the rest of the class is structured, building upon learned concepts to help students to better tackle more difficult work. Composition and choreography will be explored to help each student investigate their voice as an artist, and examples from past and contemporary dance work will be used to help students understand the art of dance in a broader societal context. Students will be pushed to approach their work critically and academically, promoting multiple intelligences and acknowledging their different strengths.

Through my choreography I hope to access the same lessons I try to instill in my students to create meaningful and purposeful work. In the past I have drawn from the human condition as well as literature to inspire my choreography. Stylistically, I draw from the movement of

contemporary jazz and modern. I favor the utilization of classic technique but pair it with movement that pushes exploration of the body's range of motion and pedestrian inspired choreography. Recently collaborations with fellow students in the film major have widened my interests in dance as well. I hope to continue my work in dance film, hopefully moving towards work that incorporates more social commentary. Art, including dance, holds incredible power in its ability to communicate. I believe dance can be used to spread awareness on social issues and do so in a way that is relatable to all people. Dancing for me is when I feel most human and most alive, and I see my calling to social issues as the impetus to using this amazing art to spread awareness to others. Specific issues that interest me involve women and children, issues of gender identity, genocide and other forms of violence, and the environment.

Moving To A New City:

San Francisco, CA

Housing

Archstone Fox Plaza

- 1390 Market St., Suite 107, San Francisco, CA 94102
- http://www.archstoneapartments.com/Apartments/California/Northern_California/Archstone_Fox_Plaza/

Avalon Diamond Heights

- 5285 Diamond heights Boulevard, San Francisco, CA 94131
- <http://www.avaloncommunities.com/avaloncore/>

Archstone South Market

- One Saint Francis Place, San Francisco, CA 94107
- http://www.archstoneapartments.com/Apartments/California/Northern_California

Archstone_South_Market/

- 656 O'Farrell St., #402, San Francisco, CA
- <http://sfbay.craigslist.org/sfc/apa/1156429516.html>

The Fillmore Center

- 1475 Fillmore Street, San Francisco, CA 94115
- <http://www.thefillmorecenter.com>

2000 Post

- 2000 Post Street, San Francisco, CA 94115
- <http://www.2000post.com>

Centerstone Property

- 1715 McAllister St/Broderick, San Francisco, CA
- http://www.rentalguide.com/listingdetail.php?listing_id=7413

Moving To A New City: *San Francisco, CA*

Venues to for Dance Performance and Classes

ODC-Dance Commons

- <http://www.ocddance.org>
- Venue to see dance (ODC company and those in residence) as well as take master classes

Levy Dance/Home studio, Studio Gracia and summer intensive

- <http://levydance.org>
- Offers master classes and summer intensive, currently in residence at ODC

Dance Mission Theater

- <http://www.dancemission.com>
- Classes and performances

San Francisco Dance Center

- <http://sfdancecenter.org>
- Weekly workshops, classes, drop in and professional rates

Performance Art Venues (not dance specific)

- American Conservatory Theater, Union Square
- Castro Theater, The Castro
- Chinese Cultural Center, Chinatown
- Fort Mason Center, Japantown
- Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall, Civic Center
- Nob Hill Masonic Center, Nob Hill
- Precita Eyes Mural Arts and Visitors Center, The Mission
- Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Bay Area Dance Companies, Performance and Intensives:

• Yannis Adoniou's KUNST-STOFF • Axis Dance Company • Ballet San Jose • Capacitor • Mary Carbonara Dances • Carolina Lugo's Brisa de Españas Flamenco • Company C • Dance Continuum/SF • Diablo Ballet • Dimensions Dance Theater • FACT/SF • Liss Fain Dance • Mark Foehringer Company • Janice Garrett + Dancers • Huckabay McAllister Dance • LEVYdance • Margaret Jenkins Dance Company • Hope Mohr • Project Agora • Purple Moon Dance Project • Robert Moses' Kin • Moving Arts Dance • ODC • Oakland Ballet • Raw Dance • San Francisco Ballet • San Francisco Boylesque • San Francisco Opera Ballet • Shift Dance Theater • Stacey Printz Dance Project • Lizz Roman & Dancers • Ross Dance Company • Deborah Slater Dance Theater • Smuin Ballet

Alaina Williams
Senior Thesis Essay
Scalin
Spring 2009

*Embodying Philosophy:
Dance Education at Jesuit Universities*

Embodying Philosophy:
Dance Education at Jesuit Universities

Jesuit liberal arts universities are known for their achievements in education. Through core curriculums that emphasize expertise in various disciplines, Jesuit universities strive to develop students to be informed citizens living to their fullest abilities. Beyond an emphasis on critical thinking skills, Jesuit philosophy encourages students to identify and develop their God-given gifts and passions and a compassionate awareness of the world that they may better serve their fellow men and women. Central to the Jesuit educational philosophy is the focus on academic excellence from which “the encouragement of learning” derives. In the sphere of academic competition, the emphasis is often placed on more practical disciplines: science, math, and business. Fine arts, and specifically dance, are not often supported in the same vein as other studies. The disproportionate attention would imply that contrary to mission statements that emphasize the education of the whole person, the arts are not significant. However, writes Eileen Wirth (2008), department chair of journalism and mass communication at Creighton University, education in the performing arts has shown to both “promote the creative and analytical thinking that are essential for academic rigor” in other subjects and promote components of the Jesuit mission through the nature of the requirements of such study (p.16). A mission to honor a “humanistic foundation in the Renaissance,” while holding in “esteem both imagination and intellect” is ably accomplished through the study of the arts (LMU Mission Statement 2008). Though some universities are lacking a sufficient emphasis of fine arts, dance programs and the universities themselves can easily correct this imbalance. Amending this imbalance can assure that Jesuit

universities are truly living to their mission statements and further improving their excellent devotion to education and service.

The Jesuit mission calls us not only to be scholars, but also to be aware of the connection of ourselves to spirituality and the world around us. This awareness is cultivated through the Jesuit commitment to the service of faith and the promotion of justice (LMU Mission Statement 2008), but additionally, these are values one experiences fully while engaging in artistic study. The combination of physicality, intellect, and artistry of dance as an art is more strongly related to this mission than many would initially identify. There is the more obvious integration with the Catholic emphasis of community. Dance can easily be incorporated into pre-existing campus activities such as retreats, service projects, and liturgies (Wirth, 2008, p. 16). Dance as well as other visual and performing arts can support lectures or traditional liturgy as well as add a new layer to what students are receiving. The leaders of Mosaic, a progressive church based in Los Angeles, recognize the power of art in communication. The organization hosts an on campus weekly meeting at Loyola Marymount University where students gather to hear speakers and engage in discussion on life, spirituality, and social activism. The group routinely incorporates film, music, visual art, and dance into its program to reach a more diverse body of students. Backed with a philosophy not unlike the Jesuit university that hosts them, they support students to express their spirituality in ways that enliven their souls and ignite their passion to serve others.

Community is also felt in college dance programs through other aspects of this discipline. Dance students are often put through a rigorous schedule of dance technique classes, cultural, historical, and pedagogical classes relating to dance, the university core,

and other demands of a college student. Dance students learn to depend on the inspiration of their peers and professors to be able to take on the full load of what is asked of them. Dance technique classes themselves offer opportunities not only for students to work individually on their technique, but to watch and learn from their peers. There is a communal feeling of a strong work ethic that emanates in dance studios where students spend hours a week working together towards a common goal. This goal can be as simple as drawing the department together and supporting one another's art, or, it can lend itself to a larger purpose.

In keeping with the Catholic dedication to social justice, dance and the arts can also serve as instruments towards raising social awareness. The first and most obvious way this can be done is through actual dance work. Though the accessibility to understand art is limited by one's unique experience, the potential for art to act as a vehicle for understanding and exploration is clear. Dance and theater are utilized by many organizations, for example, for educational purposes in under developed countries. In "Women and Religion," a course taught by Dr. Tracy Tiemieier in the Theology department at Loyola Marymount University, students learn about women's advocacy groups that use skits to educate rural women on the dangers of female genital mutilation. Without much support from the government and in an area where the population is diverse, movement and acting provide the organizations with an effective technique to raise awareness and begin to decrease the occurrence of FGM in rural West Africa. Students at Jesuit universities can identify social issues of their own community and use their artistic skills to raise awareness as well.

One such opportunity for students is engaging in arts outreach programs. One such program called “Art Smart,” is based out of LMU and brings college students into neighboring elementary schools to teach young students art classes. In many of the communities like Lennox and Watts surrounding LMU, 40% of residents live below the poverty line. The economic hardship is present in schools that lack supplies and art programs. By participating in Art Smart, college students are able to use their art to help alleviate some of the side effects of a greater issue, poverty and labor rights, in their community of Los Angeles. Young students who would otherwise not have such an experience are provided with not only fun activities in art, but college aged mentors who can encourage students and their creative talents. Jessica Meland, a senior dance major at LMU will implement a similar program for students at the near by Dolores Mission after school program.

The program will offer students at Dolores mission creative dance classes and mentoring by college students. In terms of how this project relates to her Jesuit education, Meland explained that it relates in many ways. For one, “The program will specifically expose the students to arts and to allow them to explore their own creativity and emotions through dance, rather than just in their classes, which measures only one kind of intelligence” (Jessica Meland, Personal Communication, November 20, 2008). Beyond supporting the education of a whole person, Meland feels engaging in this service will work in other ways to pull together the different aspects of her education:

“I feel like it encapsulates all the different things we learn in the dance major, specifically teaching and how to create lesson plans. But it also instills the Jesuit ideals of being a person with and for others. We can’t change their socioeconomic

status or change their lives, necessarily, but we can listen to their stories and love them” (Jessica Meland, Personal Communication, November 20, 2008).

The after school program will further represent the Jesuit ideals of a community where we are accountable for each other and living our faith by

“giving a child love and telling them that they are valued, and showing them that we go to college so they know they can educate themselves, too, even if that is not what they are used to hearing” (Jessica Meland, Personal Communication, 20, 2008).

Participating in dance and the performing arts not only provides students like Meland with a practical way to put their art education in social action, but also helps to prepare the mind to view the world critically and from a social justice perspective. According to Colleen M. Griffith (2008), faculty director of spirituality studies at Boston College, bodies manifest and sustain central values of a culture (p. 5). The values in our society can reflect both love and respect, but also social injustices such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, and others. Griffith (2008) explains: “the noblest of society’s hopes and its best knowledge become actualized in bodies... large “isms” that render us less human do as well” (p. 5). As Jesuit philosophies are geared toward deepening the experience of life, it fits that our mission towards social justice would encompass eradicating the “isms” that “render us less human.” The body focused practice of dancing works in this way to “allow us to view critically the way bodies are targeted in society,” a practice Griffith calls the discernment of the body as socio-culturally inscribed (2008, p. 5). The more students are trained to examine the aspects of society that influence, the more they are able to identify the “isms” and all those social problems that most need our attention.

Studying dance as a tool for social activism can act as a vehicle for students to express their view points on important issues in ways different than words and rallies.

Participating in dance also cultivates for students a respect for their own bodies, a practice which will then support a more compassionate view towards other bodies. This practice of “hallowing the body,” encourages students to recognize the dignity in other bodies. It is an education which can deepen students commitment to service by “caring about the bodily well being of other people, protesting acts of violence, and deepening sensitivity to the vulnerability of finite bodily life” (Griffith, 2008, p. 5). These bodily practices are also representative of the Jesuit goal of teaching students to see “God in all things” and respecting the divinity that resides in us all. Intense study of dance technique can also provide students moments to commune with the divine, whichever way they interpret it. The self exploration, vulnerability, and extreme physical work can create moments during which students can truly connect with themselves and the environment around them. Dance students by nature of their study cultivate a close relationship and understanding of their body and they are trained to explore the many ways feelings and stories can be told through their movement. These components influence students to have more sensitivity to what other bodies may be saying.

The final component to the Jesuit mission as per the Loyola Marymount University mission statement is the education of the whole person. Though the Jesuit tradition encourages a connection of mind, body, and spirit, the three components are not always integrated. Dancing as part of art education is one of the few disciplines that tie a physical experience to intellectual process simultaneously. Even the heightened awareness of one’s body through the work of producing art has a profound affect on the

education of the whole person. Dancers are required to become scholars of their art. They learn to view dance critically and to speak and write about what they see in an academic manner. Their abilities as an artist are also fine tuned. Their curiosity and inner self are encouraged to flourish as they explore choreography. Further, their bodies are pushed to the physical limit as they challenge themselves to increase their technique, strength, stamina, and flexibility. The lessons and habits gained during this study are easily applied within in and outside of the discipline, preparing its students for an array of careers and vocations.

Dance as a study connects easily to other aspects of Ignatian spirituality as well. Griffith (2008) supports the concept that our view toward our bodily selves relates to our spirituality through the lens of the Ignatian Examen (p. 5). The main foci of the Examen are gratitude and thanksgiving, attentiveness and observation, and commitment to deepening life. The first connection resides in the intentional reflection upon and giving thanks for the body. Griffith (2008) offers: "Thanksgiving for the gift of the bodily selves begins with greater awareness of all that bodies make possible and fuller recognition of the connectedness they herald" (p. 4). Griffith explains that this also exemplifies the Ignatian motto to "find God in all things." The Jesuits also emphasize a necessity for understanding one's position in the global picture, a perspective necessary in order to learn how to be a person for others. Physicality has a place in this as well: metaphorically viewed, even the interdependence of our body systems can represent to us the greater system with which we are apart of in the world (Griffith, 2008, p. 5).

If university students are to benefit from the advantages of dance and performing arts education, the universities themselves have a responsibility in aiding this to happen.

Part of the necessary support for these programs to flourish and access more students is funding. Even in universities where the endowment and budget are limited, careful study must be done to guarantee that even if large sums of funding cannot be given to all programs, that at least programs are provided with things they truly need. An example of this would be proper facilities so that students can be better educated, as well as venues for showing. It is difficult to raise the visibility of dance and arts on campus if there are not proper venues in existence to host concerts and shows. Further, if the university will boast a dedication to the Jesuit mission as discussed here, they have a responsibility to lead its students by example. If an administration claims to value many disciplines because they believe it will better prepare their students, then the public acknowledgement that administration gives its arts programs should mirror this sentiment. Basically, those in high positions at the university should not only be present at athletic events or especially important masses.

When speaking of the universities accomplishments, acknowledgement should certainly be given to all those programs that flourish in the university. However, it is especially important that those programs that are smaller or have previously received less support are mentioned. It is difficult for students to rally and work to promote their work on campus if they are not shown that the university already supports and cares for them, regardless of their major. The university's administration also has a hand in promoting the interdepartmental collaborations that would increase a feeling of interdisciplinary unification on campus. If chairs of departments were required to host events in collaboration with other departments on campus, much like student organizations do to reach a broader student base, perhaps the connection of dance and art to other disciplines

would become more apparent to students themselves. Students with smaller majors, dance, art or otherwise, would find validation as well.

It is not, however, the sole responsibility of the university and its administrators to guarantee that dance and performing arts are given a larger place on campus. Of the many lessons we can glean from the lessons of our Jesuit tradition, it is the recognition of the responsibility for each of us to be accountable to one another. If dance majors, theater majors, and art majors feel their universities are not giving them due credit, it is the responsibility of those programs to find all the ways in which they themselves can show the university this imbalance. If we are to convince our administrations of the interconnectedness of our studies and the Jesuit practices, we must make this clear to those who are not apart of our departments. For example, if we wish for the university to see that our art disciplines bolster the skills necessary to achieve academic excellence, we should perform to the best of our abilities in our core classes as well as our major classes. The work ethic, curiosity, creativity, and risk-taking we learn in our dance classes should also be applied to the subjects of math, philosophy, critical arts, and others. If we want to emphasize the community building aspects of our work, we should not be hesitant to promote interdepartmental projects and collaborations. Kristen Smiarowski, professor of dance at Loyola Marymount University, not only teaches a class entitled, “Dance as Social Action,” but put her teaching into practice by creating the work “Groundswell” in the fall of 2006. This environmentally driven dance work not only used dancers and resources of the dance program, but also worked in collaboration with the LMU science department (Kristen Smiarowski, Personal Communication, December 5, 2008). Projects like “Groundswell” demonstrates both the connection of art to politics and other

disciplines of study, but emphasizes the communal tradition of Jesuit philosophy. The interdisciplinary collaboration further actualizes the notion of the education of the whole person: one who thinks critically, is socially aware, and is intellectually expressive on critical subjects. When schools host a course like “Dance as Social Action,” those involved should work to expand their program and heighten their contributions to the university community through their art. Students should strive to develop their intellectual and artistic skills not only for the requirements of their majors, but to apply these skills in other venues of their education. We cannot ask universities to acknowledge our part in the education of a complete person if we ourselves do not actively participate in that goal.

Dance as a part of a liberal arts education supports the Jesuit philosophy on several levels. If universities wish to develop students who are engaged in the world around them, are connected to a mission towards faith and justice, and who are fully educated as whole people, dance and other performing arts should be given equal emphasis in university curriculum and on campuses as other areas of study. Given the proper support, students will be given an opportunity to explore their Jesuit education in a multi-faceted way that honors, true to its mission, the divine in all things.

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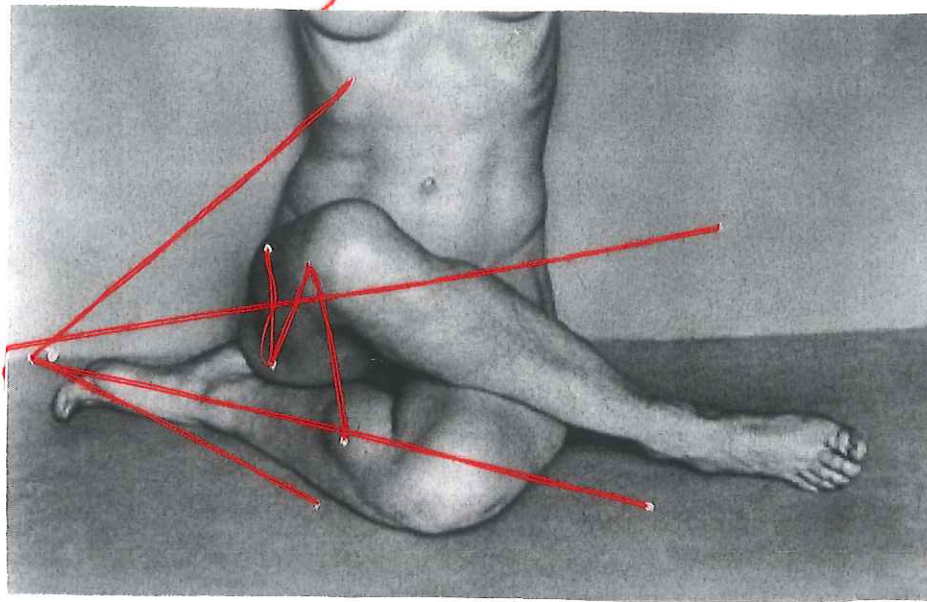
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Choreographic Thesis Workbook

Presentation of Theme

At the start of this piece, I was interested in working with the concept of oppression and the experience it creates of feeling bound on different levels. My main focus was the oppression experienced by women, specifically in relation to the ownership or lack of ownership over one's own body. Though it is a simple concept, it one that is ingrained with some of today's most controversial issues, from abortion to same sex marriage. Though the research, exploration, and execution of the work has lead me to a different destination then I had previously projected, the piece is still one that speaks from my heart on a significant issue that affects women. As this is an issue that concerns the body, quite naturally within the piece it has been interpreted through the body, as well as through the lens of a camera. In this way, it is also a project that explores the way film can utilized in increasing audience participation when viewing art. I wanted to incorporate fabric as a prop into the piece as a symbol of societal ideas regarding bodies as integrated with our identities as a second skin, representing the bound feeling physically while simultaneously projecting a feeling of outer pressure and tension. The components of the film, from costuming to choreography, lighting, and camera work, are designed to heighten one's awareness of the act of looking. It is my hope the images of physical struggle, film sets and mannequin women, sensual yet distorted movement, and the mode of film will engage the audience in a contemplative manner. As an artist I hope to find ways that art can be best utilized in illuminating aspects of our human condition, to offer thought towards social action and justice. This piece and its focus on the objectification of bodies within our culture is my first departure on this path, however I hope there are moments of it that can speak to the personal experiences of the audience, if not raise awareness on the direct issue itself and the affect it has on all of us.

Research

Notes on Dance Film Work

“Bleu”

Directed, Choreographed, and Performed by cari ann shim sham*
Cinematography and Visual Effect by Kyle Ruddick

Notes while Viewing:

First shot- close up of woman's head, moving to her eyes...stares out at us. White. mid shot- woman standing in awkward position, black and white against a white background. Framing- arms, half of body, profile. Arm gesture begins to wiggle. Camera and shots continually shift from body part to body part. There is nothing sexual about this—something about the way the woman is moving and not projecting anything specific in her expression, just existing in this space. Blue paper square flies at her, multiple numbers of the blue papers start to attach to her, covering her body...not the most obvious places first. More switching to different angles- 360 presentation of body. Focus on partial shots of the body at once. Definite focus on light and form, the way the light hits the body. Movement is minimal- carving and explorative in the space. Woman is covered in blue papers, opening up to sky..... standing still, staring at camera- blue sheet comes out of mouth. End.

Post-Viewing Reflection:

This piece clearly has a more graphics/visual effects feeling than the other videos I have seen. It was really interesting to see a body existing in a space without any sort of connotations. There was no emotion set forth by the woman, and none of her movement implied much of anything beyond carving of the space around her. What this means is that there is definitely a way to present a body, present even a naked body, without it feeling overly sexual. Though I am not sure how much was altered in editing, there was a definite attention to highlight her form. While she was in black and white, she still had a glow to her. The blue papers coming into the black and white scene made for a bright contrast. By the end we have an image of a body that was once completely exposed and unashamed covered completely; the eyes that stared out from the frame at the beginning of the piece covered completely, effacing the woman. It brings to mind a lot of questions about the object vs. subject conflict I am thinking about, and how to make your dancing figure a subject that relates to the audience and one that feels like an object. There is also something about this strange idea that once her face was covered, I felt like she was identity-less. How do we relate or view our bodies that a body on its own does not have personality? I was surprised when I realized that's how I had been thinking. Also, the separation of the body and the off center cropped framing of the shots I thought was really attention pulling and really brought the focus to specific areas.

Dance for Camera 2: Dance Films from Around the World
First Run Features, 2002

“Boy”

Directed by Peter Anderson and Rosemary Lee
Performed by Tom Evans

Notes while Viewing:

Highly pedestrian. Follows a young boy in a landscape of a beach imagining he is a super hero. Cross fading of bodies in and out-visual effects

Application of some of the audio sounds from his activity into the music score (feet on wet sand, sand dune collapsing, grass blowing in the wind, his breath)

Mix of shots- begins more wide and becomes closer so that in some scenes only a portion of his body is in the shot.

Music- mix of instruments, audio sounds, strange ambience, and other voices- gets almost creepy at times. Sort of reminds me of an intense action drama, music crescendoing leaps off of dunes, etc.

Relationship- no acknowledgement to camera. As a view, I do not feel like I am necessarily in his space, but you feel familiar.

Post Viewing Reflection on Techniques Used:

This film has a very different feel than what I am looking to create in my piece. The story seems to be just about a boy who is maybe imagining he is like his favorite super heroes, except his adversary looks just like him. Sometimes, it is an empty jumpsuit like the one he is already wearing that he is combating. The movement mixes between pedestrian: a small boy playing in the sand, stalking an enemy, slipping and falling- to combative, to more traditional dance movement that is sustained and articulate. The shots are not set in a way that make you feel you know the boy, that he knows you, or that you are a part of the scene, though you do feel that you are receiving an intimate look into what he is doing. This is his secret world- you never see anyone else besides him, no parents or playmates, so you feel as if you are witnessing the imagination we all exercised as children. It is strangely eerie at times, especially as the sound score switches from ambient strings and ambient sounds of the outdoors to Eastern sounding tonal melodies and an ambient choral of voices. In some way, the music takes you in from a playful imagination game to where the boy is within it- he is a character, something very dramatic, fighting an adversary and seeking to win.

“Burst”

Directed by Reynir Lyngdal

Choreographed by Katrin Hall

Performed by Kata Johnson and Elias Knudsen

Notes While Viewing:

Interesting beginning- image of an upside down face, so close you can only see eyes.

Backs up to show a bedroom scene. Immediately feels like a comfortable domestic situation.

Tension of woman rejecting man's advancing. Bass music playing throughout sounds from film amplified- ex. Man walking crumbles on the floor, squeezing the water out of a cloth and throwing it at the woman in the bed. Her shocked gasp as she wakes to it hitting her face. Couple moves into

a more aggressive scene- athletic modern movement with inversions and weight sharing. Action is slowed down, giving it a strange sustained and floating appearance. Choreography becomes quiet

animalesque- resembling monkeys, but not in a cheesy way. Sounds continue to be important- grunts as they hit each other, grunts when they are hit. Shots speed at transitional moments and

slow down at point of climax, as well as during particularly athletic moments, i.e. the man flying through the air, landing in a hand stand and ever so slowly lowering himself to the surface of the bed. Angles of camera begin to shift more aggressively- never exactly a complete 360-degree view,

but zeros in on one dancer or the other when they have received or are delivering a particularly painful blow. Direction of angles and slowing down of speed highlights the movement. The

modern work is mixed with increasingly more animalistic stalking, vocal expressions of frustration, and pedestrian moments. Seamless transitioning from the dancing to “normal people.” Pipe burst at end finds couple falling together in the bed—super close shots of their face to collar bone area. Shift in mood- loving, intimate. Like everyone was a joke. Actors are happy, see nothing but each other. Returns to the beginning shot where we are sitting on the headboard in a sense looking down at them in bed. Strange shift at the end when man falls into the water filled bedroom, disappears, female is distraught, then is grabbed by the ankle and pulled in. closing shot is her drifting down out of the scene. Ominous ending, no happy ending for this couple.

Post Viewing Reflection:

I really enjoyed the play about this couple's relationship. The combative choreography was both athletic and surprising. The effects of slowing down or speeding up movements at certain points brings a new perspective and dynamic to the audience, and, I felt like I could really see their bodies working and the relationship of space between them and around them. There were seamless transitions between “Now I am a dancer” and “Now I am a human” action which I felt was well constructed. The more muted colors of the set and the fact that it was really a bedroom, complete with the dancers wearing bedclothes, really added to my sense of what the story was. Immediately, the first image of the woman in a silk camisole and the man reaching over her to touch her face when he woke up brings up ideas and feelings towards couples and affection. This is especially great because a few moments after that, you receive a visual punch when that relationship turns aggressive, albeit in a playful way, and not real violence. This film more than the other I have watched paid more attention to the relationship of the dancers. It created characters that existed in partnership with the other, so the entire piece was a give and take- some times literally as they performed more complex contact maneuvers. I think what I would take from watching this video is the advantage to utilizing effects like slowing down movement to highlight the action of the body. As a viewer, it was enjoyable for once to have time to contemplate what I was looking at. Again, the sound score, full of the sounds they were naturally making as they moved, created a more sensory involved experience. It felt more real- if there had been some complicated, layered musical choice, it would not have felt so relatable.

“Motion Control”

Choreographed by Liz Aggis and Billy Cowie

Directed by David Anderson

Performed by Liz Aggis

Notes While Viewing:

Immediately captivating. Camera movement and angle feels as those we are creeping a long somewhere, into a house, into a bedroom. Initial sound score is disruptive, sounds like a record that is being turned backwards very quickly. Kind of frightening. Strange adapter on lens. Interesting camera angle coming over bed, birds eye view. Images of what the sleeping figure might be thinking of. Figure sees camera. Immediate relationship with camera. Pedestrian gesture, the figure is defensive that we are there. Intense sound score, natural and exaggerate sounds. Minimal- no melody or tones. Body is sped up, slowed down, reversed, repeated. A lot of play with different effects of the sort. Screen turns into mirror, she is picking at her face... picking, dissatisfied? Camera dives into her forehead- white space... small rectangular box that woman lies inside... internal psyche? Strange music coming in and out of almost silence. Camera turns so box appears at strange angles- makes gravity seem distorted contrast of red hair, pale skin, black clothing, and

white room is striking. Only acknowledges camera a few times. She is more internal. Pushing side of box- entrapment? Confinement. Similar to what I'm going for. Occasionally reaches or leans out but looks apprehensive of what else exists. Movement is all of similar quality- sustained, even. Box begins to shrink until dancer is forced out... Falls into a faded white. Next scene- white room, clear plastic hanging from all side. Same woman in center, this time with glamorous outfit. Strange red plastic gown that is adhered to ground. She utilizes the weight of the attachment in her movement, learning off balance, giving her an ethereal or floating in space kind of quality. Distorted strange angles with the body. Looks at camera in a defiant matter, aggressive. Always in center of screen- camera moves in and out but she is mostly in center. Flips upside- more interesting use of moving it camera to different perspectives. Not sure what the attachment is meant to express. Movement more regal.

Post Viewing Reflection:

This film was really strange and quirky. The movement was minimal but very clearly contemporary modern vocabulary. There was a definitive creation of different worlds- the world in which we first encounter her in this strange, old house, and the white worlds that are presumably in her psyche. The theme of her relationship with the camera and it's angles was interesting- there is a definite change in your feeling of attachment to what you are seeing as an audience member depending on whether or not the performer on screen acknowledge your presence. In this case, the woman had a very defiant stare and looked at us often, which became almost disconcerting after awhile. The set too was minimalist—just white rooms mostly. The trapped box seen was great- the camera work moving like someone is just rolling the camera over and over on its side really brought new dimension to what she was doing in the box and really gave you the feeling that she was trapped on all sides, and further, that this wasn't a normal environment where normal gravitational rules apply. The lighting was bright, really emphasizing the contrast between her red hair, her pale skin, and whatever clothes she wore. I really have no idea what exactly the film was about, but the odd sound score and the interesting camera angles really gave it a surreal feeling. It was as if we encountered her in a normal world, and though she did not want us there, carved our way into her mind- both her anxiety or worries as well as the happier image of perhaps good memories or herself as a confident person or as one in control.

Discussion of Costuming

Initial Ideas

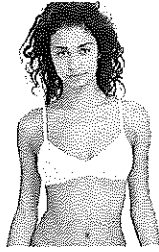
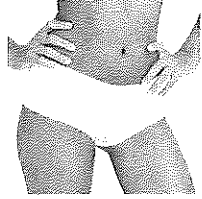
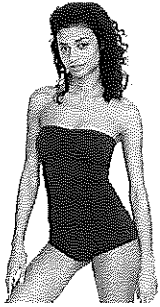
Being as this film is about the objectification of the body, I want to costume the dancers in a way that draws focus to the body without undermining my own purposes. There are a few ways I can approach costumes: either I can attempt to undermine the way we are used to viewing bodies by going in the complete opposite direction, or I could take those stereotypes and hyperbolize them to draw attention to how arbitrary or foolish they truly are. There is a challenge in wanting to do a piece about bodies without seeming to also objectify or place that body up to be gazed at. When I began this project, I wanted to stay away from stereotypes or anything I felt was too commonly associated with this kind of work. I did not want to do a dance with sun dresses, or house dresses, or really anything overtly feminine at all. In fact, I almost wanted it to be androgynous in a sense. That there was a body, and it was female only based on what was scientifically, anatomically present. I wanted to even bring attention to the body, to flesh- to hopefully make the audience aware of their natural instincts when they view that body: is it sexual, is it merely athletic, do they find it beautiful, or unattractive? It immediately became apparent that the costume, or lack of costume, could really make or break the statement of the film.

Initially, I wanted to place myself and the additional dancers of the film in the basics: I would be wearing a strapless black leotard for the main section of work and a half top and shorts or something similar, for the scene involving fabric. I wanted everything to be simple and streamlined so that again, there was no added story line or character: the content presented really was a body and nothing else. For the fabric scenes, I found both the contrast of colored fabric against skin as well as the imagery of the fabric binding actual flesh to be quite striking and symbolic. The additional dancers, meant to be broadly representative of victimized or lifeless bodies, as well as the set to an effect, would be wearing similarly simple outfits. I was considering either plain solid colored leotards or any variation of women's underwear. Again, this would fall into the simple and body silhouette qualifications. The homogeneity of the bodies matching was important, as well as considering what the costumes they were clothed in implied. Plain cotton bras and briefs would speak perhaps of a different woman than lacy, colorful, sexy underwear sets would speak different than a sporty half top and biker shorts. I wanted to show skin in a way that subverted how we typically view and think of bodies. I hoped to do this by drawing attention to one's reaction to these bodies (were they sexy or unsexy, attractive or unattractive, and any other number of evaluative descriptors they could assign what they saw on screen). Underwear or things similar to that also give a feeling of vulnerability- of being either stripped bare or revealing things we usually prefer to keep under wraps from the public eye.

Final Decision

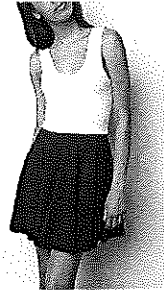
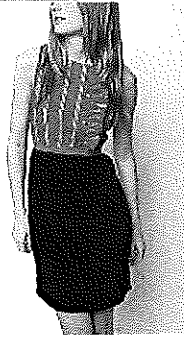
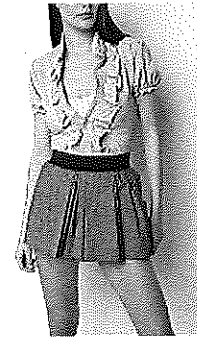
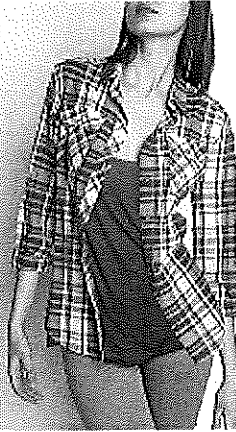
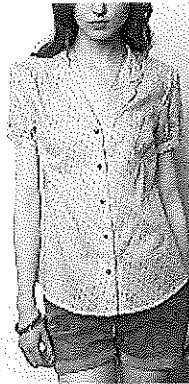
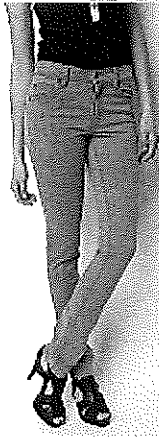
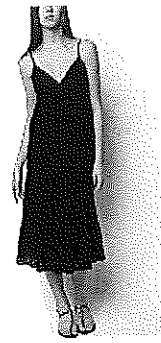
In the end, I decided on a compromise of everything I had brainstormed and discussed with Kristen and Tekla. For myself, I would be wearing the black strapless leotard. I felt this fulfilled my desire to highlight the body and showing skin without going too far in a distracting manner. I like its simplicity and that it has a level of masculine-feminine equilibrium, because it lacks any additional details that one would associate one way or another. Further, as we have decided to use a set that is obviously a set, I really wanted to continue the emphasis of this piece as a construction. It became less important to keep away from all overly feminine details. This is why I have decided to have my dancers wear regular clothes that range from super casual to nice dresses. This will consist of whatever we find in my closet or theirs, simply to be a representation of all different ideas of "woman." Regardless of their dress, the additional women would not be moving much and I wanted to maintain the feeling of mannequins, or pretty things on display, as if this is a real photo or movie shoot. The variance in their clothing, in some cases being very feminine and not so much in others, does well to represent a whole range of appearances women are asked to become.

Costume Idea Images



Mannequin Dancers

Soloist/Mannequin



Discussion of Sound Score

Brainstorm point 1: Composed music

For my initial meeting with David, we discussed different options for a sound score for my film. I brought with me a few pieces of music that had characteristics I liked in hopes we could locate or create a score that shared those qualities.

1. Enjoy Your Memories, While You Still Can- The Books
2. La Valse d'Amelie- Yann Tiersen
3. The Well Meaning Professor- Eluvium
4. Scene 1- Michael Galasso

"Enjoy Your Memories..." by the Books appealed to me for its disjointed nature. It is a score that consists of broken up guitar chords that sound to be distorted, static, and random sound bytes ranging from crows to snippets of TV broadcasts. I enjoyed it for its abstract quality and reference to popular culture. Both "The Well Meaning Professor" and "Amelie" are simplistic piano solos. They contain repetition and a melancholic tone, which also appealed to me. "Scene 1," though commonly used, attracted me as a beautiful, and again, minimal, composition, but this time, in violin.

Brainstorm point 2: Recorded sounds of breath and movement

This option would consist of recording the sounds that naturally occur as I execute the choreography: dynamic breath, air moving, the sounds of feet and body parts interacting with the floor, etc. The advantages to this option is that the raw quality of my actual breath, coupled with the movement the audience will see on screen, could create a more visceral and real experience for the audience. The film is meant to be less linear or narrative and abstract, so the lack of a melody or progression of a song keeps within those perimeters. What I think is most intriguing about this option is the dichotomy the score could present for the audience. Experiencing dynamic breathing that ranges in sustainment and rhythm will produce different feelings for the audience as well a tension: is this breathing the result merely of physical exertion from doing the dance? Is it labored and frenzied because the character is anxious or feels threatened? Is it meant to be sensual? These questions provide a tension for those experiencing the film. Within it exists a duality of brittle vs. beautiful, sensual vs. painful. In terms of discussing the way bodies are viewed, or the experience of being a woman within a society where the body is so heavily emphasized, this tension is very real. It speaks one hundred percent to what I had hoped to do with the film in the first place: to give the audience points for reflection, to possibly feel uncomfortable.

Brainstorm point 3: White noise and sound clips

Putting together a score of white noise infused with sound clips from real media sources is similar to the recorded movement and breath concept. It is abstract and does not include any linear melody. The additional advantage to this choice is that the media clips could be pulled from anywhere, and whether they are completely coherent or not to the audience, they will give a sense of referencing television, movies, the media, and our culture. The systems of our society as well as the influence of the media are tightly interlaced with the issue of body objectivity, which again, speaks to the purpose of the project.

Brainstorm point 4: Recorded Narrative

I could also write or find passages to read and record to use as a score. The reading could be simply a voice listing evaluations of a body, its appearances and functions: The knee bends. The finger nails are brittle. The eyes see. The waist is too large.- etc. It could be a personal discussion about me- how I view or evaluate the parts of my body, be that superficially (my breasts are small, my legs aren't straight) or functionally (my legs support me, my feet allow me to walk). The narrative discussing a body both negatively, positively, and in terms of its actual function versus the superficial function it has been assigned, will again give the audience departure points for thought and reflection. So much of how bodies are viewed and abused comes from our perspectives and need to constantly evaluate ourselves to arbitrary standards of culture. Bodies are constantly objectified and discussed- this mode can reflect this constant dialogue of bodies in society. It was also suggested that perhaps using excerpts from popular women's magazines would be effective. Today's magazines aimed towards women are largely focused on how women can better themselves- but almost purely in the sense of appearance. Articles are largely focused on things like "Getting a Beach Body" or a "Hot Bedroom Body," finding the perfect clothes for your body, and how to otherwise ornament your body to create the appearance of the best you. These excerpts, in my opinion, would sound as absurd as they are, which might be easier to see in the context of the video. It is also representative of the all encompassing nature of these attitudes. It is quite obvious when written in neon letters on the cover of Cosmopolitan- however, the values these headlines represent are actually quite pervasive in most of the institutions of our society and is not only limited to media.

Process of Choosing a Score

In considering score options, I found it necessary to pay attention to the following questions: How does each one of these choices relate to my intent? What image or experience will they create for the audience? Even the specificity or vagueness or sound bytes, or whether a voice used is male or female, can project a drastically different message about the film's intent. A set of male voices, for example, could speak to an idea that ALL men are oppressive. A set of all female voices could imply that I believe all women are catty. In both instances, it places the "blame" for the occurrence of body objectification solely on one group. I believe that the oppression of anyone, but especially the victimization of the body is a system that we all, knowingly or unknowingly, male or female, participate in. I do not, for the purposes of this film, want to imply otherwise. I do not wish to cater to already-prevalent stereotypes, such as all men are chauvinistic and the cause of women's oppression, or that women are catty and only do these things to each other. Another example in terms of providing too much information, or perhaps misleading information to the audience, can

Discussion of Lighting and Set

Last year I created a set that became a world. The piece was heavily narrative and told a linear story of a character existing in two environments: a reality set in a hospital and the world of her psyche. This year, I wanted to create a piece where the dancing did most of the talking. I did not want to lead the audience through set or music to create a story or character through what they were seeing, so I want to make the most minimal set possible. As the dance studios already have black Marley for floors and a large, black fabric backdrop was easily accessible from the film department. Initially, I decided to create a void in a sense where this was all happening.

Through discussions with faculty about the true intention of the piece and how significant the smallest of details could prove to be in this endeavor, I have considered expanding my initial inclination on having a “set-less” set. Especially since the piece evolved to being more of a representation of the performative nature to the issue of body objectification, the other dancers in the film became key in terms of being a set themselves. The set is literally the film sound stage in the LMU film department. This space acts both as an area for film students to film and create elaborate sets with an array of lighting as well as a storage space for a lot of the equipment utilized by the students. I wanted there to be lighting and other film related equipment in the shots so that it was quite obvious it was in fact a constructed set. In the beginning stages of this process, I wondered constantly how I would put a body on screen to point out we shouldn't look at bodies a certain way, but I have learned that presenting images that are similar to the stereotype or problem can be a way into exaggerating their existence. I am not disillusioned about what I am doing, in fact, I will put on display for my audience exactly what we all know: this piece is constructed. However, I hope it will inspire some questions about my intent and what the nature of the film implies. The landscape of bodies, so to speak, will create a sort of environment where the dancing occurs. They will be ambiguous- perhaps they are the obstacles or perpetrators of the injustice, perhaps they are victims held captive. Either way, their physical existence in the space will be the set.

The images present in this “set” (lifeless, dressed up women, a film shoot with bright lights and made up dancers will conjure correlations to the media and presentational nature of the society in which we live. This is both significant in that it resonates with our habits as a society but also the idea of putting people on display as a profession and money making industry, as well as the industry of make up and clothing etc. that make billions of dollars off of people trying to decorate their body to make certain appearances. It will demonstrate the many ways we cover our bodies and put them on display- and how it is all a show, a façade. Which returns, again, to the rest of the set. This film is not real. It is not real life; it is not even a direct mimicry of life. It is abstract, but premeditated. I am a dancer, a choreographer, planning things to appear and play out in a certain manner.

The lighting is set up to high light what I have detailed here. In fact, a third of the lighting used is visible in the corners of the frames. Though the rest are coming from behind the camera and dolly and from above on the cat walks, they create a luminescent glow that highlights both the colors of the scene and the bodies presented within it. Lighting, as I learned with last year's project, is one of the most important aspects in creating a work that looks professional and finished. Especially for a project like this where there is a theme of the act of looking, being presentational, or focusing on bodies, lighting that highlighted this was necessary.

Discussion of Dancers and Crew

DANCERS

Alaina Williams/soloist

When I began this process, I had wanted to create a group work. My previous experience has mainly been in solo work- be it choreographic studies in our composition classes or my piece last year, which was also a solo film project. When scheduling and other conflicts presented itself later on, I concluded I would not mind pursuing a solo project again and pushing myself to do more this time around. Last year's project was heavily narrative- I spent a lot of time constructing a world and a character, as well as learning about and constructing the filming of the project. As it was my first endeavor in this area, I feel the choreography actually took a back seat to the film side of the project. This year, given my previous experience and the focus on the concept of bodies, I wanted to challenge myself to develop more complex choreography and to have the movement really drive the piece.

Acting as choreographer and performer has both benefits and disadvantages. I fell victim to both my tendency to get overwhelmed and anxious, and since I only had to be accountable to myself, my work ethic was lacking in the first semester. This entire process has been both difficult and efficient as a result of my personal habits, which has made this a difficult process at times. I was asked to confront my personal challenges, and in honesty, there were many times I gave into my anxiety, laziness, or fear. However, as this issue is so near to my heart and I really desired to create a work I would be proud of, after a certain point I was better able to get myself into gear. Working with myself has shown me parts of who I really am- and in doing a piece about the appearances society strives to put on as well as questioning what "identity" actually is, I was given many opportunities for reflection. I know at the end of this process that I have a lot of technical and creative potential- and that the greatest thing holding me back is my own anxiety, fear, and self-condemnation.

Paige Cercciara, Mackenzy Franklin, Annie Martin, Jessica Meland, Shae Stanton

/"Mannequin" Dancers

The five women who composed the corps of what I began calling the "Mannequin" dancers were an integral piece to the project. I had originally arranged for about fifteen women to create what was essentially the set for the film, and all but these five had to back out last minute. These five were not only completely generous with their time and patient, but were encouraging to me and kept a bright attitude even as we filmed late into the morning hours. For this version of this piece, their movement was limited, but even with that their experience as dancers was clear. They were professional and quick to follow direction. Especially Annie, who is not a dance major, was especially optimistic and eager to participate. Working with these dancers has again affirmed for me the importance for us all to support each other. I would more than happily return the favor if any of these women needed help with something in the future, and they showed me incredible kindness in participating. The collaborative nature of art and dance is truly one of the most fulfilling aspects.

CREW

Stephen Lee / Director of Photography

Stephen Lee, a junior film production major at Loyola Marymount University, is a true artist. His interests lie primarily in photography, and his attention to creating beautiful images came through in our collaboration filming this piece. Stephen is also a member of my service organization and completely understood where I was in my efforts to create a work that spoke to social issues. He was supportive of my efforts and encouraging to me and my ideas, even though I lack the experience in filming that he has as a major. We spoke extensively in and out of the studio on general concepts, lighting and set design, creating schedules and editing. He had a hand in every aspect of this production, and I am incredibly grateful for his contribution to my thesis. As a film director, he is professional and serious, taking great care in the details of getting each shot right. He listened to my concerns and ambitions and worked to help me incorporate them into the work. Filming was a process filled with precision and patience, and a lot of sharing of information- I would like to think we both mutually benefited from sharing information from our personal art, dance or film, and learning how the two compliment each other. Even despite difficult schedules and having to film his own junior thesis this semester, Stephen and I were able to make the project happen. I truly appreciate his effort and care towards my piece. Again, my attention is drawn to the significance of collaborating in art, and I have no doubt gained valuable education in the arena of film from my very generous and talented friend.

Daniel Ainsworth, for the rough draft; Dustin for the final draft / Lighting

Lighting is an extremely important aspect of the filming process. It is not only necessary to that the movement and movers can be seen, but also variations on lighting can influence the overall feeling of the film. Daniel Ainsworth, a senior film production major at Loyola Marymount University, as well as Dustin and so and so, are excellent in light design. They also helped out extensively in setting up the set area each night for filming and assisted Stephen in working the dolly and framing shots. They were all very professional and knowledgeable in film production and were an asset to our process.

Production

Initial Shot List

1. Mirror Scene

What it looks like: Lighting stands and the “set” can be seen to the side so you get the sense I am preparing to do something on the set—

[A]. A series of short close ups to start:

The camera following closely as I am putting on clothes, putting make up on my face. Should be close up enough that the viewer doesn't have a sense of anything beyond the dressing of a body/body parts.

[B]. Which leads to:

The figure (me) facing a mirror. The camera is behind and to the side of the figure, as if walking in on the performer preparing. The figure slowly and methodically puts on make up- red lip stick, black eyeliner- at the completion of applying both, the process begins again, over and over, picking up speed and frenzy.

I think this should be done sort of as a mid shot- sort of waist and up, including the mirror and a little bit of the set around. OR, a possible shift to the side [C]—so you can see the profile of my face and the mirror and the set behind me while I put the make up on—but close enough that the shot is mostly my head and not much else.

2. Fabric Scene

What it looks like: Same set as used in everything else; the space of the sound stage. The red fabric will be tied to something off screen and I will use set choreography that leads to my eventual complete entanglement in the fabric. I am not so attached to specific shots for this one beyond that it needs to be close enough that the figure and fabric take up most of the screen [A].

[B]. The fabric will transition from the other scenes by being apart of an outfit worn by one of the “mannequins” in the Main Dancing scene.

[C]. I would like to shoot in longer sequences of movement this time- stopping here and there for camera things is fine but I want a continuous run as best we can- again, as a mid range sort of shot.

If the camera could move around the main point of focus (the figure and fabric) in an arc to make it more 3D that would be great. I want there to be less negative space here than in our rough draft- the figure should fill up most of the screen to imply a crush of space and confinement in the struggle with the fabric. Just as before, we will stop filming and really get me all tied up and resume shooting from straight on the wrestling to be free, which leads to...

[D]. (The last shot of the entire film probs):

As I am on the floor completely tangled, I will look at the camera. The camera will begin to back away from me for a few feet, stop, and turn to “look” to its right and/or left. There will be a line of a people also standing, watching the scene, motionless.

Options for ending: either the camera/viewer goes back to the figure on the ground and the entire scene fades out as the figure struggles, a lone, OR maybe it just floats sort of up, disengaging itself from the scene.

3. Main Dancing Scene

What it looks like: In the middle of the sound stage. Some backdrop would be good. Lighting should be bright- resembling a stereotypical idea of a film or photo shoot. Lighting and film equipment that is already around can be seen around the sides and in the back ground- implying an actual shoot and emphasizing that this is a constructed thing (just like our concept of bodies and gender).

Ten or so “mannequins”/people will be standing around the space with a clearing in the center where the main figure will be.

[A]. Same as beginning: close ups of the mannequin girls being dressed. Shots of them, close up and motionless/lifeless. Just parts- never the whole—compartmentalizing their overall image.

[B]. A wide shot so the viewer gets a sense of the space- the equipment, the bodies, the dancer in the center. A few seconds of stillness—and then all figures, “mannequins” and soloist, will start to slowly twirl a piece of their hair in their hand/complete some sort of minimal gesture.

[C]. Camera cuts to a closer shot. For beginning of phrase: Same arc as before, moving around the space. Shooting the figure in the center through the bodies around (as if the bodies are like the bars on a cage, they obstruct our full view into the center)

[D]. We will clear some of the bodies out of the front of the space so we can see the solo figure clearly. We will go through the phrase work, again, trying to move through more lengthy chunks of movement than we did last time. We can select specific movements that stick out to us that we would like to focus in on- my goal is to have to reshoot things as few times as possible so we can move through the entire phrase quickly.

Again, I want a lot less negative space than last time- so we should come in closer, and if I move out of frame, that is okay. I prefer the image of being confined to a too small space than dancing in wide-open space.

Shot List for Choreographic Thesis: For Your Viewing Pleasure

Stephen Lee, Alaina Williams

Mirror Scene

Close ups:

Applying lipstick	Pulling leotard over
Powder puff on skin	legs
Applying eyeliner	stomach
Applying mascara	back
	chest
Pinning hair	

Mid:

(Over shoulder) Camera "walks" toward figure sitting in front of mirror until reaches a mid-range from figure
 Applying powder, lipstick, mascara-slowly
 Repeat 3 times (give or take)
 Look over shoulder, and repeat.

Fabric Scene

Close ups:

(I will do about half the phrase very slowly)
 Starting with the hands grabbing the fabric, let's just move the camera to travel with the arms and hands

Mid:

(I will do complete phrase, moderate tempo)
 Camera will move around center (dancer/fabric) in a slow arc

End shot:

Dancer all tied up and trying to break free- Camera starts at a mid-close range and pulls out slowly, leaving figure
 Stops, goes side to side to see other observers, back to dancer and fade
 OR
 Stops, black out as dancer struggles

Possible additions if time:

Same as **Mid** except either closer and coming from above, or closer and coming from ground level creeping up

Main Dance Scene (most time consuming):

Close ups:

Mannequin Girls Pulling clothing over skin- 3-4

Production

Budget for Film

Camera	\$10/day rental= \$40.00
-Tripod -Dolly -Lens Adapter	Borrowed from LMU Film Dept. In Kind
Lighting	Borrowed from LMU Film Dept. In Kind
Props	
-Fabric	JoAnn Fabric \$17.00
Costuming	
-Clothes for Mannequin Dancers -Leotard for Alaina	Dancers' own-In Kind American Apparel \$26.00
Studio space to rehearse	
Space for filming	LMU Film Sound Stage- In Kind
Crew -DP, Lighting, etc.	Volunteer
Dancers	Volunteer

March

April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Editing	4 Editing	5 Editing	6 Spring Adjudicati on	7				1 Meeting with TK for Costumes	2	3 Soundscor e Meeting with David and Kristen	4
8 Break.	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Solo Rehearsal	25	26	27	28	29	30 Dance Concert Week...	31 Meeting with Stephen	1 22	2 23 Final Filming Fabric	3 24 Final Filming Mirror	4 25 Editing
29	30	31 Meeting with Kristen					26 Senior Showcase	27	28	29 Editing	30 Chorepgra phy Showcase		
								May 1-8	Final	Editing	for	Thesis	Project

Post Showing Reflection and Analysis of Work

Given that my many proposed schedules for filming and editing had to be changed for one reason or another, at the time of my opportunity for showing, the Senior Showcase and the Choreography Show Case, my film was not completed. However, I had about a third of it to screen for the Choreography Show Case, and I can't imagine there would be a better place to present it than in my studios with faculty and friends who support me. Though I regret that I had difficulties this year being as productive and on time with my thesis as I had hoped, I know that it is still a valuable experience in the end. Showing the two minutes of editing we had completed was a great affirmation that I am going in the right direction. Several dance majors told me afterwards that the lighting and colors were rich and beautiful and the images intriguing.

I asked a few questions afterwards for specific feedback as well so I could better construct the rest of my editing. I felt I was successful so far in my goal of heightening an audience's awareness of their own watching, because the images they most responded to were those that had been included strictly with goal in mind. The beginning, they said, was attention getting, and that the movement was interesting and well performed. One commented that the mood created with the lighting and the creation of the environment in the room were strong because they stayed consistent the entire time. Another comment was that the large room scene was interesting and stuck out to them because of the stark lifelessness of the other women in comparison with my dancing. Other comments remarked on particular images, like that of the close up of applying lipstick in the beginning or the images of the lifeless mannequin dancers in close ups as well. I had been feeling self-conscious that evening, attempting to get a copy that worked to show in the studios, running over what would say before it ran, petrified that those who had heard my speech at the Senior Showcase would only be able to tell me I had not lived up to the ambitions I had projected the previous Sunday. However, the showing gave me a positive push towards finishing this project and feeling proud of what I have done.

In retrospect, there are a few things I would change, had I the knowledge earlier of how everything would turn out. First of all, I would have wanted to adhere closer to my original projected time line and film in January. I was more prepared this time to know what I wanted to shoot, and Stephen is a very competent director, so we were able to do much in a short amount of time. Regardless, I could have done with a larger buffer zone in terms of breathing space and opportunity to go back and film more where necessary. There are certain goals I had set in terms of camera work that were directly linked with my ambitions for the film, and I do believe there are additional shots I could have added to make my options for editing more satisfying and sufficient. Upon watching the beginning of the work, I would still like to play around with duration and order of shots, in an effort to best reach the audience. Choreographically, I would have liked to shoot more of the material I had done that was based off of my improvisational exercises. Some of what came out of those sessions was interesting, but out of anxiety I stuck with less adventurous movement. Every time I think about my film, I have more ideas for the trajectory of the "story" that unfolds, as well as new ways of drawing attention to the body or the act of looking. I also find myself

continually pulled toward quirky camera angles or wanting to experiment with how close and strange the camera can become in relation to the moving body. The same goes for experimenting with the way the performer interacts or ignores the camera, and what that can say about the relationship or involvement the audience has with what is happening on the screen. As this was a piece aimed at raising reflection on the body, I would be interested to continue working the shots around the intricacies of the body, and trying some more complicated imagery to raise that awareness.

This film will definitely be something that I will return to in the near future to continue to develop as I strive to learn for myself my voice as an artist, as well as more about the dance film genre. This is a great start: my ideas are creative, and my mind is constantly working about the different components and new angles to try. This process has shown me that I have capabilities I often let be hindered because I am too afraid to fail, look silly, or do something really big for once to pursue them. From here, I will take this experience as motivation in the future the next time I feel too scared or anxious to pursue something I truly love. As I near the end of putting this entire thing together, I am proud that even though it was personally difficult, I stuck with my original ambitions as best as I could under the circumstances. I am grateful for the opportunity to grow with the guidance of Stephen, Judy, and Kristen as my mentor, and I am eagerly looking forward to future opportunities in performance, choreography, and film.

Journals

Compilations by month

August

Senior year is finally upon me. For someone who is as obsessed with time, it is remarkable how surprised this still makes me. It is time to choose a thesis, though I have been thinking on this since last year. Last year's film project really made me want to continue exploring film and taking on more of the film side this time around. I have felt really torn about my entire life at LMU existing between an around these ideals I have about social justice and helping people and how art should be a bridge to that in some way and how art is meaningful and teaches one to be more human... I really want to try and bring the two together tangibly in my life. And I want to engage in the process, genuinely, honestly, and stop being so afraid of doing something for once. I think it would be best to attack something that has always concerned me and really engages me—women's issues, some aspect of that ...

I am really excited to get back to school and everything there; this summer has been taxing on me and if it weren't for being able to plan for things happening this school year I might have gone mildly crazy. Sometimes when I am going to sleep at night I start imagining and have images in my head of things I could do on film... different vignettes of the experience of woman, some literal, some more symbolic... already I can tell it will be a difficult sort of reconciling this conflict I have with art being both something that becomes elitist and disconnected from people, while also being something I really believe can speak to people, regardless of everything else life puts on us. For some reason I keep arranging my choreographic ideas in color... a gold scene, a red scene... different movement, different implication. How do I make an audience feel what I feel? What am I going to try to say? If I am going to try to do a piece about women, I do not want to make it stereotypical or just like everything that has ever been said on this issue. I don't want it to be trite.

...

I think I will work with a group this year instead of a solo. I might be a part of it, I haven't decided yet... but I think it will be a new challenge. I don't want to become overly ambitious and take too much on, but most of the choreography we are asked to do in classes are solo studies. Last year's piece was a solo work, which definitely has a lot of advantages that make it somewhat easier... I think as a beginner choreographer it is beneficial to not have so much to think on, just the structure of the solo and camera—not structuring so many bodies, it is less complex. If I do a group... I would be excited to work with several of my friends, though it honestly intimidates me a lot to think of SaraAnne or Alice or Andrea in my piece. I respect them a lot and I know they care about me, but it makes me nervous, like I'm not good enough for some reason. For all practical reasons, it would make sense to work with a variance of class years, considering all the seniors will be busy and underclassmen really do work hard. ...

I am really excited to embark on this. I want to create something I am proud of, and feel confident in my choreography and performance. I have struggled so often with my love for dance and for service and how these things will connect in my life, and this should be a great experience in playing with expressing one through the other. ...

September

I've had my first meeting with Kristen. I am glad she is my mentor because I enjoyed working with her last year. She does a good job of helping you to develop your ideas without telling you what you are doing. She engages you in a discussion and lets it develop from within that. I feel like she understands what I am trying to do and her background in socially aimed work will really be helpful for me and my interests with this piece. She is also going to try and put me in touch with some connections she has here that do dance and film, some that is socially aimed, some not. ...

We talked about logistical things- basically where to start and how to go about it the way I would do in the real world outside of school. I am to write up a budget detailing each and everything I need, then give a higher estimate on expense for all of them. Those that are free to me are "in kind." A bit of a homework assignment: talk to all of my friends in the film dept. and see how much of this, lighting and equipment wise, I can get for free and how I can access it.

Right now I am working on a new thought. I constantly have Chad from Styles and Forms reminding me that less can be more, to use devices, to trust what comes out of my body, and most of all, to narrow down what I'm doing. This does not have to be the piece that solves the world's problem or speaks to all women. It is the piece that speaks to ME and hopefully to someone in the audience, some where. ...

My focus now, though it is not the body and women and their bodies, is being narrowed to the feeling of being bound. I derived this by looking at what I'm interested in- social in justice or oppression- and how that feels- confined, inescapable. As if you're bound. And I keep seeing images of fabric in my head... I want to stay away entirely from a prop piece that has a prop merely for the sake of having one... there is something about providing a physical obstacle for myself that is interesting, though I would have to think on it further to not have it be too contrived or too literal. ...

In terms of costuming I already thinking more skin than anything. I am not sure how Judy or the faculty will feel about this, but I am sure it can be done artfully. I don't want to be naked. I just want to emphasize the body- all of it, the joints and muscles and the things it can do- that often get overlooked because people compartmentalize themselves. I like this, I hate that, I wish my such and such were like hers... the rest of the body gets hidden by breasts, whatever part speaks sensual in someone's perspective. This should be a piece about making people uncomfortable in a sense. They should feel awkward perhaps, or notice that they don't feel or awkward, or they are passing judgment on this body: its beautiful, its ugly, its attractive, I don't like it... that should be the point. To raise awareness of the process our minds go through. The way bodies are confined, how we confine ourselves, our society confines are. The struggle of it all. ...

We've set up a timeline that I think is extremely manageable. Given our projection I will have a few weeks to edit and reshoot things at the end of it all and have time to breathe at the end of the year. The point of this for me is not to get it into the concert, though I would be really proud to make a good showing my senior year and know that I had put that work in. I am nervous and excited. ...

October

In choreography, I have always had a problem of not being immediately judgmental of what comes out of me. I'm already starting to feel pressured... even if the movement is inspired but whatever it is and makes sense to me I do not know that it will read to the audience. I am worried about what this might turn into. I am trying to be less emotional with it, to just put on some music and give myself a directive and just go for it, but I do think my worries are actually making me produce a lot of the same business. I've talked to Kristen about what I am feeling inspired by, a lot. I'm starting to really want to do something that makes people think in some way about this issue. The longer I exist as a woman in our society and on a college campus the sicker I get of how the system works. I enter into choreographic generation time trying to remember these things and exemplify it in my movement... Sometimes I'll just tie up certain parts of my body and see how I can move, what it looks like when I try to get out, how it feels to be really tied up. Other times, I will think of parts of the body that are considered sensual- the hips, chest, collarbone- and use those as initiators for movement to see what comes out. I remember sophomore year in styles and forms that Kali did her text study to a poem "I am a Woman" and how her movement was so feminine, yet without being overtly feminine in the way we would usually picture it. I thought it was clever to somehow get to the essence of what a woman is without relying on the common stereotypes, and I think there is a lesson in there for me with choreograph as well. ...

I have confirmed with Stephen that he will be my DP. Last year I worked with a friend of mine, Ryan, and although I enjoyed that and he is a really talented film maker, I am excited about this new collaboration. Stephen is really an artist... he sees the world in such beautiful ways, and is actually a photographer first. He has a great way with creating images, and I think we will work well together. He is quieter than me but he really seems to understand everything we have talked about so far in terms of my piece and what I want to do with it. It is almost vindicating in a way to have someone else who I respect for their art really be behind something I am doing. We have talked about different options for crew, but we are definitely going to be able to do this for next to nothing. We are going to use the studios to film, and the rest of the equipment we can get from the school. ...

I've made a list of goals and objectives for this project. I want to get a sort of mock up of what I am thinking for the piece just using footage from rehearsal. I will record just with a handheld camcorder the movement I am playing with, and piece it together in different ways to get a better idea of how I will edit the real thing. I want to give it to my professors so they can offer their ideas for further development.

November

I have been talking more with Stephen about different things to try with filming, what kind of mood we will set, and other logistics. We spent a good amount of time discussing lighting as well. I really wanted lighting that would be somewhat “contrasty” and really emphasize the parts of the body. As I am going for a really minimal set and clothing, I really wanted the look of the film to be rich and beautiful—I was seeing a more golden tone and deep colors. I am working towards finding a feel for this that seems right. Last year, everything just sort of followed easily... the poem I was using as a foundation had descriptive imagery that very easily created structure and images in my mind. I had red, I had white, and I had corresponding feelings for each one. I guess it is interesting how when it comes to using my own words how much more searching I need to do to find the right place. I suppose in a way when I was using that poem as a basis, it took some of the responsibility off of me. This is fully me, a little more vulnerable. In some ways I don't think I have any problem with being vulnerable or open with people. I know that this is what art is about, and what making true connections with people has to start with. For some reason, though I love dancing, it is one of the places I feel the least comfortable in at times. ... and now I'm putting myself, some of my deepest feelings, and my dancing up on screen. Either this will help me to grow in some way or it is going to damage me beyond belief. ...

I have settled into some structuring ideas I like. The film will have three “sections” though they will not be edited just straight, one section at a time in chronological order. One section will be free standing movement in the void of the black space—I will be wearing some thing minimal, performing some of the movement that has been taken from trying to distort stereotypically sexual movement or acting our confinement... I'm considering using grease paint to write words I associate with this issue all over my self as well, so that in the course of the work it will get smeared around and obliterated... a sort of symbolic defiance to the system. This could range in really “normal” conversation words, like “object,” “sexual,” “use,” “look,” etc. or things that are more shocking, like the many words that are used to describe women that are degrading or objectify their bodies. This is the only part I have a problem fitting in the red fabric. Again, not wanting it to be an arbitrary prop, but also not wanting to attempt to tie it into every thing just because I am afraid of that. The second section will be the red fabric section, during which there will be some exploration of the red fabric and the phrase that “dances” through the fabric, ending in me being absolutely tied up and struggling. The last scene will be the scene where there are other women standing around. right now I am thinking of having just as many bodies as I can get into the space standing sort of lifelessly, like this whole business of being objectified has paralyzed them or sucked the life out of them in a way. Depending on how they are stand this might also represent dolls or mannequins, which would be interesting to play up also. I will most likely just do a variation of the work done in the free standing section, possibly moving just from simply dancing it to becoming increasingly bound and unable to move by some unseen force. This will be done in the middle of the “landscape” of bodies, so we can shoot around, above, and through the other bodies in the space. Where we can focus more on close ups and compartmentalizing my body in the free standing section, this section we can do the same with other bodies as well as getting more shots that encompass more of the scene itself. Or... I will cover my face with the fabric. I have been playing with this image for awhile and I think it is really striking to me. I have it recorded on some footage from rehearsals and I think it says so much towards the defacing/dehumanizing aspect of oppression. The audience will only be able to see my body, and not my face. ...

December

Break never comes too soon. I have been struggling... I want to enjoy my senior year and enjoy doing this project but I am having a hard time getting out of my anxiety. I have not made as much progress as I would have wanted to by this point. I feel like I have really great ideas, and I have been so inspired by my feminist theories class and meetings with Kristen. I am just having a difficult time putting things into action. However, I am making slow progress. A lot of planning- plans for shots, structuring sections, acquiring equipment (the first camera we were going to use was sold literally the day before I asked my friend if we could use it). As it turns out we're going to be using the same camera Ryan and I used last year from my friend Chris. I'll have to pay \$10 a day because someone lost his battery charger, but what that means so far is that I am only spending about \$30 dollars in costuming and \$40 in renting the equipment. The rest is free, which is fortuitous and wonderful. I am well aware that when I leave here I will not be so lucky. ...

Some of the videos I have been watching have been giving me ideas in terms of camera work. One of the videos in particular, "Horses Never Lie," features a female dancer and utilizes some really beautiful shots focusing on the body. In this particular film, the frame shifts a lot to what she is doing with her legs, and a lot of times it will move behind her, accentuating the shape of her spine and the articulation of the back space of the body. It is a view that is often unseen on a normal stage and is part of why film is such a great combination with dance for me. Kristen and I have discussed different camera techniques for my film—maybe have an extreme close up of just a hand doing some sort of non-associative gesturing, while a voice over plays- something like, an example of a typical talk evaluating or talking about a female or her specifically female parts... sort of to point out the absurdity of the kind of values we place on body parts. Especially when you think about how women's organs, specifically ones that get focused on the most, are a part of our bodies because we are able to have children. It is such a strange Oedipal complex thing that women's breasts and reproductive parts have been so sexualized. ...

Something from class—discussions on gender roles, Monique Wittig, and radical feminist... Today's class sort of lead me here: women have long been defined by their relation to men and their family which results of that union. It is a common assumption that men and women are biologically determined to be different, and because of these characteristics, should occupy different spheres of labor: men are more strong and logical and should be the breadwinners; therefore they belong in the public sphere. Women are more emotional and nurturing, and therefore belong in the private sphere, i.e. compulsory motherhood. Though earlier feminists such as Monique Wittig and Simone de Beauvoir argue that gender roles are socially constructed by the institutions in society ("One is Not Born a Woman," and "The Second Sex), the roles it inscribes for men and women are in tune with the radical feminist understanding of society. This "biological determinism" would also have this shallow understanding of how men and women are "made:" women have ovaries and a womb and breasts; therefore they should care for the children. Men's reproductive organs, however, are never held in such strong emphasis in determining their "natural" role. I think I should maybe use these understandings of women's roles as structure for the costumes and presentation of the film... the other dancers, myself. Creating things the audience is familiar with and then subverting it in a way that they notice. I am not sure exactly how to do this, but I think part of it is reconciling how I feel (the confined, the strangeness of what we consider "Sexy") and the common images: feminine dress, stereotypical sexual movement... but distorting it.

I've been thinking that for the "fabric over the face" scene, I want to create some really isolated sustained movement... maybe play with some of the camera techniques I've been seeing in "Dance for the Camera 2." I especially enjoyed the dynamics of combinations of slowing down action, only to speed it up, and then slow it down a second later. It relates to my hope to bring awareness to how we look at bodies, because you have longer to really see it, as well as all the intricacies of the joints and muscles as they move. I didn't go into this project thinking I would do much experimental editing, but as I am not doing a narrative piece like last year, and I am feeling more pulled towards the idea of abstraction, it could be worthy endeavor to begin considering.

January

Over break I was reviewing some more of my texts from feminist theories. Just something I'm thinking about relating to women's sexuality... Sex is often seen as the actual act of sex, and usually in a heteronormative fashion: vaginal penetration. However, "sex" itself covers a wide variety of sexual activities and lifestyle choices. Women's bodies have always been extremely sexualized-historically; we have not had much control over our bodies. Until we began to see rulings like *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 and the 14th Amendment, the objectification we still see in today's culture was magnified. Women's bodies were literally and legally not their own. One way in which this objectification and subordination is achieved is through controlling sexual practices of women. For women there have consistently existed contradictory sexual expectations. On one hand, they are expected to appear sexy and available. On the other hand, they are not meant to desire. They should balance the line of modesty and sexuality, being available but not too available, and within the actual sex act, not speak of their own desires. What often ends up being "acceptable" by way of sexual practices is based on power relationships. In this article by Catherine McKinnon called "Desire and Power" she references this-- "...sexuality is gendered and gender is sexualized. In other words, feminism is a theory of how the eroticization of dominance and submission creates gender, creates woman and man in the social form in which we know them". Though McKinnon does not identify her self as a radical feminist, the sexualization and power struggle over the body is in line with radical theory. She continues: "I think that sexual desire in women, at least in this culture, is socially constructed as that by which we come to want our own self-annihilation. That is, our subordination is eroticized in and as female; in fact, we get off on it to a degree..."(206). It is in this light we find women participating in their own sexual subordination: not verbalizing their own sexual desires, having sex in positions that are not fulfilling to our biological construction, and, as McKinnon explains faking orgasms to keep men in our lives: "They want us to have orgasms; that proves they're virile, potent, effective. We provide them with that appearance, whether it's real for us or not" (263). We also see women "desiring" such things as role-playing where they are "dominated," and parading around at Halloween in renditions of passive vocations, hyper sexualized (the sexy nurse, the naughty school girl, for example). What this also leads to is the billion-dollar industry that is pornography.

Things are falling into place but we will see what the new semester brings. I am anxious to begin filming... I feel less than secure with my movement at this point and I'd really like to see it on camera for real and the editing possibilities. I am most excited about this "room of bodies." I think I have some solid imagery. The important thing while filming will be to just use all sorts of p.o.v and really find different ways we can follow the body closely or decompartmentalize it a bit. I sort of want to isolate my different parts, take it apart. For the first time now however I am considered

adding make up... There is such a performative aspect to fulfilling our female and male roles, and the ways we ornament or decorate ourselves is part of that. I was reading an art history text by Griselda Pollack, "The Spaces of Femininity." It talked a lot at first about impressionist work by men features people in different spaces than women... that the work of artists like Berthe Morisot shows women occupying different spaces, but in a different way- painting like "Five o'clock Tea" that gives you the feeling of confinement- wall paper stripes like jail bars as a back drop. It gave me interesting ideas in terms of how I would present the space of my film--- that it is more than just shooting close up or far back, but framing or cropping it in a way that can represent that confinement or entrapment. ...

April

I have been feeling really good about where I am taking this piece. I am sort of beyond the point of caring if people "get it" per se, though I would like for it to mean something... I think it will take me some time to fine tune this artistry of mine... learn more about making work that speaks socially. I feel like this process has really helped me to learn though. I've really explored different layers to this whole "feminism" business and feel very strongly in my opinions towards women's issues. I am proud that I wanted to put myself out there to make a piece. This is personal, and its honest, and I got to do it by working with a great collaborator who I really enjoy spending time with. I will be happy when it is all over. ...

We have finally reached a stage of finalizing! I am really tired of feeling like I have let people down and I just want to focus on getting the project done and making something I can feel proud of. I wish I didn't have these feelings of embarrassment toward the faculty because I think they are disappointed in me, but I have to forge on. I know I am cared for, and regardless of what I have done or not done, I did that. I am responsible to myself... and if part of me is pushing for me to continue procrastinating or feel bad, it is all of my choice to not do that, to not feel bad about what faculty may or may not be feeling about me... if there is anything I regret about the way I entered this process, I might as well finish strong and be proud of what I've made. ...

My sound score meeting with David and Kristen today was difficult. I can pre-empt this by saying I know they care about me, and more than that, they believe in me and my abilities as a dancer and choreographer. But I do feel a little hurt. I know they want me to just work with the footage from the rough draft but I can't seem to say enough that that footage was really only created for explorative purposes and I would feel really terrible if that's what I used to complete my thesis. Especially when I know where I can go and what I can do. I am going to do this, because I know I would not be satisfied if I dropped out now and settled. I am going to make it happen, and no matter how it ends up, I know I will be proud that I stuck with it and tried to right my wrongs. I hope they can understand why this is so important to me. ...

We just finished our last night of late night shooting yesterday. I don't know how I have done this. I used to stay up late all the time... this year I just can't handle it. These late night shooting sessions have been rough, both on my body as well as my head—I struggle so much when I am sleep deprived. I have been feeling kind of sick lately and I think its from the anxiety combined with the lack of sleep. I can't believe it's finally done. All we have to do is upload the footage and start editing, which Stephen will help me with on some parts since I am not as familiar with the program. It just feels good to know the hours of filming are behind us. I am ridiculously grateful to

the girls who stayed late into the night to complete my mannequin section. So many people promised they would come and they all dropped out, and these five stayed the entire time. Jessie especially is always so supportive and kind. I really trust her, and it meant a lot to me that besides everything going on with her right now, she stuck it out and stayed just as late as everyone else. I wonder sometimes why I have such a hard time trusting in my abilities when people like Jessie never question them. ...

I had to show my piece tonight. It wasn't finished, but I am so relieved it is over. I am literally shocked people enjoyed it. I was so worried, nothing was going right. Editing was troublesome and the song wouldn't work in the program and I was freaking out. Matt was nice enough to come and be with me because he knew how scared I was... I think after I spoke (I'm not even sure what I said, something about it being a work in progress, just the edited beginning) I just ran and sat on the floor next to matt's chair with my head on his knee so I wouldn't have to watch people watching. Afterwards, Alice and Crow and everyone had a lot of really great things to say and images that stuck out to them. It was entirely affirming and I am ready to finish it up and turn it in. I can't believe it has been a year of struggle. I know I could have been better, I know I could have been worse, and the big thing is here I am. Goodness. Time to get this thing taken care of and turned in. I am happy I stuck with it... and already thinking of ways to develop it further and take it to new places. The process is never over.