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Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration: Creating the Foundation for Collaboration Amongst the Arts Disciplines, Powered by Tectonic Theatre Project's Moment Work

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Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration: Creating the Foundation for Collaboration Amongst the
Arts Disciplines, Powered by Tectonic Theatre Project's Moment Work

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine
Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Abstract

CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION: CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR COLLABORATION AMONGST THE ARTS. POWERED BY TECTONIC THEATRE PROJECT'S MOMENT WORK

By Tara Beth Weintraub, M.F.A

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2015

Major Director: Dr. Noreen Barnes
Director of Graduate Studies, Theatre

During this course, upper-level VCUArts students are invited to join forces to become a part of a cross-disciplinary, ensemble-based exploration. Powered by Tectonic Theatre Project's Moment Work, students will create new works and gain insight into the philosophies, purposes, and processes of Moment Work and other devised theatre techniques. The class will culminate in short, devised pieces, created and performed by the students. The focus of the class is on the creation of a harmonious ensemble amongst a varied group of young artists. I believe that in order to create a generation of innovative and forward-thinking artists, the segregation of the arts disciplines within academia must

halt. Cross-disciplinary collaboration will invite varying perspectives to exist in a single setting, and hopefully lead to new forms of art.

Introduction

As educators, we hold a responsibility to inspire our students to become part of a progressive group of innovative thinkers. Creating a generation of out-of-the-box problem solvers will invariably affect positive change in society. The arts, in particular, have an influential talent to affect change in a very personal way. Artists have the unique ability to touch the heart of society. Why, then, do we continue to limit our resources?

I believe that the compartmentalization amongst the arts disciplines is highly reducing innovation and creativity amongst young artists and therefore limiting the future of each individual discipline. The lack of exposure to other art forms traps us in a disciplinary-specific cage with only like-minded individuals instructed to approach their art in a hyper-focused way. Cross-disciplinary collaboration must become a part of the academic foundation of the arts.

According to the current Spring 2015 VCUArts class listings, students are offered eleven cross-disciplinary courses within the School of the Arts. Of those eleven offerings, only three courses are truly fully inclusive of all arts disciplines, one being a five-week workshop, the second, a lecture-based history course, and the third being my course, “Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration.” In the creation of this course, I wanted to provide a fully collaborative outlet for advanced arts students across VCUArts disciplines to have the unique opportunity to create

together. In order to generate a diverse group of artists, the course was available to students with instructor approval only. My students spanned the arts disciplines, representing dance, sculpture, arts education, stage management and acting.

Truly inspired by my experience working with Moisés Kaufman and the Tectonic Theatre Project company, I utilized their approach to creating new work, entitled Moment Work, as the foundation for collaboration amongst the arts. During this course, students would abandon their title of Dancer, Actor, Stage Manager, Art Educator, and Sculptor at the door and simply be considered an Artist. They would learn and develop the skills necessary to feel confident and become facile throughout all of the elements.

Going into this course, creating a harmonious ensemble had to be the glue to a successful collaboration. True collaborative growth could only occur if the students were able to work together as a unit toward a common goal. Unlike the theatre and dance students, the visual artists willingly proclaim that “team work” is not a significant part of their curriculum. In fact, two students noted that they sometimes felt working together had a negative connotation in many of their classes. Despite their recent lack of group work experience, they entered the course open and excited to explore an ensemble-based artistic experience.

A group of students walk into a class with an unfamiliar topic and unfamiliar faces and are then asked to make bold choices, take risks and to trust one another. In order for ensemble building exercises and shared experience to connect individuals into a single unit, safety must be established. While reading Will Weigler’s book, *Strategies for Playbuilding*, I was struck by his differentiation between rules and promises. He notes, “The semantic shift from ‘rules’ to ‘promises to one another’ can make a big difference. Rules can seem impersonal and tend to get

bent and broken. Setting up promises to one another connects each rule directly to its effects on the other people in the group. Framing it this way can build upon everyone's integrity and sense of loyalty to one another." (5) This particular idea encompassed a larger concept I wanted to instill in the class, that being ownership. I wanted to give the ensemble the permission of taking ownership of the class and the work. When creating our class contract entitled "Promises to the Ensemble," I gently guided the students toward specific wording to further the creation of a safe, creative, and judgment-free environment.

I asked the ensemble to view me as a guide during this course. I gave them the assurance that I would provide a map of possible destinations and point them in the right direction if they get lost, but they have the permission to choose what roads to take. Together, we will see where our travels take us. With a world of artistic possibilities ahead of us, our journey began.

Chapter 1: Moment Work Lab One Notes- New York 2014

Tectonic Theatre Project Moment Work Pre-Work

Found Text:

Dear Hurting: Your brother-in-law should have been out of your house a month after he moved in. Tell Vinny you've had it with this experiment in communal living, set an exit date for Nicky, and stick to it.

"Dear Abby" article from *Atlanta Journal Constitution*

Costume: Taco Socks and Black sequined bolero

Prop: Pill Bottle

Light: Phone

Song: Wow and Flutter by April Smith

Email from Education Director, Matt Freeman

Hello, NYC Level 1 Lab Participants!

The Level 1 Training Labs start on Friday, June 27th and we are super excited to get started! A few housekeeping items to make you feel more comfortable at ART/NY:

What: Moment Work Training Labs

When: Level 1- Friday, June 27th through Sunday, June 29th, 10am-6pm

Where: ART/NY Studios, 520 8th Avenue, 3rd Floor, NY, NY 10018

Instructor: Andy Paris and Leigh Fondakowski

Things to bring:

-Please bring or wear comfortable clothing.

-Please bring a prop, a costume piece, a light source (NO live flames, but flashlights, pointer lights, or cell phones, etc. are acceptable), any kind of music and/or sound, and a short piece of text.

A few notes on the above:

- 1) The props and costumes will be available for use by all participants in the Labs; therefore, please do not bring anything that is fragile or has any significant monetary or emotional value. While we will ask everyone to respect the items, we would hate for an accident to happen.
- 2) For the text, we suggest that you try a piece of found text (i.e., some prose, a fortune cookie, an instruction manual, a newspaper article, etc.) rather than something from a play.

3) As always, when selecting your items, text, and music, please evaluate their **theatrical potential and performability**.

DAY ONE OF MOMENT WORK LAB

6/27/2014

START TIME: 10:00 AM

ARRIVAL: 9:26 AM

We were separated into two groups right at the start of the day. Half of us went with Leigh Fondakowski and the other group went with Andy Paris.

Teacher: Leigh Fondakowski

As an icebreaker, we went around in a circle and said our zodiac sign, our Chinese sign and a moment of theatre that stuck with us. She urged us to describe the moment as best we could. The point of this exercise was that everyone's moments rarely related to text.

Most mainstream theatre is dictated by the text.

MOMENT WORK- Technique for writing performance/ becoming FACILE (A word used throughout the workshop)

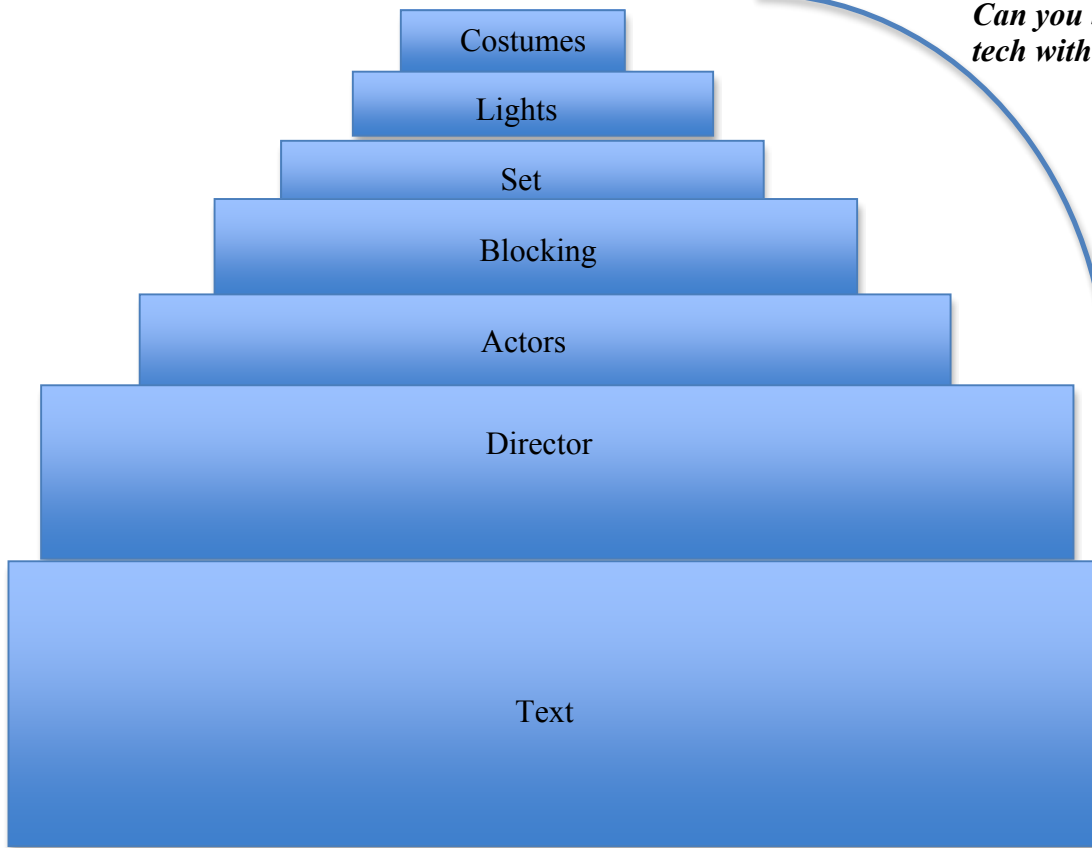
MOMENT WORK: Analyzing theatre- the mechanics of each element- Being in dialogue with the elements- being the listener and the observer.

MOMENT: Unit of theatrical time

Used to make work; a directing tool; to workshop a playwright; to explore and think theatrically

Figure 1: Generic Theatrical Model.

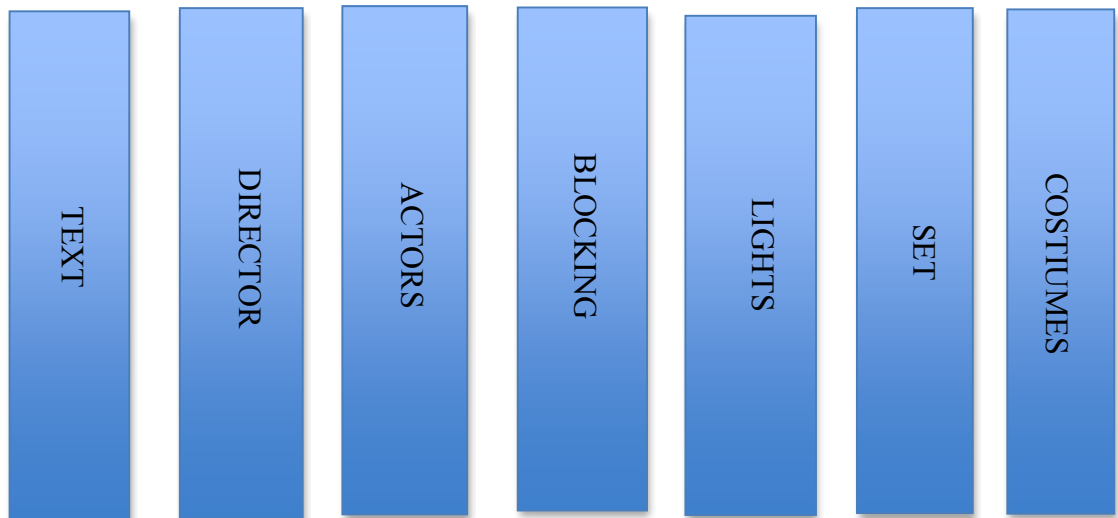
GENERIC THEATRICAL MODEL:



*Exploiting the medium?
These are neglected areas.
Can you be truly creative in
tech with a timed clock?*

Figure 2: Tectonic Theatre Project Moment Work Model.

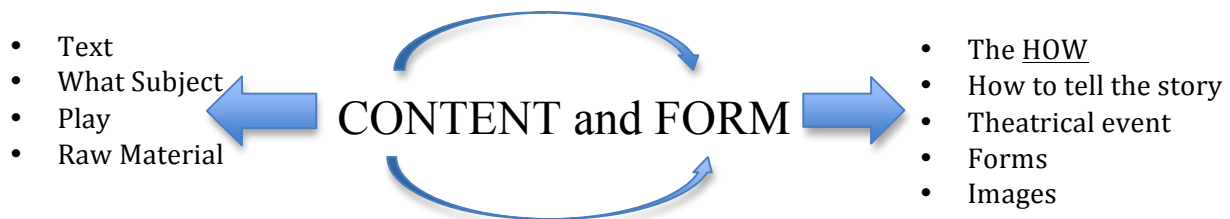
TECTONIC THEATRE PROJECT MOMENT WORK MODEL:



- Anybody can do any of these jobs (FACILE). Until the play is created, take away roles and hierarchy.
- All elements are equally important to creating art.
- All elements have narrative potential and poetic potential
- No timed clock

Moment Work is about exploring the relationship between:

Figure 3: Content and Form.



When Tectonic does a Moment Work Lab, they often call it “Is there a play here?” workshop.

- When everyone is in a set role - the work becomes predictable. When that is taken away, you create imbalance and spontaneity.

The group made a list of elements on the board:

Figure 4: List of Elements.

Sound	Color
Lights	Cacophony
Movement	Stagecraft
Choreography	Voice
Architecture/ Space/ Site specific	Layering
Focus and Energy	Juxtaposition
Humanity	Size/scale
Society/ Societal Norms	Risk
Relationships:	Absurdity
Spatial	Revelation/transparency
Actor to themselves	Spectacle
Actor to each other	Magic
Actor to audience	Transformation
Audience to audience	Proximity to performance
Rhythm	Visual lines
Time	Blocking/ staging
Text	Video
Language (textual or non textual)	Crew
Props	Suspension of disbelief
Makeup	

Exercise 1: Create a moment

ROUND 1: We were asked to get up, say “I Begin,” do something to create a moment of theatrical time, say “I end,” and sit down.

- Most everyone went to the middle of the room, said “I begin”, did a random act, stood center and said “I end”

ROUND 2: Leigh asked us to do the same thing, but this time add specificity to location (Where in the room our moment takes place) and the point of “beginning” and “ending”

ROUND 3: This time, we were asked to make the moment about the architecture of the room

- We then had a group discussion about the moments where the group collectively had a response to a moment. What did they do? Why did we respond?

ROUND 4: We were asked to take away all text and story- to purely focus on architecture.

ROUND 5: We were asked to focus on a prop. (An umbrella.) How could we use it - its elements and properties

- We had a discussion of our realizations and discoveries of the objects properties.

“Moment work is about taking away normative uses and finding something new.”

ROUND 6: This time, we were to focus on props (4 wooden black boxes) and their properties.

- We had a discussion of our realizations and discoveries of the objects properties.

Another student asked the question of how to use this in a rehearsal room. Leigh explained that if you had difficulty blocking a certain scene, you could use the elements in the scene (costumes, props, light, architecture) to discover the event of the scene - notice what it illuminates in the scene.

EXERCISE 2: Two Person Moments

Round 1: We were asked to focus on both architecture and repetition. We needed to acknowledge the others' presence – this may or may not effect the action of the moment. One person began, and the other began when they felt the impulse. It ended the same way.

- We discussed both being in the two person moments and watching the two-person moments.
- Were the elements talking to each other or were the actors talking to each other. That is the key to moment work - The ELEMENTS should talk to each other. That is the difference between and scene and a moment.

ROUND 2: This time, we were asked to focus on props and repetition.

- Discussion of when the elements were interacting and when the actors seemed to comment.
- My exercise: Picking up small pieces of white paper that had been scattered on the floor from a previous moment- and putting them into a hat. My moment partner used blue tape to pick up paper- threw the tape into a hat.
- Leigh stopped after our moment to comment on how the elements in our moment were interacting- same goal- to pick up paper- different tactics. They interacted when tape was being thrown into the hat- hat moved closer to complete the objective.

EXERCISE 3: Creating a Moment by Exploring Singular Elements

ROUND 1: Light

- We were put into groups of three and were asked to use light sources to create a moment. The room was completely dark. We were given 10 minutes to discover and present. Light sources abounded- lamps, glow sticks, flashlights, flashing wands, everything and anything you can think of.

- ***Moment Work's critique structure was put into place***

- -We were asked, "What struck you?"

- - What theatrical questions arose (not to be answered, just heard)

***This was a wonderful approach that stuck with me. This type of critiquing process allows questions to become observations - this would be a great way to approach observations with students. It takes away the judgment and allows you to be aware of what others saw.

- We then named each moment. (Issues came up with this later in the week)

ROUND 2: Costumes

- We were to take a costume piece and create a moment using that piece and could add in light if we wanted. We could not use the costume in a normative manner.
- We then critiqued each piece using the same approach

3 WAYS TO CONSTRUCT NARRATIVE (story, plot)

1. Sequencing
2. Layering
3. Organizing Principle

1 & 2 will convey meaning and create context.

3 was learned in Level 2.

EXERCISE 4: The Moment Before

- Leigh asked us to revisit a past moment, either light or costume, and create the moment prior to that moment. We would connect the moment before to the original moment (taking in the past critique) – Very early stages of **sequencing**. (5 minutes)
- Critique of moments.

DECOMPRESSION DAY ONE

Comments and Observations:

- Letting the element be the focus allowed us to exercise this new muscle not normally used in our “generic” model of theatre.
- Multiple people mentioned their surprise with the emotional response while viewing the moments.
- There was a distinct shift in the day when we went from individual work to group work.
- The critiquing process - multiple people mentioned the power of this type of critique. Using questions, as observations would be wonderful to use with students.
- I mentioned that the exercises really allowed this freedom without text. It reminded me a lot of mask work.
- The concept of poetry of an element and the exploration of that beauty.

“Homework” Assignment

VIRTUOSITY-What does it mean? We were to go home and create a moment of virtuosity, focusing on an element, to share with the group the following day.

- Being the kind of person I am, having to have the right answer, I, of course, googled “virtuosity” and to summarize the definition, it is someone who either is very skilled in an artistic subject or someone who appreciates the art. Originally, my idea was to find a song that I deeply connect with, put on headphones and listen in the moment, truthfully, and appreciate it. The moment I created the following day was very different...

DAY TWO OF MOMENT WORK LAB

6/28/2014

START TIME: 10:00 AM

ARRIVAL: 9:37 AM

Teacher: Andy Paris

EXERCISE 1: VIRTUOSITY MOMENTS

We switched teachers today and Andy had us sharing our moments of virtuosity for the first three hours of the day, with a reflection and critique after each moment. It was intriguing to see what other people had come up with. What their idea of virtuosity was and how to explore the definition in a moment. It ranged from chairs, an open mouth, and opera music to a visceral animalistic journey around and through boxes to the sound of a storm. Watching other people’s moments inspired a change in the one I had previously conceived.

The idea of my moment was still at the core of the piece, but I changed how to construct it. I had not rehearsed this at all so I was unsure of how it was going to go. I placed two white chairs next to each other in the middle of the room. I asked for the lights to be turned off, creating a completely dark room. I used my phone to play a song I have an attachment to, for multiple reasons. I chose “Creep” by Radiohead, performed by 4 of my previous students at an open mic night. The music began in the darkness. When the first chorus began, I used the flashlight on my phone to create a distorted light against my face. I “watched” the performance, in the moment, remembering the pride I felt, watching my students strive for this beautiful sound that they had worked so hard to create. I put myself in the moment and reacted. At the end of the first chorus, it went black again. In the darkness, I switched chairs. When the second chorus began I had the light appear on my face again, this time I was representing another person, sharing the same experience, but with a different appreciation. I glanced at my watch, I looked away, showing no interest in the music or what was in front of me. I proceeded to switch chairs, this time noticing the ignorance and rudeness of my neighbor. Switched again and began to play on my phone, not noticing the person giving me an evil eye. The sound of applause struck in the recording and I finished with the light on the attentive audience member. For the last chorus, I ended in darkness. Andy led the reflection and critique. He began by asking me what we were listening to and for me to explain my connection to it. After I did, many people had a vocal reaction. People said that at the start, they thought I was listening to myself singing. Andy asked the group about what elements were present in the moment. What conventions were used? The group responded with music, sound (of the audience and the quality of the recording), the theatrical convention of creating two people from one, emotion.

One comment was that because I didn't sing, it was unexpected and kept their attention.

Another observation, "**what struck me**" is the language to use, was the light creating a distorted image with the attentive audience member and a very clear picture for the disruptive audience member.

Andy added in that the phone became many elements. It became sound, prop, and light source. He also mentioned that even though he did not see my face fully, he could see and feel what I was feeling and that it was powerful and beautiful to experience.

As the presentation of moments continued, Andy pushed us to really focus on **STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS- What physically/ elementally happened? To explain what we saw without adding judgment or view point/ interpretation.**

Like the previous day, we would name the moments that were presented. He mentioned that naming could be helpful or harmful in the creation process. If you don't focus on the structural elements in the title you create, you add a viewpoint that could possibly sway the piece in a specific direction. He was sure to add that this is neither bad nor good, just to be aware that it is happening.

The previous day, with Leigh, the group named our costume piece "Private Dancer" – when we created it, that idea was never part of the concept. When we went back to add a moment before and make edits, we took the title into consideration and the entire piece shifted. What I get from this is that I now know what happened. It isn't bad, but I am aware. If the name had been created

purely out of what happened structurally, it may have gone in a different direction. Don't let the name create an unintended story and have it confine you.

EXERCISE TWO: Discussion of Sequencing

If one moment was put before or after another moment, how does that effect what happened before or after? If "singing dog poop" was put before "Jesse's Truck boxes," what does the audience get?

- "Think of the elements in a scientific and mathematical way, as variables- honing in on one can change everything"- Andy Paris
- "We have uncanny instincts, when we listen" – Andy Paris
- "It's not about how to tell the audience a story. Its about how to engage the audience in a story"- Andy Paris
- "Don't focus on the story itself but the elements that make up a story"- Andy Paris

A moment from earlier in the day was revisited and Andy asked for her to remove the music from the moment and do the exact same thing. The entire mood changed completely. The variable of music was removed and the product was changed. It changed perspective of intention and almost everything else.

- We have to be aware of how manipulative an element can be, especially music and text. It can work for or against you.
- Think about preshow music or the absence of it. Music during a horror film, or complete silence.

EXERCISE 3: EXPLORATION OF PROPS

We put everyone's personal props on a table, picked up one and began to explore its properties.

Its sound, light, reflection, etc. We were given three minutes to explore the item in the space.

Andy side coached us, asking us where did the prop feel most at home at in the room? , What can it do?

We then discussed what "struck us" about the prop. What did we discover?

He then put us into groups of four and instructed us to grab a new prop, and create a moment with the focus on that prop's elements, with the ability to add light and sound. We were given about three minutes to play and then we were to present what we discovered.

1. Belt - We reflected the belt against the wall. One person held the buckled end, while I began slowly coiling up the belt as tight as it would go. We transitioned the coiled belt to the floor and reflected it against the shiny surface. I released one end of the belt, allowing it to quickly uncoil itself, creating this really beautiful sound against the floor.

Reactions: The shadow and the belt seemed to have a duet with one another; the belt buckle made its own music while coiling and uncoiling.

2. Folding Fan-We found the tiny intricate paper cuttings created a beautiful reflection on the walls and then on the ceiling. We had a group member lay on the ground to shine a light from beneath. She mentioned how haunting it became when it got larger towards her. When showing our moment, we requested that everyone lay in a circle with his or her heads in the middle. Our group got in the middle of the circle

and had the fan enter the lit space, open slowly and begin to fly around the ceiling, ending with it coming towards the light, growing larger.

Andy then requested that we do it for a second time, this time at a 90% slower speed. And then a 3rd time against the window shades. The speed and placement created this beautiful poetic dance-

Reactions: There was this seductive quality; Exposed; When it was on the ceiling becoming larger, they felt threatened.

EXERCISE 4: LAYERING

Layering: Sticking one moment on top of another moment. Putting two moments together, having them organically adjust to each other, creating a singular new moment.

Keeping the same groups, we chose two random moments from the past two days to layer together. They did not have to be our moments. It could be someone else's. We were given 5 minutes to do this. Our group chose "Jesse's Truck Boxes" and "Twine in front of Two White Chairs"

We had almost no rehearsal time

We presented and the first time, the pace was rushed. We weren't sure what we were doing exactly.

Reactions: All had to do with breathing and that it needed space and pacing.

Andy asked us to do it again and listen to each other.

2nd time through - It felt like magic while it was happening!

“The listening and responding in the group was palpable between you three- it truly became one moment- a language was created between the elements and the bodies- Physically and mentally one entity- it was poetic”- Andy Paris

EXERCISE 5: Sequencing the layered moments

We then took the four-layered moments we had created and put them into a sequence to create one giant moment. We took away, “I begin” and “I end”- that is the difference between scenes and moments. We did this twice, with two different sequences and presented the moment to the other group. What story did it tell sequencing the moment in that specific order versus a different order? What did the audience get from it?

DECOMPRESSION DAY 2

Comments and Observations:

- The difference between creating scenes and creating moments
- The concept of simplicity and realizing that something simple and beautiful is enough.
- The critique style allows feedback to become tangible and exciting, in opposed to negative and critical.
- The other group posed the question about why we changed the sequence. Andy responded with “ The sequence order is based on elements and what story do you want to tell? Is it the journey of the chairs? Is it the ending and starting with the dog poop? Is it rhythm? Is it the story of the lights?”

DAY THREE OF MOMENT WORK LAB

6/29/2014

START TIME: 10:00 AM

ARRIVAL: 9:38 AM

Teacher: Leigh Fondakowski

Today started with a bit of a jolt. Leigh and Andy wanted to give us the opportunity to work with the other group, so they switched us up and put us into different groups. My new group was put with Leigh for the final day.

We began the day by sitting in a circle, stating our names and one thing that has struck us during the workshop so far. I shared that the beauty of the singular element struck me. That changing it ever so slightly changed the context of everything. I told everyone that the night before, I was lucky enough to see *Cripple of Inishmaan* at the Cort Theatre and that while watching, I challenged myself to watch the story of the elements. The music told a very tragic story. The lighting told another. The architecture enhanced both the music and the lighting.

We discussed how difficult it is to shed the urge to make a story. “Taking the discoveries from these exercises and making a story isn’t the point. Making something theatrical is.”- Leigh

“Give yourself as many opportunities for play while you are crafting.” – Leigh

“Be FACILE” - Leigh

EXERCISE 1: Presentation of Virtuosity moments

Half of the group had not presented their moments the day before, so we were all asked to present them once more. While presenting mine, I felt like I was not intently listening as I was the day prior. It was very different when presenting in this new space. The architecture of the room made the sound bounce off of the walls in a different way. The room had no windows so there was absolutely no light, causing my movement from one chair to the other to be more difficult. Leigh, not wanting to waste too much time, let us present one after another, not allowing time for analysis, as we were able to do with Andy. As helpful as that was with Andy, we had a lot to get through today and we could not afford to spend two hours analyzing.

Something else was very different in this group of people. After someone presented something, everyone would clap. I understand everyone was being supportive, but it made it seem like we were performing, and that was not the point of the workshop. It was just that, a place to work and explore and discover. It adds a bit of judgment, although positive, into the equation. And it was the first time I had even THOUGHT about if I LIKED it. I believe that I felt freer to play and explore without qualifying the piece I was a part of or just have watched.

EXERCISE 2: A MOMENT WITH LIGHT

Leigh instructed us to get into groups of three, and be sure to work with people we had not worked with during the previous days of the workshop. We needed to create a moment using light. A woman in my group had brought glow sticks with her, which we decided to explore and

discover with. We began by breaking the sections of the glow sticks, and listening to the cracking sound it created and seeing how that would propel the liquid to begin glowing. We then connected the glow sticks into one long strand, we held the pieces between the three of us and began weaving in and out between each other, never breaking the grasp of the strand. Leigh came and said what we were doing, although beautiful, pushed focus to the actor and not the element. She challenged us to play again, and see how we could remove ourselves from the center of the moment.

Round 1

We connected the multicolored glow sticks into a circle. We began to turn it. When the circle started to break into pieces, we organically broke away from each other, each with our own strand, and walked in three different directions, ending with the glow sticks disappearing behind our bodies.

Critique and feedback - It was beautiful to watch. Though we were not seen at all, our presence was felt. It would be interesting if we had played more with reflection against the ground. It would be interesting to add dimension to the moment.

Round 2: Add contrasting or complimentary element that will enhance the tone we have created with the moment in round 1.

We decided to add a complementary element of sound. We found a recording of a very space-like drone. We also made adjustments based on previous feedback. We played with the reflection

against the floor. We added height and had the strand grow very tall. When we broke apart, we approached the audience before retreating.

Critique and feedback - The sound added an unworldly tone that definitely enhanced the moment. When the strand grew tall, I felt threatened. The reflection was beautiful. From sitting farther back, the actors were completely invisible, which made the perspective as an audience member, drastically different. We changed the relationship to the audience.

- “These changes are neither good nor bad- just options/choices”- Leigh
- “These are the seeds- the things to construct a narrative out of in the future.” Leigh

One group’s moment, although interesting to watch, was really a sequence of separate moments. This was brought to our attention from a fellow student. When asked what makes this multiple moments in opposed to a singular moment, Leigh responded by explaining that it is all about the story of an element and where it starts and ends. This one had multiple moments that had a very noticeable end, where a new story began.

- “Be careful of unintentional sequencing” – Leigh
- “Be FACILE”
- “What we look for in **LAYERING** is DRAMATIC TENSION, RAISE IN THE STAKES, CURIOSITY” - Leigh

EXERCISE 3: Layering in TEXT

What is the text doing?

- Illustrating

- Theatricalization
- It is just another element

We were asked to choose another groups moment to work on and add 3-5 words to enhance the moment. Our group was given the “Light Woman” moment. We added the text of Illuminate (when light one showed the light woman), Expose (when the light on her rear end turned on), Reveal (When the light on her face turned on), Blind (When the light shining on the audience turned on), and Conceal (when all the lights were turned off).

We watched each other’s moments and were then given a short piece of found text. We were to choose from the moments of the day and apply it to that piece. We could use the whole sentence, we could use one word, we could not use it at all, if it could still be implied.

Our found text was “It wasn’t exactly a eureka moment”. We chose the three lamps on chairs. When a lamp would raise upwards, that person would shout “Eureka!” When it would lower, they would utter “Eureka?” When two lamps reached the floor and one was raised, the two actors with the lowered lamps stated “It wasn’t exactly a eureka moment” And the actor with the raised lamp yelled “Eureka!”

During this round of observations, someone added a bit of judgment into their response. Leigh responded with “**You want to notice, not qualify.**”

- “Notice what happened when text was added. **When were the elements overshadowed by the text? When were they working together?**” – Leigh
- “If the image is striking enough, it can handle more complex text- when others may need simplicity”- Leigh

- “When you add text, do you want to give the audience the answers or let them figure them out and become engaged?” Leigh

EXERCISE 4: Layering in Text continued

We were put into new groups of three and were given a new piece of found text. We were asked to create a moment, using one element, in order to theatricalize the moment. We did not have to use all or any of the text. **DON'T BE LITERAL**

The text we chose was, “She died on a Wednesday in Wilmington, Delaware. She was 90.” We decided to only use “She died on a Wednesday.”

We grabbed two flashlights and three of us went into a closet. We began to explore the light against the skin.

The man in our group decided to strip down into his boxers and, in complete darkness, we both began to explore his body with the light held against his body, only rarely breaking away for a bit of light. I ended going down his forearm and shining a light onto his hand. Holding the light in place, I said the line “She died on a Wednesday”

Feedback: There was a sense of being exposed. The fact that we ended on a man’s hand and hearing the text of “SHE died” created the idea of possible murder? Many people had a feeling of Autopsy.

Leigh asked for us to do it again but to a girl's body and see what would change. Her white shirt created a nightgown effect when light pressed against it. It became much more of a grieving and sad moment with the woman's body being explored.

It was titled "Body Exposed - Autopsy"

EXERCISE 5: The Article and a moment

We were all given the full article, in which every piece of found text from the day was taken from. After reading, the whole group listed the following:

EVENTS in the article.

IMAGES in the article

THEATRICAL QUESTIONS that were raised when reading it (how to do it on stage)

We went back into our previous groups and were challenged to create a moment based on an image, event, or question from our list. **It is not about the content but the form. Don't be literal.**

We wanted to show the fibers she had spent 15 years working on and how it both created something amazing and constricted her simultaneously. We laid three long extension cords parallel to one another on the floor. One woman from our group stood center. The two of us remaining each grabbed one cord and began wrapping it around her chest, always weaving in and out of each other, creating a vest. When that was complete, we each grabbed the third cord, held it tight and walked towards her, wrapping it around her entire body, creating a straight jacket, always weaving in and out until completed. When done, we made eye contact and walked away, leaving her alone.

EXERCISE 6: The Article and Sequencing “The Story of Stephanie”

We were put into new groups of 5.

STEP 1: Make a list of which moments created from the text of the day (even ones that were made before we read the whole article) were the most theatrically compelling to you.

STEP 2: Compare with your group and make the group’s top 5 moments.

STEP 3: Sequence them to tell “The Story of Stephanie”

- They need to be layered and sequenced. Both elements and text.
- What is the glue connecting these 5 moments? An ELEMENT needs to be the glue.
- We can layer but cannot add new moments
- 7 minutes to create the sequence

Our group had very similar personal lists and our final list was:

1. Storybook
2. Color wheel (the glow sticks)
3. Autopsy (flash lights against skin)
4. Lone Woman in Chairs
5. Three Lights Rising (lamps and eureka moment)

Though we all agreed on the most theatrically compelling moments, many of the members of the group were directors and strong personalities. Because of this, many people wanted to take charge and felt their ideas were the way to go. This was the first time in any group during the workshop that this issue came into play. It was also the largest group we had been put into. I was

the only female, which created an interesting dichotomy. I decided to take a step back, let them figure it out, and enhance the moment from growing on other's ideas.

After agreeing on how to sequence and layer the moments to tell the most compelling telling of Stephanie's life, we were asked the question:

“What does the audience need to know if they did not read the article” and were urged to add the element of text when necessary. We added 5 quotes from the article into our sequence, which really enhanced the mood and there was a clear growth of narrative

After the second round we did our usual critique and analysis. **What struck you? What questions do you have?**

****This was the day I truly understood how these exercises and small moments could create a performance.

DECOMPRESSION DAY 2

Comments and Observations:

- This was the day we wrote and created performance.
- There was such a spare use of text.
- What struck me was finding the dramaturgical NEED for text.
- “Go out and take this work and make this your own!” - Leigh
- “Be mindful as plot and story come into play. Remind yourself to always go back to the basics. LET THE ELEMENTS TALK” –Leigh

PERSONAL REFLECTION FOLLOWING WORKSHOP:

Going into the workshop, I was extremely nervous about how I would fit in with this talented group of professionals. I wanted to be brave and take risks while at the workshop. I wanted to learn as much as I could by doing and meet as many people as I could. I even chose a specific journal to bring with me every day. The cover read, “Be Amazing. Be Fearless. Be Yourself.” I hoped that looking at those words would push me to challenge myself each day. I knew that Tectonic had chosen me to be involved in the labs, and I was expecting to be both one of the youngest participants as well as the least experienced. It turned out that yes was the answer to both of those claims, but I had absolutely no reason to be nervous. Leigh and Andy were able to create such an open, honest, judgment-free environment. I felt one hundred percent safe to play and explore. Never once did I feel an ounce of discomfort when working with the group. Everyone was there for the same reason: to explore and create with other people who wanted to explore and create. We bonded as a group immediately. I can honestly say that I feel extremely privileged to have worked with and learned from artists of this high caliber.

The days were very long, working for nine hours with two ten minute breaks and one hour break for lunch. When looking at the schedule prior to the start of the workshop, I was trepidatious about how I would stay focused during such a long class. This was not a problem at all as the hours passed like minutes. Moment work is something I have never experienced in my prior artistic life. It brings the focus completely outwards and puts weight on the elements, which in turn, eliminated the fear of failure within Tara, the actress. Even the critiquing system used in

Moment Work takes away the idea of failure and judgment. This is something I will be bringing with me as I move forward as a teacher. I believe that this type of analysis was a large part of what created the positive and safe environment we were in.

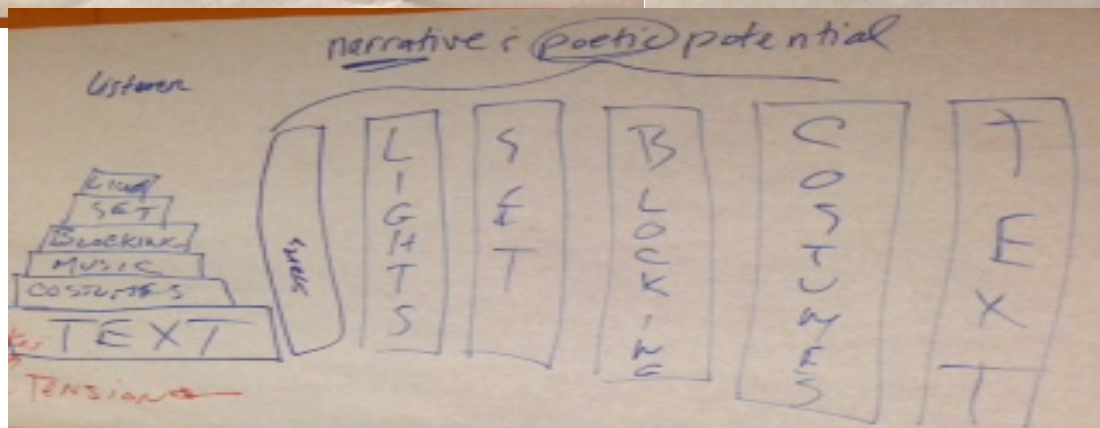
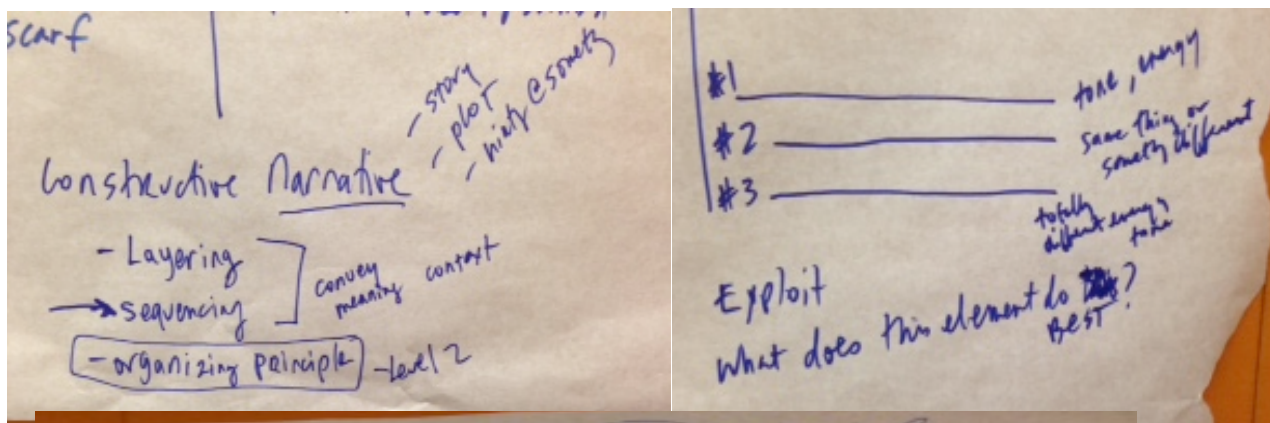
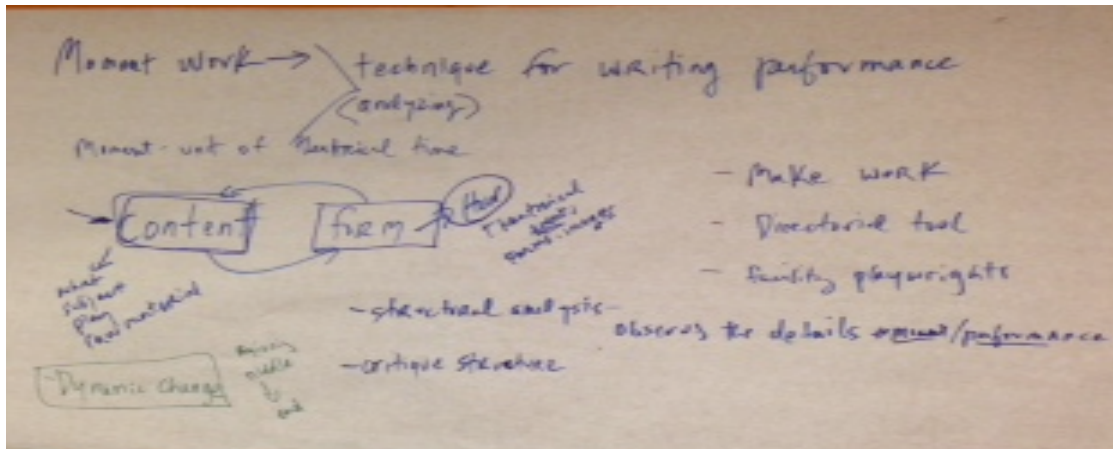
Both Andy Paris and Leigh Fondakowski were phenomenal teachers and I feel so very lucky to have worked with them. I was thrilled to have had the chance to learn from both of them and witness their very different methods of teaching the same concepts. Andy is, at heart, an actor, and that is very evident in his teaching style. He likes to “do” with the group. He enjoyed talking about what inspired each person to do a specific thing. He knew when to step back and let the group work alone and learn from our mistakes, though that word was never used. He was passionate and would let time slip away from him if something sparked his interest. Whenever a member of the group felt something strike them, he wanted us to take his marker and add it to a list on the board. The group quickly became an ensemble and he made an effort to get to know each of us. I loved working with him, as I loved working with Leigh.

Leigh is very much a writer/director, and that is also extremely noticeable in her approach to teaching Moment Work. She gave very clear instructions when explaining a concept or an exercise we were to do. When we were exploring, she side coached beautifully, allowing us to find and create moments on our own, but guiding us in the right direction. Her critiques were always stated remarkably well and never forced us to do what she wanted to see. One of my favorite things about her was observing her watch us. When one of us would get up to share our moment, she would be beaming from ear to ear. She loved watching us take risks and really get what Moment Work was all about. She made the environment safe from the start and I always felt like she was there to help us on our feet if we had fallen off course. She also made a genuine

connection with each of us. I could tell that she read each of our biographies and resumes thoroughly before classes began. When the workshop ended, she gave each of us her personal email and phone number, asking us to call her if we ever needed anything. I truly hope to have the teaching talent and grace of this wonderful woman.

I cannot thank Wesley enough for urging me to take this workshop with Tectonic Theatre Project. The professionals I met were inspiring, the teachers were remarkable and Moment Work is something I definitely want to teach. It is a remarkable approach to creating beautiful work. I was sad to leave after Lab One ended, and I will be sure to take Lab Two as soon as possible. My goal is to teach a class in the spring to our undergraduate students in what I have learned, and hopefully, after guidance from my peers, to teach a class in collaborative methods, using Moment Work as the foundation. I believe that this is something I can use for my interview classes, and well into the future.

Figure 5: Pictures of Lists from Workshop.



Chapter 2: Moment Work Labs One and Two Overview: Arizona 2015

MOMENT WORK LAB 1 ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY:

Taught by: Barbara Pitts McAdams and Moisés Kaufman

Notes and Quotes that added or challenged concepts taught in the New York Workshop with
Andy Paris and Leigh Fondakowski

“Moment Work teaches you how to watch it” – Barbara

Barbara explained the Virtuosity assignment in detail, unlike the New York workshop. Because of that, I think everyone seemed to hyper focus on her definition, so the outcome was very linear. With the lack of explanation, people were able to create their own personal definitions and the Moments varied in form and context.

When exploring Moments of architecture, we went outside and created outdoor moments. The campus is so visually appealing and we were able to really play with size, shape, distance, and texture there. It was a perfect area for that type of exploration.

“Once a Moment is created, it belongs to the room.” Barbara

“Adding too much context too soon can confine you” – Barbara

During Sound + Prop + Lighting Moments:

Driving Narrative Vs. Illustrating (Coloring or scoring)

Was sound activating?

Enhancing/ juxtaposition/ Contrasting to action on stage?

“A hunch is an idea or question you are trying to answer”- Moisés

“Sequencing is the most impactful because it adds and changes context enormously” – Barbara

The difference between a moment and a scene: Moment is a content shift. A beat is an emotional shift.

Moment Work gives the ensemble creative agency.

Question posed to Moisés: How do you regain control as director when the ensemble is given so much freedom?

“The director has the final say. They control the organizing principle. And eventually we go back to the conventional theatre model towards the end.

Tectonic’s Approach to the Interview Process:

- Let them talk for hours
- Multiple visits with the same people
- Everything was transcribed as the process went along: “Transcription isn’t a chore. It is how you become intimate with the work.”
- Side note: 33 Variations- no interviews were used.
- Poetry of Vernacular- Mimicry- Stutters, Accents
- Must be able to let go

MOMENT WORK LAB 2 ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY:

Taught by: Barbara Pitts McAdams and Moisés Kaufman

A Summary: Notes and Quotes

Text to focus on: articles on brain maladies.

Given articles and asked to create sequences.

- What structurally happened?
 - What was interpreted from the audience?***
1. Side note: Always Step Out of the moment and watch
 2. Side note: Always go back to the elements
 3. Side note: Does the form work but not the content? Edit and adjust. Note it.

Creating Moments based off of articles or dry text: “Take the dry text and put it in the present- Make a monologue or scene from it.” Barbara

“Don’t be afraid of Simplicity” Moisés

Issues Theatre Makers have: “Either over-explaining to the audience or completely fucking with them and not explaining anything.” Moisés

“Contemporary American Theatre ignores aesthetics. Moment Work puts us in a frame of mind to read aesthetic.” Moisés

“Moment Work is a way of writing performance. Not text.” Moisés

“Moment Work is an and theory not a but theory.” Moisés

“Theatricality can speak of sophisticated ideas.” Moisés

“The audiences’ imagination is one of our most powerful tools.” Moisés

“Train to think like an artist- that is different then thinking like a performer.” Moisés

Question posed to Moisés: “What is the difference between Story and Narrative?”

Moisés: “Narrative is about the minutia of moments and story is plot. We could also look at it this way. Story is a series of events in chronological order. Narrative is the representation or materialization of that story.”

Beckett: Form is Content.

“In Tectonic, focus is binary. Half of the time in the rehearsal room is spent on content and the other half on form. The back and forth is pivotal to the work.” Moisés

Hunch- Peter Brooke

-Do all of this work, forgets it, and explores the hunch.

- “A hunch is an unformed idea. Mine was ‘Let’s go talk to the people of Laramie and see what happens.’” Moisés

Organizing Principle example: What happened before, during, and after Matthew Sheppard.

“Text in Moment Work is open to interpretation. A generator of text might be, ‘ I want three exchanges in that moment.’. Moisés

Moisés on Time Frames:

“I am completely against constraint of time when the work hasn’t been made. This is a laboratory, just like funding for scientific research.”

“We have raised a whole generation of writers who write for readings....behind a table. They are writing for drama. Not Theatre. “

“Form has a strong theatrical beginning, middle, and end.” Moisés

“Every time the elements become redundant, it comes off as untrue.” Moisés

“Elements should never do = but X. To quote Brecht, ‘ In contradiction lies truth.’ It is all about juxtaposition.” Moisés

BASIC STRUCTURING TECHNIQUES

Sequencing:

Ex: A-B-C and A-C-B provide two very different narratives. Or A-B-C.....B and you are then creating a track of moments.

Figure 6: Layering.

Ex: A |____A____|
----- OR |____B____|
B

Context:

Ex: If A gives you the main information/ or the new information. Creates the world of the play.
A [BCD] or [BCD]A or BC]A[DE

“Discovery = re-contextualizing”

“You have the responsibility to explain Moments eventually.” Moisés

“Structural Analysis is being keenly aware of how we craft.” Moisés

“Does it pass the Joe X test?” (Audience) Moisés

“That disgruntled feeling in the audience is FUEL, creating the X of content and form.” Moisés

“Your greatest dough is the audiences’ hunger for order.” Moisés

FUEL: to ignite audience curiosity

- Being confused
- Not knowing
- Balls in the air

- Juxtaposition

“Whenever you are creating, you are building a contract between you and the audience. Don’t break it.” Wesley

“When elements are doing the same thing, it is boring and bad,” Moisés

“We are always deconstructing and reconstructing.” Moisés

“We are always moving between Narrative and Poetry.” Moisés

“Confusion is fine, but it needs to be specific confusion.” Moisés

“Our brains are meaning-making machines.” Moisés

“It is important to have multiple balls in the air, but eventually they need to be caught. They CANNOT fall.” Moisés

“Never let the audiences get ahead of you.” Moisés

“Think of the theatrical event as something you can discover for the first time.” Moisés

“You must keep the theatrical and dramatic tension by creating the contrast between image and text.” Moisés

An image is static. It doesn’t move forward. A moment has a clear beginning, middle, and end.
“Moisés

*Moises intricately went through the sequences we had created and explained how to keep the tension.

Throughlines- the timelines being told.. Throughlines dictate what story we are telling.

“Don’t explain what you are about to see. That’s indicating. That’s deadly.” Moisés

“The tool of tension is paramount.” Moisés

“Labels in the theatre is a capitalist form. We are not in the business of making money. We are in the business of making art.” Moisés

“Moment Work requires a vast amount of generosity.” Moisés

“ Sometimes not knowing during the process is uncomfortable. Live in that place of discomfort. In discomfort lies great truth.” Moisés

“This work is very difficult for the young generation, who are constantly living in this time of NOW.” Moisés

“The work filters itself.” Barbara

SIDE NOTE: Moisés gave us the manuscript of the first 4 chapters of the Moment Work book he is currently writing. We spent an hour and a half of the last day giving him feedback. I was taking notes for him, and this is what he wanted to add from our notes:

- 4 D's: Describe, Define, Demonstrate, Deconstruct
- Creating Vs. Editing
- Description of Dramatic Tension and Theatrical Tension
- Joe X Test
- Importance of FUEL
- Addition of Visuals for the juxtaposition of content and form
- Narrative Flexibility/ plasticity in the elements
- Further discussion of thinking like an artist. Removal of hierarchy in order for all to become facile. Giving everyone a different agency.

Figure 7: Arizona State University Lab Participants and Master Teachers: End of Day 7.



From Back Row to Front Row- Starting on left: Mina Samuels, Rachel Bowditch, Lance Ghavari, Colton Robertson, Wesley Broulik, Tara Weintraub, Gavin Hawk, Keith Huff, Etta Pisano, Johnny Saldaña, Barbara Pitts McAdams, Moisés Kaufman, Joya Scott, Kirt Shineman

Chapter 3: We Begin: Creating the Ensemble

THEA 491: DEvised THEATRE: CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

DAY ONE- Friday 1/15/15

I was extraordinarily excited to begin our class this afternoon. Walking in, I was greeted by both familiar and unfamiliar faces, some nervous but all smiling. Everyone was seated in a chair on the side of B-72 when the clock struck one p.m. I proceeded to call the group into a seated circle in the middle of the floor. I gave a brief introduction of myself and the journey we were all about to embark on as a group. I let them know how truly thankful I am to go through this experience with this specific group of artists, and how lovely it is to have an ensemble composed of actors, dancers, a stage manager, a sculptor, and an art educator.

I asked them to think about their personal definition of collaboration and to think back to one specific instance of collaboration that, for some reason or another, has stuck with them. They went around the circle, stating their names, year, area, definition of collaboration, and personal experience asked about earlier. I finished, not providing my definition, in order to not sway them in their future exploration of the term. One extremely interesting viewpoint was from senior sculpture student. She explained that in her area, collaboration is seen as a negative thing amongst her peers. They absolutely hate group projects, and she sometimes feels the professors frown upon working as a team. Because of that, her past four years have, unfortunately, put a sour taste on the word. She wanted to take this class to fall in love with group work again. She has a background in contact improvisation. We went over the syllabus in depth, being sure to

answer any questions that may have risen from possibly new terminology. I also let them know that the purpose of this class was not to become a master of devised theatre and to know everything there is to know about Moment Work, but to collaborate with different artists and create something they would not have been able to without one another. Because of that, the scheduled course calendar will most likely change with the needs of the ensemble, so to stay flexible.

We got on our feet and they began exploring some group ensemble exercises, such as Run together, Stop together, 12 Step Circle, and Point, Yes. This began rocky, with many students nervous to play. As they continued, they loosened up a bit and slowly improved. We took a few moments to state observations about the exercises and their experience. I had them begin to remove judgment from their responses, such as good/bad, like/didn't like.

The last game, Point, Yes, involves asking another member for permission to take their spot by pointing at them and the other saying 'Yes'. That person, then asks another member of the circle for permission to take their spot by pointing, and so on. I wanted to continue the idea of saying yes in a collaborative process, so we played Yes, And as a group. They had to create a solid story with a beginning, middle and end, with it coming to a close after the second round. I then split them into smaller groups and had them play Yes, And Adventure. During this version, they both create and take part in their story simultaneously. They use the space to create their environment and to physicalize the happenings of the story as they come to fruition. I was sure to put different types of artists in each group. Each group was having fun, playing, and laughing. They were bonding. At the end of their adventures, they worked as a group to vocally share their adventure with the rest of the class. We had a discussion of why they think I asked them to

physicalize the story this time. All students responded with strong reasons, such as: to get out of our heads, to play and get to know one another, to activate our bodies to gain new ideas, to establish a sense of play and wonder, to work as a small unit. After the discussion, we had a ten-minute break.

When we returned from our break, I wanted to spend some time creating a group contract. I think it is extremely important for the students to take ownership of the class and of their work. Together, they created a contract of promises to the ensemble. Here is what they decided upon:

Contract- Promises to the ensemble- made by the students- facilitated by Instructor

1. Maintain a safe physical and emotional space to allow play and vulnerability.
2. Judgment-Free zone
3. Stay committed to the ensemble and goals of the class
4. Listen to and support each member's ideas.
5. Allow everyone's voice to be heard.
6. Stay focused and engaged in the present.
7. Fail Gloriously.
8. Be willing to try again.
9. Be willing to try new things.
10. Respect the space.
11. Respect the instructor.
12. Respect each member's choices, bodies, views, and time.
13. Come to class open and ready to work.
14. What happens in class, stays in class.
15. Allow trust to build and expand between the ensemble.
16. Contribute to the ensemble.
17. Don't be afraid to ask/ provide a forewarning, if approaching a delicate topic.
18. Push yourself.
19. Allow a Focused Play to exist.

This will be typed up and signed by the members of the class next Friday, put on blackboard, and handed out to each student to keep.

After agreeing on the terms of the contract, we moved on to working with dowels in two groups. One group worked, while the other group observed. Workers would hold the thin dowels against their pointer fingers, connecting to the people next to them. They were then asked to explore and work as a unit to move around the space, playing with levels and challenging themselves. The observers would say: “Suspend” when they were “struck by something” (Tectonic Theatre Project terminology). The workers would pause in whatever position they happened to be in and the observers would move around the space and find the elements that made this particular suspension striking. They could walk through the workers or around the workers. When the observers had finished exploring the suspension, the workers would begin to move again. When a rod first fell in the exercise, they all reacted as if they lost, or failed. We paused and I made note that yes, the rod fell. That is a fact. I am removing it. That is a fact. It is neither good, nor bad. It is a change and the group will shift with that change. Sometimes, what others call mistakes, are gifts in the arts. Because of these unexpected moments, something new and brilliant can be found. From that point on, when a dowel would fall, an observer would quietly pick it up and continue their observation. We switched groups several times and each time, students began to take more risks and explore. We ended with group observations, using Tectonic’s vocabulary of “What struck me”.

We moved on to play a game called, 4 Hands and 4 Feet, separated into two groups. They were asked to move one person of their group across the floor without letting them touch the ground. At any given point, only 4 hands and 4 feet could be touching the ground. They did this twice, switching up groups and exploring new ways to solve the problem. When one group finished, the other stood watching and supporting their choices.

Perfect Circle was the exercise explored in class. The ensemble worked together to form a perfect circle. Once it's formed, they had to break away, run touch the wall, and then come back to form the perfect circle again. They would adjust and go again, until a perfect circle was made three times without needing adjustment. We then immediately repeated the three earlier exercises of Run Together/ Stop Together, 12 Steps, and Yes, point. There was a very significant change in the pacing and concentration during the exercises, as well as much greater ability to work as a team.

We ended the day with observations. Everyone stated how excited they were to see where this class would take them. They were shocked at the growth and connection they experienced in three hours together. Our dancers made note of how liberating of an environment this was. In their world, they strive for perfection in every class. There is always a right and wrong. Mikayla stepped forward and thanked the group for coming in open and vulnerable. One of the dance students, Sierra, was taken aback from Mikayla's statement and responded by saying that she very rarely gets thanked by peers. They are expected to thank the musicians and their instructor and that is it. Mikayla and Andrew chimed in by saying that the thank you is an acknowledgment of going through an event, or a process together. A verbal note that the experience would not have been the same without them.

Before next class, they will vlog for two to four minutes about the class and reflect. This group got much further than expected. We may be able to begin the basics of Moment Work during the second half of our second class! Looking forward to next week's work.

Chapter 4: Just a Moment: Learning About Moment Work

THEA 491: DEVISED THEATRE: CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

DAY TWO- Friday 1/23/15

At the beginning of class today, we sat down and reviewed what we had done and learned during our first class. The students shared some of their personal reflections that they had mentioned in their vlogs the previous week. One of the most striking reflections was from a visual artist, Greer. She noted that she is already seeing a difference in how she views her own art and questioning different ways of approaching it. One of the dancers, Tarik, said that he had been so focused on what collaboration means in the dance world this week, that he believes his definition changed and would share his new one with us next week when he further develops it. I let them know that I was quite impressed with how quickly they began to work together and trust each other last week and how excited I am to move forward.

We warmed up with the same exercises from our previous week, so they can see their own growth. In each exercise, the students improved, especially Point and Yes. It moved like water, constantly flowing at a steady fast pace. They worked much faster and following the exercise, the students stated that it was much easier to work faster. We added an exercise called the Clap Wave this week, to which the students, as a whole, had a very strong reaction. As I side-coached “eye contact” and “part your lips and breathe”, the wave got faster and more fluid. When I ended

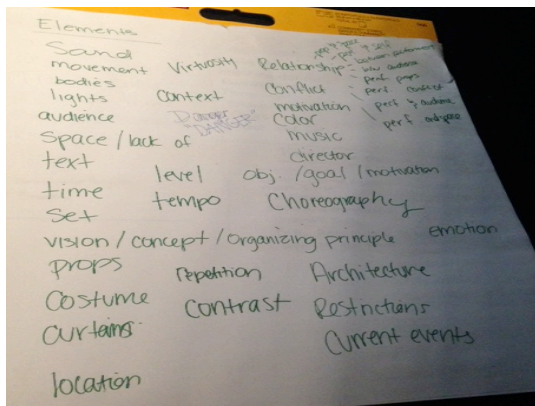
the exercise, they all had a loud verbal reaction of excitement. I asked why they had that reaction and what was so striking about it. After a few “It was really fast!” “It just worked!”, Mikayla said the intensity of the increase in sound and tempo really added excitement. I let them know that the two elements, sound and tempo, created tension, and to keep that in their heads as we move forward!

We then did an exercise that I had learned (and loved) in Aaron Anderson’s mask class, which I named Face Front. The “rules” of the exercise state the one person, and no more than one person, needs to be facing front at all times. The participants should work together to succeed. After the first four students did part one of the exercise, we had a small discussion about the experience. They were telling me that they wound up listening to each other’s footsteps and using their peripheral vision as a key to turning around. I then told them to take off their shoes (to create less sound when turning), spread out a bit, and close their eyes. I side coached, reminding them to breathe and told them to own their impulses. If they feel the impulse to turn...turn. The observers were in awe of what happened while the participant’s eyes were closed. They, for the most part, became much more attentive and connected to one another. Beautiful patterns emerged and the observers had physical and vocal reactions. During our second conversation, we talked about the power of impulse in a group. Did they always “follow the rules” of the exercise? No. Does it matter? No. There was no right or wrong. The rules changed with their impulses. They were still working together as an ensemble and created something intriguing for the viewers. The rules provide a starting point- a goal, but “accidents” are sometimes the most beautiful gift of innovation. After both groups both participated and observed, we took a ten-minute break before moving onto our Introduction to Moment Work!

I gave an introduction to Moisés Kaufman and Tectonic Theatre Project and explained how Moment Work came to be. We discussed the generic theatrical model in depth. I wanted to make sure that the non-theatre students were able to understand the concepts that were being discussed. Many of these non-majors were shocked to see how little time certain areas of performance were given in the rehearsal process. We then moved on and I explained Tectonic's Moment Work Model of creating theatre. There were several ooh's and ahhh's. Andrew responded with "This makes so much more sense!" This sparked a conversation and I agreed that yes, it is a much more creative and open way of making performance but it does take a very specific kind of person to work this way. This process takes a very long time. This is not a company that pushes out four productions a season. They consider themselves a laboratory and can spend years working on four projects simultaneously.

We then created a list of elements found in performance as a group.

Figure 8: Class List of Elements.



We discussed the use of the word Facile at Tectonic and how everyone involved leaves their title at the door and is then considered a performance writer, able to create with all elements.

This is what they will be doing. When they walk into class, they are now performance writers, learning to become facile in all elements of performance.

It was now time to create Moments! They were given the basic and vague structure of stating “I begin” do something and say “I end”. I did coach them to discover something in the moment and not focus on performing. Not surprisingly, the actors “performed” and the others discovered. I had to side coach on the second rounds, stressing the idea of simple action. On our third round, I added the idea of specificity of location. I noted that they can begin and end anywhere in the space and at any time. The students adapted and made more specific choices.

During this round, I began to set the Tectonic critique structure in place. We talked about the word Tectonic and what it made them think of. They said “Tectonic plates!” I added that it was the concept of structure, which is how they approach creating work. After each moment, they did a structural analysis of what they saw, taking apart what they physically saw, piece by piece, without forcing personal viewpoint on to it. Then I asked them what struck them about what they saw. They responded with “I was struck by....” And the final part of Tectonic’s critiques, what theatrical questions arose? I stressed that these questions were not to be answered, but to live in the space. I continually side coached the students, being sure they are being specific in their analysis and removing view point and judgmental wording, asking them to restate their analysis when necessary.

I asked them to walk around the room and explore. Discover the textures and sounds of the space. What have you not noticed before about the architecture of the room. I allowed them to discover for about five minutes and then asked them to share a moment with the group about the architecture of the space .I let them know that, as observers, we were mobile and could move to

any area of the room to watch. The dancers automatically found the rhythm and levels in the space and were discovering moments dealing with level. The actors seemed to focus on sounds of the space, while the visual artists naturally focused on the shapes and dimensions of the space. When the moments were shared, there was a constant response of “ I never thought of looking at that!” Each different type of artist had a very different focus when doing their structural analysis, which was fascinating to listen to. The dancers were so aware and specific about each minute movement of the body, while the actors focused on facial movements and were more general when discussing movement of the body. We also discussed how even though I had given the instruction of creating a moment just dealing with the element of architecture, naturally, sound, tempo, rhythm, body...all of these other elements had worked their way into the moments and how this should happen organically.

We had a group discussion about what the group collectively responded to in each moment and why we responded that way. To stress the importance of structural analysis, I then asked a student to recreate another student’s moment. The student who originally created the moment seemed upset. This sparked a conversation about ownership of moments. What is created in the room belongs to the room. Other people may need to be a part of specific moments in order to tell the story in the most poetic way. Other times, you need to be able to let a moment go all together. I told them a story that Barbara Pitts and Moisés Kaufman had told me over the winter about the making of *The Laramie Project*. Barbara had been interviewing a woman in Laramie for multiple years and creating moments around her experience for quite a while. Moisés wound up cutting the character out of the production because her story wasn’t moving the piece forward. When he asked her if she was okay, Barbara responded, crying, I will be.

Tarik had asked why they were not allowed to use text in their moments until the end. To answer his question, I asked everyone to think of a specific moment of performance they had witnessed that struck them and to describe it to us. Every single person's response was a visual moment. I let that be known to the group and told them I wanted them to push themselves to use all of the other elements available to them. And later, when text is necessary, it will be used. Tectonic realized how much stress is put on verbal expression when what audiences remember are visual moments of expression. I don't want them to rely on text to tell a story when they have the ability to create innovative moments that will impress their viewers, such as those they had just described have done for them. They need to find the poetic potential and narrative potential of the other elements before adding text.

The group was given a homework assignment to create a moment dealing with virtuosity using two of the elements listed on the board.

Chapter 5: Building the Foundation: Exploring Architecture

THEA 491: DEvised THEATRE: CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

DAY THREE- Friday 1/30/2015

Today's class was held in a new space due to the freshman auditions taking place in the basement of the Performing Arts Center. For the next few classes, we will be in Newdick Theatre, which I am actually really excited about. After beginning our exploration of architecture last week, we talked about the poetic potential and narrative potential that B72 elementally provides for us. Newdick Theatre is a completely unusual space so I was excited to allow the students to begin exploring the architecture of the room. Last week, we spent a lot of time deconstructing each moment in order to fully grasp the concept and necessity of structural analysis but this class, I wanted them to experience discovery.

Tectonic Theatre Project's approach to discovery in a laboratory setting strictly limits the amount of talking and time spent when discovering and creating a moment. After allowing them to Mill and Seethe through the space, I gave them three minutes to run around and discover the properties of the room. They were to create two small moments, sharing the poetic potential of this particular architecture. The fast-paced nature of the exercise took many of the visual arts students out of their heads and forced them to stay in the moment. The results were wonderful. As we ran through every inch of Newdick, discovering the nuances and even, beauty that the

architecture provided, the ensemble's reactions were in unison. Many "ooohs" and "ahhhs" and "I had no idea that was there!" We discussed the reactions of the group while watching specific moments. Why did we laugh when seeing Natasha's legs appear from the pit-like opening near the stage door? What made us gasp when Greer made every seat in a full row of the house bounce? Why are these discoveries so important in creating performance? These were questions that we contemplated and should be answered in this week's vlog postings.

Following our break, we moved onto creating moments with props. We lined up the props that everyone had brought with them and the students were to choose a prop that they did not bring in. I gave them three minutes to discover the properties of their object and how it lives in the space. I gave them the direction to find non-normative uses for their prop and create three separate moments that share their discoveries. Some students were more successful than others. We had a very important discussion after this first round about why this seemed to be the case. Why did certain objects hold more narrative potential than others? Certain objects are unyielding and less prone to tell multiple stories. One example was a wooden duck. When Andrew was trying to find the narrative potential of the wooden duck, he seemed stressed and stuck. I found it ironic that the wooden duck was brought into the room in the first place. While in the Arizona workshop, someone had brought in a yellow rubber duck as their prop, and the same problem occurred. Though it was unyielding, it still wound up in over half of the moments, as an inside joke of the group. If someone outside of the workshop had come watch the moments, the duck would be completely out of place, and we knew that, but as professionals, we were just adding a bit of comic relief to the process. We went through the other props and talked about why certain props were unyielding and less helpful than others.

This particular day of exploration held many vital lessons and the students created some wonderful moments, but their Virtuosity moments that they created for homework stand as stunning examples of ensemble and the power of cross-disciplinary arts classes thus far. The assignment asked each student to create a moment about virtuosity using two of the elements on our list. I was vague in the description and lack of definition. I wanted to give them as few regulations as possible, allowing them to create based on what was learned thus far, without fear of “doing it wrong”, especially for the visual arts students who are not as experienced in “performing” for others.

Six out of the nine students in the class used other people as part of their moment. The students were not asked to be a part of other moments but it just organically happened and the result was extremely poetic and very touching, one example being our sculptor, Natasha’s moment. She asked the group to line up against the wall stage right. She stated, “I begin” and walked up to the person farthest upstage, put their arm over her shoulder and allowing him to release all of his weight onto her, she started to drag him to a specific point on the other side of the stage and place him in a particular position. She went down the line on a steady rhythm, lifting each member of the ensemble in a way she felt they were comfortable with and transporting them to a new position. As she moved from one person to the next, each student slowly began to release their body to her and trust each other completely. By the time she arrived at the eighth and final person, she approached Andrew, who had already flung his arms open in acceptance, ready and willing to give himself over to what she had created. The rhythm of her movement, the gentle nature of how she handled her classmates, and her bright smile never faded in this fifteen minute moment, done in complete silence. It was extremely moving to witness. It

was already telling a very powerful story, and the narrative and poetic potential of the moment was clear. Our discussion of structural analysis, what struck the ensemble, and what theatrical questions arose was inspiring. She had chosen to create a moment around sculpture, using the elements of Body and Spatial Relationship. Naturally, Weight, Shape and Rhythm became a part of the moment as well. I was in awe of each student's willingness to give over and say yes to each other, after only three classes together. There has been tremendous growth in the 9 hours spent together thus far. The strengths of each artist shine so brightly in this course and every student has mentioned multiple times in class and in their vlogs that they are so creatively inspired by the concepts and ideas of each ensemble member. The segregation of the various arts disciplines is such a disservice to academia and is preventing the ability to create fresh and innovative artists. This ensemble is proof of that.

Chapter 6: A Light in the Dark: Exploring Light

THEA 491: DEvised THEATRE: CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

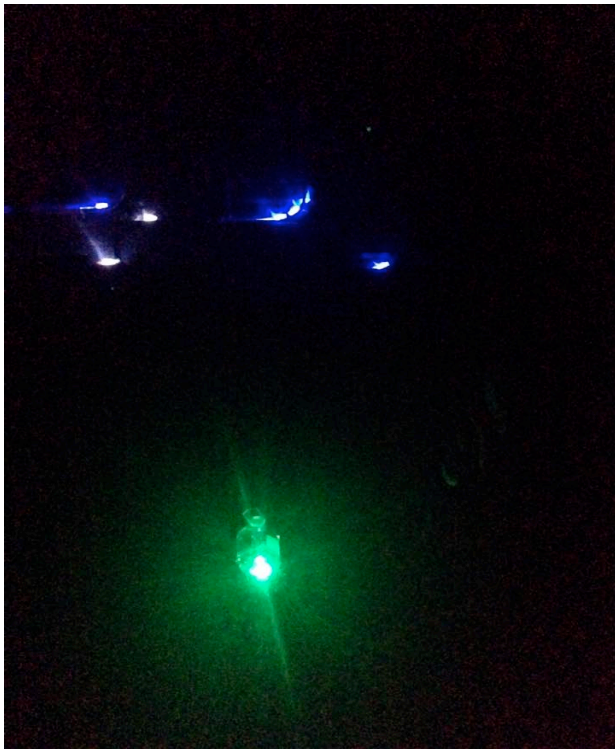
DAY FOUR- Friday 2/6/2015

Following today's warm up, which, by the way, was incredibly in sync, we let the two students share their virtuosity moments that hadn't shared during the previous class. Both of the moments demonstrated the students' strengths, or what they had considered their strengths. After a structural analysis and theatrical questioning of the two moments, we began to discuss the power of the element of light. I explained that in my experience, light has the unique potential to become an extremely poetic and powerful narrative force for both an audience as well as the artist.

I asked the students to line up their lighting objects on the stage. We had a few different sized flashlights, a large string of orange holiday lights, glow sticks, and glow in the dark stars. I decided to bring in a few of my own lighting objects for the students to explore and discover with. This included green, red, white, and blue finger lights, and magnetic emergency flashlight complete with white light, and a red flashing light. I then proceeded to allow the students to take a lighting object that they themselves did not bring in and explore how the light affects this particular environment. I gave them ten minutes to explore the architecture of the space and share a lighting moment based off of what they had found. There were some gorgeous images

created in this group of moments. One that struck me was Natasha, the sculptor's moment. She had lined up blue and white finger lights along the black piping on the walls of the stage, creating a very striking and fluid image. The lights seemed to flow downward and lead to a large container of water below. Under the water container, she placed a green finger light, which created an image of a green glowing lantern. I was impressed of the realization that the artist did not have to be present in the moment for it to be powerful. I provided a picture below, though the image does not do it justice:

Figure 9: Lighting Moment.



The students were then allowed to work in groups of three or four to create a moment using light and one other element. This was really the first time they were truly working together beyond twos to create a single moment. I gave them fifteen minutes to explore and share a moment. I

witnessed certain groups having difficulties with leadership and listening. I slowly made my way to each group and quietly side-coached, attempting to allow the groups to remain in control of the work, but giving them the guidance and positive reinforcement they needed to feel successful.

Two of the moments were shockingly provocative, using the elements of body and light. These groups worked together extremely well once they were given a bit of direction. For the one group of four, this was not the case, and the work they shared was proof of the dissonance of that particular group. Two of the four stepped up to lead the group and were unwilling to let go of their own ideas or say yes to any other ensemble member. What occurred was two moments forced together with no relationship to the elements or to each other. I am actually very glad that this happened as early in the process as it did. During the workshops, this did not come into play until text was brought into the picture at the very end of level one. We were now given the opportunity to discuss the extremely important concepts of Generosity and Ownership- two key principles of Tectonic Theatre Project's approach to devising. Generosity is key in an ensemble-based creation process. You must know how to take a step back and say yes. You must give everyone the opportunity to share his or her ideas. Saying yes allows you to build concepts as a team and create extraordinary art. As an ensemble, the moments created belong to the ensemble, not to specific individuals. You cannot allow yourself to get overly attached to your own ideas. They may be used or they may not be used. They may be used but you may be removed as the artist in the moment. They may be in rehearsal for weeks or months, and then cut by the director. The Ensemble has Ownership, not the individual. As an extremely important exercise, for homework, students were put into groups of two and were to recreate a previous moment of their

choosing. They must create the “moment before” or the pre-beat to that moment and then go directly into the moment they chose. The one rule being that they could not have been a part of the moment’s original creation. This was, by far, the highlight of today’s lesson and will make the rest of the exploration during this course run more smoothly.

Chapter 7: Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan Day One -1/15/15

‘The compositional process in theatre has parallels with all artistic endeavour. One of the things we can do is suggest thinking differently about it. For example, that there are things to be learned not only from writers, but also painters, sculptors, architects, musicians, composers and choreographers when beginning to consider how you might encourage your students to approach creating an original piece of work.’ Simon McBurney

Introduction

Collaboration- definition and moment that has stayed with you

Syllabus

Games

ENSEMBLE Exercises

1. Run together, Stop Together
2. 12 steps circles
3. Point and Yes

OBSERVATIONS

Yes, And- Large group

Yes, And- Groups of 3 (physically active)- what collaborative moment struck you?

RETELLINGS- OBSERVATIONS

10-MINUTE BREAK

Contract- Promises to the ensemble- made by the students- facilitated by Instructor

20. Maintain a safe physical and emotional space to allow play and vulnerability.
21. Judgment-Free zone
22. Stay committed to the ensemble and goals of the class

23. Listen to and support each member's ideas.
24. Allow everyone's voice to be heard.
25. Stay focused and engaged in the present.
26. Fail Gloriously.
27. Be willing to try again.
28. Be willing to try new things.
29. Respect the space.
30. Respect the instructor.
31. Respects each member's choices, bodies, views, and time.
32. Come to class open and ready to work.
33. What happens in class, stays in class.
34. Allow trust to build and expand between the ensemble.
35. Contribute to the ensemble.
36. Don't be afraid to ask/ provide a forewarning, if approaching a delicate topic.
37. Push yourself.
38. Allow a Focused Play to exist.

WORD OF CAUTION/ SAFE WORD: Paleo

Began to introduce Tectonic Vocabulary into feedback: "What struck you"

DOWELS –Small groups

Say: Suspend when you are struck by something. Everyone watching the exercise circles the working group, finding intriguing angles- walk through the paused group

Switched groups several times. Each time, they took greater risks.

OBSERVATIONS

4 HANDS AND 4 FEET- separated into two groups. They were asked to move one person of their group across the floor without letting them touch the ground. At any given point, only 4 hands and 4 feet could be touching the ground. They did this twice, switching up groups and exploring new ways to solve the problem.

- **Perfect Circle:** Ensemble worked together to form a perfect circle. Once it's formed, they must break away, run touch the wall, and then come back to form the perfect circle again. They would adjust and go again. Until a perfect circle was made three times without needing to adjust.

We then immediately repeated the three earlier exercises of Run Together/ Stop Together, 12 Steps, and Yes Point. There was a very significant change in the pacing and concentration during the exercises, as well as much greater ability to work as a team.

OBSERVATIONS

End of day 1.

Lesson Plan Day 2 -1/23/2015

REVIEW OF DAY ONE

Ensemble- definition and moment that has stuck with you

Warm ups- run/stop together, point and yes, 12 steps- out loud, under breath, no voice

- FACE FRONT

Only one person facing front at a time- eyes open

Only one person facing front at a time- eyes closed

- OBSTACLE COURSE

10-MINUTE BREAK

INTRO TO MOMENT WORK

Founded in 1991, Moisés Kaufman's Tectonic Theater Project has created a wholly unique methodology for developing, analyzing, and re-imagining theater called Moment Work.

Moment Work has been used to create such theater pieces as: *The Laramie Project*, *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, *33 Variations*

INTRODUCTION OF THEATRICAL MODELS

- The concept is grounded in the idea of bringing everyone into the room right from the beginning.
- Anybody can do any of these jobs. Until the play is created, take away roles and hierarchy. When everyone is in a set role- the work becomes predictable. When that is taken away, you create imbalance and spontaneity.
- All elements are equally important to creating art.
- All elements have narrative potential and poetic potential

MOMENT: Unit of theatrical time

Moment Work encourages participants to actively engage with the elements of the stage, using collaboration

-Make a list of Elements on the board

Exercise 1: Create a moment

ROUND 1: Students were asked to get up, say “I Begin”, do something to create a moment of theatrical time, say “I end”, and sit down.

OBSERVATIONS: STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS: What did you physically see? What did the person do? Break it down, piece by piece. STRUCK: What struck you? QUESTIONS: What theatrical questions arose?

ROUND 2: Do the same thing, but this time at specificity to location (Where in the room our moment takes place) and the point of “beginning” and “ending”

Everyone walked around the room, explore every inch and cranny of the space, what are the textures, what are the sounds of the space, are there holes, what haven’t you noticed before?

ROUND 3: This time, make the moment about the architecture of the room

- We then had a group discussion about the moments where the group collectively had a response to a moment. What did they do? Why did we respond? Structural analysis, What struck you, Theatrical questions.

Homework: Moment of Virtuosity using 2 elements listed on our sheet
End Day 2

Lesson Plan Day 3- 1/30/2015

REVIEW OF DAY TWO

Warm ups- Jack and Jill, run/stop together, point and yes, 12 steps- out loud, under breath, no voice

Clap Wave: The goal of this exercise is to send a continuous clap wave around the circle. The first person turns to the actor on their right, makes eye contact and tries to clap in unison with that person. The second person turns to the actor on their right, makes eye contact and tries to clap in unison with that person. Everyone has to be ready to make eye contact, and clap, keeping the rhythm of the clap going. How quickly can the group send the wave around the circle?

MOMENT WORK- Technique for writing performance/ becoming FACILE (A word used throughout the workshop)

MOMENT WORK: Analyzing theatre- the mechanics of each element- Being in dialogue with the elements- being the listener and the observer.

MOMENT: Unit of theatrical time

Used to make work; a directing tool; to workshop a playwright; to explore and think theatrically

Moment Work is about exploring the relationship between

INTRODUCTION OF CONTENT AND FORM

When Tectonic does a Moment Work Lab, they often call it “Is there a play here?” workshop.

Sharing of Virtuosity moments- homework assignment

Structural Analysis, What Struck You, What Theatrical Questions Arose?

Named each of the moments- Discussion of the importance of analytical names.

Played with sequencing or layering two moments in different ways- as a preview for where we will be going.

REVIEW- Discover a moment about architecture – 1 minute to prepare- share (In a new space!)

What does this space already elementally provide us with?

ELEMENT- Props

ROUND 1: Students asked to focus on a prop. (One they did not bring in with them) How could we use it- its elements and properties

- We had a discussion of our realizations and discoveries of the objects properties.

“Moment work is about taking away normative uses and finding something new”

ROUND 2:

Students focus on props and how they interact with the architecture. One minute to prepare- Share

- We had a discussion of our realizations and discoveries of the objects properties.

ROUND 3: The ensemble focused on a single prop (an umbrella) and how it interacts with the environment. Second person would begin in the position of the first person’s final movement.

Make a discovery from that position, and continue the moment. And so on.

- We had a discussion of our realizations and discoveries of the objects properties.

ROUND 4:

The ensemble focused on a single prop (rubber work out band) and how it interacts with the environment. Second person would begin in the position of the first person’s final movement.

Make a discovery from that position, and continue the moment. And so on.

- We had a discussion of our realizations and discoveries of the objects properties.
- Discussion of the group's responses- how did we respond? What did we respond to?
Why did we respond the way we did?
- Discussion of props brought in. Which had narrative potential? Which had poetic potential? Were any too rigid/ limited ability to change. (wooden duck)

End of Day 3.

Lesson Plan Day 4 – 2/6/2015
REVIEW OF DAY Three

Warm ups- Jack and Jill, run/stop together, point and yes, 12 steps- out loud, under breath, no voice

Remainder of Virtuosity Moments- Sharing

EXERCISE 1: Two Person Moments

Round 1: We were asked to focus on both architecture and repetition. We needed to acknowledge the others' presence – this may or may not effect the action of the moment. One person began and the other began when they felt the impulse. It ended the same way.

- We discussed both being in the two person moments and watching the two person moments.
- Were the elements talking to each other or were the actors talking to each other. That is the key to moment work - The ELEMENTS should talk to each other. That is the difference between and scene and a moment.

ROUND 2: This time, we were asked to focus on props and repetition.

- Discussion of when the elements were interacting and when the actors seemed to comment.

EXERCISE 3: Creating a Moment by Exploring Singular Elements

ROUND 1: Light

- Students were put into groups of two and were asked to use light sources to create a moment. The room was completely dark. They were given 10 minutes to discover

and present. Light sources abounded- lamps, glow sticks, flashlights, flashing wands, everything and anything you can think of.

- We then named each moment.

ROUND 2: Light

- Students were put into groups of three and were asked to use light sources to create a moment. The room was completely dark. They were given 10 minutes to discover and present.
- We then named each moment.

Round 3: Light and other Element

- Students were put into groups of three and were asked to use light sources and props to create a moment. The room was completely dark. They were given 10 minutes to discover and present.
- We then named each moment

Homework: prepare “Moment Before” moment with your partner for a moment that you did not previously create.

End of Day 4

Lesson Plan Day 5 – 2/13/2015

REVIEW OF DAY Four

Warm ups- Jack and Jill, run/stop together, point and yes, 12 steps- outloud, under breath, no voice

EXERCISE 1: COSTUME

Round 1: Create moment with Costume and Architecture

- Given 3 minutes to discover and present.

-

Round 1: Costume and Sound

- Groups of two were asked to use costumes and sounds to create a moment. We were given 10 minutes to discover and present.
- We then named each moment

Round 2: Costume and Light

- Groups of two were asked to use costumes and sounds to create a moment. We were given 10 minutes to discover and present.
- We then named each moment

EXERCISE 4: The Moment Before

- Asked to revisit a past moment, either light or costume or prop, and create the moment prior to that moment. We would connect the moment before to the original moment (taking in the past critique) – Very early stages of **sequencing**. (5 minutes)
- Critique of moments.
- EXERCISE If time: Layering/ Sequencing with Moments thus far

- **Layering: Sticking one moment on top of another moment. Putting two moments together, having them organically adjust to each other, creating a singular new moment.**
- Keeping the same groups, we chose two random moments from the past two days to layer together. They did not have to be our moments. It could be someone else's. We were given 5 minutes to do this

Sequence Strands of moments together just explored. Re-order sequences.

End of Day 5

Lesson Plan Day 6- 2/20/2015

Review Day 5

LET THEM CHOOSE WARM UP:

Warm ups- Jack and Jill, run/stop together, point and yes, 12 steps- out loud, under breath, no voice

Added point yes with gibberish, mirror- partner, small groups, full ensemble, sound and movement games

EXERCISE 1: The Moment Before

- Asked to revisit a past moment, either light or costume or prop, and create the moment prior to that moment. They will connect the moment before to the original moment (taking in the past critique) – Very early stages of **sequencing**. (5 minutes)
- Critique of moments.

EXERCISE 2 Layering with Moments thus far

- **Layering: Sticking one moment on top of another moment. Putting two moments together, having them organically adjust to each other, creating a singular new moment.**
- Keeping the same groups, we chose two random moments from the past two days to layer together. They did not have to be our moments. It could be someone else's. We were given 5 minutes to do this

EXERCISE 3: Sequencing

- Strands of moments together just explored. Number, do in different orders.

EXERCISE 4: Layer with text

- Observe contextual changes

EXCERSIDE 5: Layer with sound

- Observe contextual changes

DISCUSSION of topic to pursue going forward

Homework: Find an article, story, interview centered on that topic. Bring in 2 copies of that piece of information.

End of Day 6

Chapter 8: Student Vlog Responses

VLOG Quotes from Students

Week One

- “My definition is collaboration is individuals approaching a blank space as a canvas to join a divine marriage of ideas and other specific things.” Mikayla (Acting)
- “I don’t know what we are doing or where we are going yet. And it is scary but exciting.” Tarik (Dance)
- “I was a little nervous being the only freshman and not knowing anyone. I was afraid of being an outlier. That wasn’t the case at all. Everyone was so welcoming and willing to work together. I was really struck by how open everyone was right away. I don’t know any other group willing to roll on top of each other on the first day of class with strangers. That was amazing.” Greer (Art Education)
- “I had such a great time today in class. It was a nice contrast to my department. Being in a class with a sense of community and “Yes, And”, which is really missing in the Visual Arts building. There is a lot more judgment over there and this judgment-free zone is really nice. I felt very welcome. You can tell the difference between the majors, which is cool. There was a distinct difference between saying “Yes, And” and letting “Yes, And” live in your body and be who you are. And these people have it in

their bodies. I am excited not only to see how this transfers to other artistic mediums but letting it be its own theatrical experience, and letting that influence my art.” Natasha (Sculpture)

- “The ensemble exercises from class were difficult today but we seemed to improve as the class went on. Trying to channel into the groups energy and realizing that none of the exercises were capable of being executed singlehandedly. It required everyone to truly listen with their bodies and trust each other.” Sierra (Dance)
- “I am excited to tap into my creativity again, which I really miss. I love the idea of this diverse group learning from each other because we all bring something different to the table.” Rachel (Stage Management)
- “My definition of ensemble was group-making, which is vague but I am sure it will become more specific with time. I am excited to see how this class is going to assist in the group connecting on a higher level.” Andrew (Acting)

Week Two

- “ I saw the parallels of the Tectonic Theatre Project model of theatre in our classwork. As we become more of an ensemble, we are already syncing up in our exercises. The class has been pushing me out of my comfort zone. I don’t feel spontaneous and I have to face those insecurities in class. But it’s been great. I am a very visual and hands on learner so this type of class has been perfect for me. “
Rachel (Stage Management)
- “ We have all of these different majors and ideas so to make art is going to be awesome. I already feel a difference in my own art. Being able to look at art from a physical standpoint instead of a visual standpoint, I ALREADY feel that it will

continue to make a difference as the class progresses. Problem solving through the physical work has given me another outlet to look at my own assignments. Though I will still do them in a visual way, it will give me a different perspective to try and operate from the results from there.” Greer (Art Education)

- “Structural Analysis is actually similar to how we are trained to question in dance, but maybe more intensive.” Tarik (Dance)
- “I really enjoy how we all work so differently but work so well together at the same time. The idea of three different artists having three different perspectives and then coming together to create something...I am so excited to get to that. I am so excited!” Rachel (Stage Management)
- “ I was looking back at our list of elements and there are so many that I do not think about on a daily basis in dance. First, I was thinking that it was more oriented toward theatre. But then looking at it again after class, I started to realize that these elements are present in dance but its just not talked about. It really made me think. “ Sierra (Dance)

Week Three

- “This is a really important class to me, and all contemporary artists. My department keeps talking around the idea that there aren't firm boundaries between art practices anymore - we create sculpture out of sound, movement, and video and much as we do plaster, glass, and wood. Businesses have started creating models that rely less on assembly line and more on a concerted effort of equals, brainstorming and creating together. Collaboration is such a big word. It only makes sense to redefine "theater" to match that mindset. The individual triumphs over the collective, the strengths of each of us shape the final product/work/idea/form. So

rather than getting lost in "the sculpture fine art world" I am learning to branch out from the idea of "sculpture" and incorporate other interests. This class is pushing me to explore those things instead of define myself by my major. When I walk in I know that I'm not expected to "act like a visual artist" and that's a good feeling. "
Natasha (Sculpture)

- "I am inspired by the idea of having the ability to use the audience as part of a Moment. I think it gives a completely new concept of what I had considered to be live performance. " Tarik (Dance)
- "This class provides a didactic learning experience. When we are stuck within our own major, we limit our own resources and our instincts and impulses are limited to what our own art discipline allows us to practice. Then we are able to enter this super artistic environment, and it's like being a kid again. We are discovering in a new way, where we no longer have to color within the lines and now it's okay if the sky is purple. The more we are exposed to, the more enlightened we become and the more interesting our own art becomes. " Tarik (Dance)
- "It struck me how many different uses, noises, movements a singular prop can produce. I was especially impressed by how both the umbrella and the rubber workout band were used. People created moments that would not have ever crossed my mind." Billy (Acting)

Week Four

- " I was struck by your statement about letting the elements speak to each other and not having the performer comment on the prop. It is important to let the element speak for itself and not force anything upon it. That really helped me discover and explore moving forward."- Andrew (Acting)

- “My updated view of ensemble is now Family. It definitely feels like a family dynamic...but closer, if that is possible.”- Andrew (Acting)
- “It is very important to have classes that cross disciplines! We need to pull from each other. We need a fresh view on things. Actors feeding to other actors or painters feeding to other painters. That isn’t helping us fully. We need a broader view and fresh ideas and varying opinions of art. Your work doesn’t become stale or repetitive. It can only help art get a message across when it is fresh and engaging enough to make a point. “- Andrew (Acting)
- “I was struck by your idea of the prospect of transferring moments that take place in small spaces into large venues. How do we create the same effect we felt in that small corner behind the door when an audience is seated in an auditorium? How can we use the elements to mimic that experience? Or do we make the choice to physically put the audience in a small space? What has the most narrative potential?”- Mikayla (Acting)
- “Light plays a very large role in art, especially in still life. When you are drawing in charcoal or graphite, putting light on a subject shows different value changes and also drastically changes how you view the composition as a whole. Certain light can change the meaning. And I am beginning to see how that plays a part in theatre, in particular, Moment Work.” Greer (Art Education)
- “My definition of ensemble has changed to a group that values everyone’s ideas equally. Everyone has the same amount of voice. Which is extremely important in this type of work. “ Greer (Art Education)

- “Cross-disciplinary classes are extremely important in academia! You get different view points at once, that ultimately lead to a better solution and really, a better product, that I can already tell we are getting in this class.” Greer (Art Education)

Week Five

- “The humanized qualities and properties given to inanimate objects was amazing to witness. How two pieces of fabric can interact with each other was awesome. It really spoke to me. This is really helping me with my own imagination and innovation.” –Billy (Acting)
- “One thing that really struck me was when I was leaving early for the family emergency, I tried to be really quiet and not disturb the class. Even though the class was still going on, everyone stopped, and made sure to say goodbye to me. It really struck me. We haven’t known each other for that long, really. Sorry, I am getting emotional. Right away, I could see that people just cared and were genuinely concerned, so when people took a moment to check in and say goodbye, it spoke volumes. It speaks volumes to the mentality we have put forth for this class and this work. I really love this ensemble.” Greer (Art Education)

Week Six

- “I enjoyed working with Greer. In group work, I struggle to find a middle ground between having a voice and not letting myself fade or stepping too far to the front and taking a leadership position. It felt collaborative. I was able to become a member of collaboration.” – Natasha (Sculptor)
- “Adding text automatically added context and I became immediately emotionally invested. It was amazing how four completely separate moments, that initially had absolutely nothing to do with one another, somehow, when you strung them together...sequenced them together and tweaked very minor things, we created this

cohesive story. I can't wait to see it and see how Joe X interprets the work next week!" Natasha (Sculptor)

- "We spent an hour sequencing our moments today and oh my god. It changes everything! All of these elements working together created something very visually intriguing. It was something you wanted to watch. It provided that X that you need from content and form." Billy (Acting)
- "I was shocked how well the layering and sequencing worked. I didn't think it was going to at first. These were three extremely different moments that really didn't have anything to do with each other. Then they all somehow came together in this very strange way that I was really struck by. You gave the direction to read this warranty text sensually, which I initially thought was silly. But then that sensual tone immediately influenced the rest of the moments. It made me realize that just one small choice can effect the entire moment. It spoke to me. I saw the power of the Moment and each individual piece and how important each piece is. Joe X now had a message related to him." Greer (Art Education)

Chapter 9: Cross-Disciplinary Contract

Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration Ensemble Contract: Promises to the Ensemble: Created by the Students, for the Students

As a contributing member of this ensemble, I promise to:

1. Maintain a safe physical and emotional space to allow play and vulnerability.
2. Provide a Judgment-Free zone
3. Stay committed to the ensemble and goals of the class
4. Listen to and support each member's ideas.
5. Allow everyone's voice to be heard.
6. Stay focused and engaged in the present.
7. Fail Gloriously.
8. Be willing to try again.
9. Be willing to try new things.
10. Respect the space.
11. Respect the instructor.
12. Respect each member's choices, bodies, views, and time.
13. Come to class open and ready to work.
14. Agree that what happens in class, stays in class.
15. Allow trust to build and expand between the ensemble.
16. Contribute to the ensemble.
17. Ask/ provide a forewarning, if approaching a delicate topic.
18. Push yourself.
19. Allow a Focused Play to exist.

*The breaking of a promise is subject to action, decided by the Instructor.

Signature: _____

Chapter 10: We End: The Next Step

When discussing the ensemble's choice of topic for further exploration, I prompted the class to consider our social responsibility and the unique power the arts hold in delivering a message in a very personal way. Of the event or issues mentioned, one common theme seemed to thread them together, and we named that "Othered." Issues of gender, social anxiety, race, sex, and sexual preference stood at the top of the list the ensemble had created. The students determined that those "othered" or cast-out of what one might consider the norms of society is an issue they would like to explore further. Professional conferences and spring break would prevent us from meeting again for almost three weeks. During that time, students were to research articles, stories, poetry, music, medical journals, interviews, artwork, and dance pieces that dealt with othering and to be prepared to share their findings when we returned.

Three weeks passed and our family reunited as if it had been months since their last meeting. The vlogs of that week all started with the same premise: "I missed this class and everyone in it so much!" After warm-ups, we all formed a circle, arms full of research, ready to share their discoveries with the ensemble. Working from this point forward, I reminded the class that the contract becomes extremely important. They needed to remember that their findings will belong to the group and the choice to use or not use a piece of information is not personal, but a

decision to benefit the work of the class as a whole and what serves the ensemble's mission.

Through out the next few classes, a few small reminders were mentioned to the students to return to the elements, to make sure that Content and Form are always crossing perpendicularly, and to remember the contract promises, which they always seemed to do regularly. They have worked extremely diligently this semester and collaborated with one another brilliantly. I cannot wait to witness the moments the ensemble will share with their audience in a few weeks. These talented artists coming together will assuredly create something remarkable and beautiful.

This process has opened my eyes not only as a teacher, but as an artist as well. I have grown in so many life-changing dimensions and discovered so much about my current teaching philosophy and what kind of educator I hope to grow into. These students reminded me that the unknown can be scary, especially in a society where one can easily find immediate answers to questions, simply by opening their laptops or asking Siri. This process is slow moving and as Barbara Pitts McAdams said to me, "The work filters itself." There aren't immediate answers. That is a particularly difficult concept for this generation to grasp. Some students had trouble trusting the steps of the journey, not knowing one hundred percent where they were going to end up. For those students, it took a bit longer for them to fully open themselves up to the ensemble and the experience. With reassurance, positive reinforcement and a bit more time, these particular students were able to fully let go and become contributing members of the ensemble.

One beautiful discovery of this cross-disciplinary collaboration was the sharing of ideas. I was able to recognize that different types of artists think about and see the world around them in drastically unique ways. Starting the course, actors would approach a moment internally, stating what struck them emotionally about what they viewed. They would experiment with the

elements with a focus on their interaction with one another. They also seemed to note the journey of sequences innately. Our stage manager began with a natural ability to organize, and because of that, was extremely good at the structural analysis of moments. She had impeccable timing while creating her moments and began the process already facile in multiple elements, such as light, sound, and architecture. Our dancers were, of course, extremely fluent in the elements of body, movement, weight, tempo and spatial relationship. They had such a powerful ability to discover the delicate intricacies of movement and were able to experiment with minute physical changes within moments that would drastically shift the context and form of the entire sequence. I was in awe of our visual artists' abilities to deconstruct moments and purely focus on each individual element and find its nuances. These students began the course, already facile in many of the elements, including, light, weight, props, movement, architecture and spatial relationship. They constantly explored the power of every element, finding the depth of poetic potential each one held.

After each structural analysis of a moment or theatrical question or discovery, there was undoubtedly always someone, either a student or myself, saying, "I never thought of it like that before." The strength of each individual artist not only became strengths of the ensemble, but it had a lasting effect on each student in the class. Their ability to view and create art blossomed out of their previous discipline-specific mindset and morphed into something grander, multifaceted, and beautiful. Working together, they began to discover moments in unexpected ways.

A clear friendship and a support system developed very quickly. Students were attending each other's performances, viewing their installations, and becoming inspired by each other's

work both inside and outside of the classroom. Students would get to class and hug. Following Spring Break, students reunited as if it had been months since their last class. Meeting only once a week for three hours time, this ensemble truly became a family and I very much believe that it was because of their shared discoveries, their love of art, their respect of what art can potentially become, and the environment we created together.

I wish that we had the ability to extend the class meeting time past three hours a week. This was mentioned multiple times by the students, and of course, a constant thought in the back of my mind each week as we neared the end of class. If I had the ability to change one thing, I would somehow create more time and have the class meet twice a week. Three hours a week is typical for many classes, but this is an atypical class. I could not ever expect a six-hour a week course to fit into many student's schedules, but in the future, I would hope to make this a year-long course, ending in a more concrete final project. When asked about the time commitment needed for his shows, Moisés Kaufman describes his company as a laboratory setting. He explains, "This is a laboratory, just like funding for scientific research."

In order to have the opportunity to create new forms of art, a short, timed clock limits what discoveries could be made. I believe that a cross-disciplinary course such as this should be approached as a laboratory setting as well, and just like the time commitment and funding towards science, the same should be put forward for the arts.

The success I have had the honor of witnessing with these students have given me hope for the future of what arts education can become. In a perfect world, I would love to see requirements across the arts disciplines that would allow student to partake in a hands-on cross-disciplinary arts course once a year. If given the opportunity to create a curriculum, I would add

an introduction to collaborative arts as a foundation for this particular class. These opportunities would allow a long term forum for sharing ideas, working together, and the creation of future generations of innovative artists, willing and enthusiastic about potential professional collaboration.

My fear is that this will be an extremely long and difficult journey to see this type of commitment to cross-disciplinary arts education come to fruition. In many universities, the arts are struggling to stay afloat within their departments and their communities. On top of that, the vast array of funding tribulations spanning much of higher education would highly limit the creation of new courses, as well as the hiring of professors to teach them. I hope to be a part of the fight to change that. What I have seen first-hand was, in a word, magical and worth every ounce of struggle to make this a foundation of arts education.

The journey of the course has been a magnificent experience to watch unfold. This group of individuals has truly become a gifted, attentive, resilient ensemble. I am in awe of the growth of the class since our first meeting. During week ten of the course, I witnessed a stunning example of how powerful this ensemble has become. To preface this instance, a group breathing warm-up is practiced at the beginning of every class, to center and reconnect the ensemble. One of the students had been going through a traumatic time as of late. During class, we began to warm-up with one of our typical exercises, the Impulse Circle. When the impulse reached this particular student, she hesitated and was thrown off track. After the second occurrence, she broke down crying and secluded herself from the rest of the ensemble. What followed moved me to tears. Without faltering or discussion, the students walked towards their ensemble member, placed their hands on her, and began to breathe as a unit. She immediately responded, matching

her own breath with theirs, calming her. Her shoulders released, her body relaxed, and her breathing steadied. They stayed in that moment until they felt her recover. If nothing else were to come from this class, this moment was enough, and exactly what I hoped for. This class has become a family. An extremely talented and artistic family who listen and respect one another, care deeply for each individual, and have become visionary artists because of their work together. I am tremendously aware that because of this course and these amazing young artists, I have become a better person, a more innovative artist, and an evolved teacher. I cannot have imagined a more perfect and rewarding teaching experience to culminate my training at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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APPENDIX A: Course Syllabus

THEA 491: Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration

Instructor: Tara Weintraub

Email: helrichtb@vcu.edu

Spring 2015, F 1-4pm

Office Hours: By Appointment

Singleton Performing Arts Center - B72

Mailbox: Performing Arts Center, 2nd Floor

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

During this course, student actors, directors, designers, visual artists and technicians will join forces to become a part of a cross-disciplinary, ensemble-based exploration. Students will create new works, powered by Tectonic Theatre Project's Moment Work, as well as implementing other devised theatre techniques. They will gain insight into the philosophies, purposes, and processes of Moment Work and develop Moments using the elements of the stage. The class will culminate in short, devised pieces, created and performed by the students.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Journal
- Light source (no candles or any source that may require the use of live fire)
- Prop
- Costume piece
- Music and/or sound without text
- A short piece of text.

A few notes on the above:

1) The props and costumes will be available for use by all students in the class; therefore, please do not bring anything that is fragile or has any substantial economic or emotional significance. While we will expect the class to be respectful of all objects brought into our work space, accidents do occur.

2) For the text, please search for a piece of found text (prose, a fortune cookie message, an instruction manual, a newspaper article, etc.) rather than something from a play.

3) When selecting your items, text, and music, please evaluate their theatrical potential and performability. Think outside of the box!

GRADING

Your grade will be based on a combination of written work, class participation and presentations. In addition to these major areas, your attendance, punctuality and ability to focus on the work will also be considered. Your final grade will be based on a 1000 point total (details under "Assignments").

VCU Grading Scale

A	100-90% (895-1000 points)
B	89-80% (795-894 points)
C	79-70% (695-794 points)
D	69-60% (595-694 points)
F	59% and Below (0-594 points)

Written Work

All written assignments will be typed in a **12 point font, double spaced and printed in black ink**. Double-sided printing is encouraged, to save trees, but not required. Printing multiple pages per sheet is not acceptable. Please format all outlines with proper indentation and numbering. Students must submit paper copies of all written assignments. Proper MLA format must be followed for all bibliographic citations.

Collaborative Work

Each time you collaborate is an opportunity. It is a chance to learn something new about your peers, your thought processes, and your strengths. Over the course of the semester students are expected to take advantage of each of these opportunities to build a creative ensemble of artists. Everyone comes into this class with different levels of experience and is expected to demonstrate a deliberate effort toward cultivating their strengths and improving upon their existing talent. **Remember, Generosity is paramount in this course.**

Professionalism

We will spend a lot of time discussing one another's work. As you give feedback on your classmates' work please remember to be courteous and respectful. It is important that the classroom be a safe environment where everyone can explore and play.. Please be respectful of people's boundaries and feelings. If, for any reason, you feel uncomfortable with the work inside or outside the classroom, please do not hesitate to approach me or email me.

Attendance

Because of the ensemble nature of this course, along with class meeting only once a week, students are allowed ONE unexcused absence. For each additional unexcused absence, you will lose a full letter grade for the class. The instructor must clear excused absences in advance. Arriving late for class disrupts the learning process for fellow students, so every two late arrivals will count as an unexcused absence for grading purposes. Students arriving more than 20 minutes late to class will be considered absent. Because each class

builds upon previous information, all students will depend on one another for the success of the ensemble. It is not possible to “make-up” class sessions. It is expected that late and absent students will call/meet other class members to find out what occurred in class and to get handouts and assignments before the next class meets. Missing all or part of a class is not an excuse for being unprepared.

Attire

Students are expected to be dressed in attire appropriate for an theatre class at all times. Clothing that allows for freedom of movement is required. Skirts, shorts and jeans are not appropriate. Students coming from work or other classes should bring a change of clothes. Please see the instructor if you have any questions.

Disabilities

If you have any visual, auditory, ambulatory or cognitive disabilities it is your responsibility to inform me on the first day of class so that I can try to accommodate your needs. See the *VCU Resource Guide* for details.

Religious observances

In accordance with university policy, if you wish to observe a religious holiday you must provide advance written notification by Fri. 1/23, so that I may accommodate your needs.

Honor policy

Please visit the VCU website or see the VCU Handbook to review the official university honor policy. One university ruling you need to be especially aware of: **The University requires that cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off while you are in the classroom.**

VCU Alert and Campus Security

1. Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts [<http://www.vcu.edu/alert/notify>]. Keep your information up-to-date.
2. Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on campus classrooms.
3. Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
4. Know where to go for additional emergency information [<http://www.vcu.edu/alert>].
5. Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police: 804-828-1234.
6. Report suspicious activities and objects.

*****Note to student:** By choosing to remain in this class, you agree to abide by the standards set forth in this syllabus. Additionally, your signature on your VCU application

signifies that you agree to abide by all rules and policies, including the Honor System, of Virginia Commonwealth University. For more information, refer to the Student Resource Guide, at <http://www.students.vcu.edu/policies.html> and the Student Bulletin, at <http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/><http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/>
<http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/>

ASSIGNMENTS – 1000 points

Missed assignments MAY NOT be made up.

Vlogs (300 points)

This assignment will serve as your video journal during the process. Each week, you will submit a 2-4 minute vlog on Blackboard, due the Monday following class. The vlog can contain your thoughts on the work done during class time, outside of class time, the process, and the collaboration process. Decompression and reflection are key ingredients to working collaboratively as an ensemble, so please use this as an opportunity to do such.

Peer Reviews (150)

During small group work, students will be expected to review the collaborative efforts of their peers. Please respond truthfully, in order for this class' objectives to be met.

Final Reflection Essay (150 points)

Students will write a five-page paper, summing up their experience in this course. How has working with a multitude of artists changed how you create art? Things to touch on can include your personal journey toward improvements in this course, any "Ah-ha" moments you had this semester, and challenges you had from the beginning that you feel you've overcome (or have made steps toward overcoming).

Class Participation (400 points)

This is a *crucial* part of your grade. Participation in class activities, assignments and discussions is a required part of this class. You will also be expected to give feedback to your fellow classmates, both written and verbal. If you are absent without excuse on a day where feedback, for example, is being elicited, you will lose points off your participation grade.

Course Calendar
(Subject to change)

JANUARY

F 16: Intro, syllabus review, contract building, Begin ensemble work.

F 23: Ensemble and Collaboration exercises

HOMEWORK: Bring in Costume piece, Light Source, Prop, Sound Clip or pre-recorded music (no text)

**F 30: Intro to Moment Work and the Elements What is a Moment? Exploration of Moments

HOMEWORK: Virtuosity Moment

FEBRUARY

**F 6: Continuation of Moment Exploration: Multiple Elements

**F 13: Continuation of Moment Exploration: Multiple Elements

HOMEWORK: Bring in Text

NOTE: PRIDE AND PREJUDICE RUNNING Feb. 12-14 & 19-21 at 7:30 pm Feb. 15 & 22 at 3:00 pm

**F 20: Continuation of Moment Exploration: LAYERING

HOMEWORK: Bring in three relatable topics to explore

F 27: Continuation of Moment Exploration: LAYERING; Discussion of topics and Topic chosen to explore

HOMEWORK: Small Group Exploration of Topic to share. 3 Moments per group.

MARCH

F 6: TBA

F 13: SPRING BREAK

F 20: Sharing of Moments- Continued Exploration

F 27: TBA

APRIL

F 3: Continuation of Moment Exploration: SEQUENCING
HOMEWORK DUE MAY 1: Reflection Paper

F 10: Continuation of Moment Exploration: SEQUENCING: Choosing of Share Day Moments

NOTE: FRANKENSTEIN: DAWN OF A MONSTER running April 10 -11, 16 -18 & 23 - 25 at 7:30 pm • April 12, 19 & 26 at 3:00 pm

F 17: TBA

F 24: Editing and Run through of Share Day

MAY

F 1: SHARE DAY and Class Decompression

PLEASE NOTE: Due to BFA Performance auditions, our class will meet in Shafer Street Playhouse (Newdick Theatre) on the following days:

- January 30
- February 6
- February 13
- February 20

**** Denotes days in Newdick Theatre on the course schedule**

APPENDIX B: Interview Transcript: Barbara Pitts McAdams

EDITED TRANSCRIPT- INTERVIEW WITH BARBARA PITTS MCADAMS

Jan. 5, 2015

What is your definition of collaboration?

Hmmm. Uh. I think collaboration...I've always worked in collaborative situations where I knew ultimately I knew somebody was going to take the reigns, you know? But we were all enfranchised to create. So I think there has to be a lot of 'Yes and Maybe' and not a lot of 'No, that's not it, that's not it. That doesn't work', because that to me, takes all the air out. So whenever there is this feeling of 'Yes and maybe', then I feel like we are moving towards something. Collaboration is lots of people coming together, putting egos to the side, in order to serve something bigger. So that doesn't even need to be art, really. It could be the volunteer effort after Hurricane Katrina. It is always really thrilling when collaboration works organically and sometimes it doesn't (giggle). So finding good models for collaboration, and setting out, as much as your can, the parameters of people's expectations are in line, makes a happy collaboration. I've worked on projects where people are like, "Oh, I really want to collaborate with you" and ultimately nothing changes and none of your input actually impacts the piece. And you're like, "You said you wanted to collaborate." (giggle) "And you don't really want to collaborate. So, people use that word, when what they really mean is, "I want you to work on my piece". You know what I mean?

What would your definition of an ensemble be?

There are these abstract definitions, then there is what my experience has been. Which are you more interested in?

Your experience with ensemble.

I have been in several companies and none of them have been the kind of companies where, you know, you are guaranteed, as a performer, to have a certain part, ever. You hoped that it would go your way. It might not, for whatever reason. And I know that there are ensembles where that's not the case, where you always create as an ensemble, you perform as an ensemble, but that's not a model that I have ever participated in. I sort of like...I think it is healthy, as a performer to work with new people. Even the best people I've worked with begin to rely on me bringing the things that I bring and then when you go work with somebody new, they don't have that "Oh, Barb will go do that Barb thing, so I know what that is..." So they challenge you on all of your choices or they get you to think about things in a new way. I think that's healthy for a group. To have the flexibility where you can go work on independent projects and come back with more stuff to bring to the group.

***What does cross-disciplinary means to you?**

When you say cross disciplinary, I think, like one art form collaborating with another art form. Or even, like Lance was saying, he is working with some scientists to make a piece of theatre. That's very cross disciplinary. I think that kind of work is really exciting! I'm working now with this woman who has a social justice organization on a project about domestic partner abuse and is really trying to create a national call to action. And saw the Laramie Project and saw the capacity it had to call people to some kind of personal commitment to change. She wants to use that kind of active theatre to get her not-for-profit- social service message across. So that's really my next cross-disciplinary outing.

***What are the issues you have come across when working cross disciplinarily amongst the arts?**

I think the hardest thing is...like when we try to work with moment work and we have our designers and you know, the videographer, sound person. We want to have those people in the room, it becomes an economic problem at the level that Tectonic is making work. So that can become a scheduling, logistical and economic problem, trying to get everybody in the room. That's one problem. So across the arts, I don't know if I have enough experience to say. Usually when we are called together, we are moving forward its because there has already been some kind of synergy discovered. That is can be fruitful.

*What are the benefits of working cross disciplinarily amongst the arts?

Leigh has a piece right now called *Spill*. And the origin of that cross-discipline project was that her partner, Reeva, who is an amazing visual artist, took portraits and made these huge life-size paintings of people they interviewed in the bayou who really suffered as people who got their living out of the ocean. So that now functions as an installation before you see the performance piece. Originally they thought that the paintings would somehow be integrated the event, the performance piece, and now they are discovering that, when possible, they want to have the installation as a separate event. What was your question exactly?

So what are the benefits of different artists coming together to create?

Oh. It's always kind of mind-bending when you come at it from one perspective and someone else has a different way they get at something. Like, even today, when we did our warm-ups, and you would think, after all these years of making theatre, there would no warm-ups that I didn't know, and I didn't know either of those warm-ups.

Neither did I.

Weren't they fun?

Mhm. Very.

They were great. So, even that. It is scary to leave your area, and your comfort zone. You show up for a workshop and have no idea if the people in it will be nice or talented or advanced or behind you. And I think we really lucked out with this group.

I agree.

Everyone is bringing a lot to the table.

It's a good group.

*Is there any particular instance of collaboration that has stuck with you and why?

One that I saw that I wasn't in, was one I mentioned earlier, *Puss in Boots*, that

Moisés did. He was working with some really talented puppet-makers and puppet operators and some Opera singers and I don't particularly like Opera. I just have never been able to access it. You know, I watch it for a while, appreciate the virtuosity and then kind of get bored by it, most of the time. And I don't really want to see puppet work that much. But somehow all of those three different people collaborating...this director with a great visual sense...these people who made these incredible puppets and this Opera singing...it all really worked. It certainly was greater than the sum of its parts, for me, the audience member. That's a collaboration that I think was very successful.

Sometimes you get this...Bill T Jones plus Max Rosch, the drummer and Toni Morrison reading poetry was one I saw a few years back and I kind of felt like, "I don't know why these things are onstage together..."

Why do you think certain things blend or don't blend?

Maybe I am just more narratively inclined, but with *Puss in Boots*, the story was very simple, where as Bill T Jones...was it Toni Morrison or Maya Angelou...I can't remember but Max Rosch is a jazz drummer and he's like bam bam bam bam, Bill T Jones is dancing and she is doing some poetry. They all seemed like elements that were not intersecting. But they are all masters in their different genres.

Do you think Moment Work lends itself to cross-disciplinary collaboration?

Yes, absolutely! One of the things about Moment Work that is so liberating is that it enfranchises us all to all materials. It doesn't really require that you have any background with it. You certainly don't need to be the world's greatest actor to contribute to Moment Work. There is always that moment where people let go of the need to be entertaining. You want your moment to be well received, whatever it is. So, you can come into a Moment Work process and be mostly a watcher too. Some people are really good at taking it all in and then communicating what they're seeing. Some people really want to be in every single moment. It can allow for the people who want to hang back and dip their toe in, to be in the room and be getting something out of it. And the people who really like to be busy, there is a place for them. There is a place for someone who has a designer mind, a dancer mind, a visual mind, a director's mind. So, this woman I am working with, L.Y. Marlowe, with the organization, Saving Promise, she has no theatre background at all. And she is so open and inspired by what is possible. So I think the fact that moment work.... It gives people the chance to take little bites and the little bites don't have to connect to each other, certainly not right away, so you can say you made something. "Ah! Look. I just made a little snippet of art!" Right? That's really exciting for

people.

Do you think this form can be applied outside of theatre?

Probably! If you were editing a movie, you would probably think about it in similar ways. With all of your snippets and scenes and edits...rearrange them and say, well what did that do? In a sense, that is what Moment Work leads to. Having a whole wealth of moments that you can rearrange and piece together.

What is your favorite ensemble based exercise? Something that builds cohesion amongst a group.

Because Moment Work is so organically collaborative, we just jump right in, as a company. I much prefer exercises in a circle, where there is a lot of movement but you have to keep your brain focused on separating out those actions and reactions. Also, moving in unison is really challenging. In my viewpoints experience...they had us running barefoot in a circle for half a day. We just did this relentlessly...I just started getting annoyed. It was punishing. I don't appreciate that kind of work. There are some artists who want that. Who want to push themselves to new levels of torment! (giggles)

Where have you personally drawn your inspiration from as an artist?

I think my inspiration comes a lot from the need to connect and to feel useful. I have had this other career as an insurance agent where I am very useful to people, but it's not a project. I feel like I don't understand what my life is when I don't have a mission or something that I am being called to do. I think I am inspired when the work really has something to say. I love to have a good time too! Sometimes I think about the most fun I have had performing...I just saw this friend of mine who I did a little ten minute play with one time...and it was so funny, we brought the house down. I can still see the faces just laughing and laughing and what an amazing feeling that is as an actor. So I would love to be able to do more of that. I feel like sharing laughter and fun. But when I think about what compels me to do theatre or stick with a project, I feel like it will have this transcendence beyond, you know, some show someone when to see one night.

How do you see this work fitting into an academic environment?

One thing that devising is so useful for in theatre, is that usually you have twenty five girls and three guys and there aren't very many shows that accommodate the student body you need to find. If you are working at an inner-city college and you have people of every color and age, devising is a great way to tailor a piece to the students that you have. That way you can make work with them that will be relevant to them. Moment Work is such a great way to teach theatre appreciation... in Level One, you really get your hands on the elements of the theatre and figuring out how they tell story and communicate what is the poetry of a prop. What is the language of costumes...how do they move? Getting your hands on them is a great way for people to begin to explore theatre. This would be great especially for theatre for non-majors. Then by making moments, they figure out, how is a play constructed? It's a series of moments. You have people make these moments and then people get an understanding dramaturgically of how you would construct a play. I can see it having more and more of a presence in academia.

Have you ever had a high school or college student who was closed off or unwilling to take risks during this work and were you able to crack their shell open?

Like I said before, there are always a couple of stinkers. But there aren't any stinkers in our class! As I get more mature, it gets easier to let them person have their experience and not push too hard. When I was directing his play at Drew, there were a couple of students who would literally stand there like this (crosses arms). One thing Rich Brown has said to me is that "you should have a chapter in your book about working with millenials." Because young people now are very different from how I was raised. The people in my cast at Drew were graduating seniors in college. A lot of them spoke to their parents every single day. If there was trouble back at home, they knew about it and it was stressing them out. They were wining about having to tech over Easter and Jewish Holiday breaks, even though they knew that going forward. They were getting homesick, and tired, and stressed out. So there was a lot of resistance to a process like Moment Work, where the not knowing is the creative fuel. And I know, because I have been through the process a bunch of times that we will whittle down to something eventually performable but they didn't know that. So for some millenials, who have been hyper-scheduled their whole lives, "you go from your this, to your ballet class, to your this, to your that, to your play date." You know, this kind of unstructured approach was frustrating for them and scary.

It is scary for me.

Is it?

The idea of not knowing has always been an issue for me. Its part of my personality, I guess.

It is for me too. Like today, introducing a new topic...I kept thinking, "Well, I hope this doesn't tank..." You have to remember that you can just trust that the work shows up.

The whole breaking the shell thing...One of those girls, oh I just wanted to scream at her. And I thought, “why shouldn’t I scream at her, yell at her, tell her to get lost” but I needed her in the part she was in, and she was so volatile, it felt like she could walk out, you know what I mean? I took it as a personal challenge to myself to just continue to let her be who she needed to be. And it was hard because she was disruptive, distracting, or she would stomp out and someone would have to go run after her. Just a drama maker, really. For the most part, I kept trying to move forward and not give that a lot of attention. In the end, I didn’t go to their sort of wrap-up day they had . They all had to write out a little thing about what they learned and experienced and Lisa, my colleague said that hers was the most profound shift. What she learned about herself. What was scary for her. She was really onto it. And some of the other kids, who weren’t really ever a problem, didn’t make as deep a connection. It was a really good reinforcement of...you think you aren’t reaching the people who aren’t participating, but you might be. You have to know that you can’t reach everybody. Make room for people to be who they are. With students, it doesn’t occur to them that you may need reinforcement too.

This is a great thing for me to hear as a young educator.

Don’t focus on the two people who aren’t getting it. As I like to say, stick with the winners. If someone is showing an aptitude and a love for it, then continue working with them.

Thank you so much for all of this!

I hope I was helpful!

You were extremely helpful!

APPENDIX C: Interview Transcript: Moisés Kaufman

EDITED TRANSCRIPT- INTERVIEW WITH MOISÉS KAUFMAN
Jan. 9, 2015

What is your definition of collaboration?

Creating a space where we bring our best selves to make something together.

How about your definition of an ensemble?

A group of like-minded individuals who come together with a common dream.

Have you ever worked with a group of different types of artists in one setting?

Always.

What were some of the benefits of bringing a mix of artists into a room to work?

The magic of having the different perspectives all focused on the same thing.

What issues did you come across?

(Pause) Um, at the beginning... Well I always start by saying that generosity is a key ingredient. And at the beginning, the generosity pervades. The more we are getting closer to finishing the product, um, issues of taste and the desire to own the artifact begin to get in the way. I think when you get to that moment of needing ownership of the artifact, I think it is always helpful to create different versions of the same thing. So each person feels they have ownership of their version.

Is there any particular instance of collaboration that has stayed with you?

The Laramie Project

What was the key ingredient of this particular collaboration?

How much we cared about telling that story.

Why do you think Moment Work lends itself to cross-disciplinary collaboration?

Because it is a cross-disciplinary technique.

As an audience member, what piece of art have you witnessed that has influenced you?

Do you want a list?

Yeah, go for it!

Pina Bausch, *Rite of Spring*

Jerzy Grotowski's *Akropolis*

Peter Sellars, *Das Kleine Mahagonny*

Robert Lepage, *Seven Streams of the River Ota*

Complicite's *Street of Crocodiles*

Robert Lepage, *Needles and Opium*

Where do you continue to draw your inspiration from as an artist?

In Art.

If you could say one thing to young artists in the making, what would it be?

Carry on.

Thank you so much!

Yeah? Oh good! Lovely. Okay. Now, I sunbathe.

VITA

Tara Beth Weintraub was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. In 2008, she graduated from Georgia Southern University with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre. Tara continued to teach Theatre for Youth and direct in the Atlanta area until she began her studies at Binghamton University. In 2011, Tara graduated with her Master of Arts in Theatre and returned to Atlanta. There, she was offered the opportunity to develop and implement the first theatre program at Swift School, an elementary and middle school focusing on the needs of students with dyslexia and other language-based learning differences. Tara became a certified classroom educator in the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators. In 2011, she co-founded and served as Artistic Director of The Good Works Theatre Festival, providing an avenue for new, emerging writers to have their voices heard in today's world of theatre.

Tara began the Performance Pedagogy program at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2013 where she also served as Adjunct Faculty, teaching Introduction to Stage Performance, Effective Speech, Introduction to Acting I, Directing II and Devised Theatre: Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration. During her time in Richmond, she directed productions and taught theatre at Saint Gertrude High School. She graduates with her Master of Fine Arts in Performance Pedagogy in May of 2015. Tara is a member of Stage Directors and Choreographers, SouthEastern Theatre Conference and the Association for Theatre in Higher Education.