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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Moving With The Spaces Between:
Dance as a Symbiotic Knowing of Self, Other and Environment

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Dance Theatre)

by

Aurora Brown Lagattuta

Committee in charge:

Professor Yolande Snaith, Chair
Professor Robert Castro
Professor Liam Clancy
Professor Alena Williams

2019

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The Thesis of Aurora Brown Lagattuta is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California San Diego

2019

DEDICATION

For my mother.

EPIGRAPH

“Swept away with the idea, he said it felt like an awakening to him. More like a remembering, I think. The animacy of the world is something we already know, but the language of animacy teeters on extinction—not just for Native peoples, but for everyone. Our toddlers speak of plants and animals as if they were people, extending to them self and intention and compassion—until we teach them not to. We quickly retrain them and make them forget. When we tell them that the tree is not a who, but an it, we make that maple an object; we put a barrier between us, absolving ourselves of moral responsibility and opening the door to exploitation.”¹

I wonder if much that ails our society stems from the fact that we have allowed ourselves to be cut off from that love of, and from, the land. It is medicine for broken land and empty hearts.”²

¹ Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, (Canada, Milkwood Editions, 2013,) 57.

² *Ibid*, 126.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Moving With The Spaces Between:
Dance as a Symbiotic Knowing of Self, Other and Environment

by

Aurora Brown Lagattuta

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Dance Theatre)

University of California San Diego, 2019

Professor Yolande Snaith, Chair

MIKO, a space between was a site-specific dance performance that occurred at Scripps Institute of Oceanography on January 23, 24 and 25, 2019. This performance investigated dance as an embodied knowing of the symbiotic relationships between self, other and the environment. *MIKO, a space between* is also part of the interdisciplinary grant Waves Internal, which strives to deepen empathetic connections with shorelines. Through various and consistent explorations dancing outside at Scripps Institute of Oceanography, this dance project investigated how the act of dancing with certain locations can shift, transform and uplift oneself, others and the specific places that we dance within. This research re-examines what dance can be and the potential roles dance can play in the world today. Through the creation of regenerative dance ecologies, this research demonstrates small yet powerful ways that dance enriches, transforms and nurtures the human-planetary bond.

INTRODUCTION

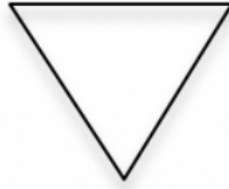


Figure 1. Hermetic Symbol for Water³

“Water is a kindness; religion is tea. You can live without tea, but not without kindness.”-
Dalai Lama⁴

I have this notion that I need to know and produce something fixed, set and clean. But the truth is that this work still feels fluid, enigmatic and expansive. It feels like an emergence or a starting place for future iterations, explorations, dances and scores. This is what my team of collaborators and I desired: to create repeatable dance practices and frameworks that create experiential and humanistic approaches to dancing site-specifically, particularly along shorelines.

My collaborators and I completed this project with various scores to further development. We also finished this project with just as many, if not more, questions. There still remains much mystery. There are holes. There are dance moments and practices that I still cannot find the words for. Moreover, I am discovering that the dancing knowledge which unfolded isn't stationary. Instead it is mutual, shifting and always just slightly out of my grasp. It enjoys flowing and slowly connecting like raindrops down a window pane.

Like water, I too know about connecting. I am a middle child and a woman. I am versed in the acts of weaving and multi-tasking, of pacifying and bridging. I have a high capacity for chaos:

³ Wheeler, Philip. *Alchemical Symbols*, (Kansas City, Althea Productions LLC, 2018) 12.

⁴ Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, Jeffrey Hopkins, and Elizabeth Napper. 2012. *Kindness, clarity, and insight*. Boston: Snow Lion. 67.

multiple ideas, thoughts, movements, research and literature at once. Yet I understand how confusing and overwhelming overlapping connections can be.

I co-created this thesis performance with an extensive system of collaborators across disciplines and countries that included dancers, designers, oceanographers, ecologists and musicians. In addition, this work demanded collaborations with the multiple locations at Scripps Institute of Oceanography. These sites and the spaces between them co-conceived the dancing. The work included research from dance, philosophy, scholastic writings, cognitive science, oceanography, ecology, visual arts, experimental music and feminist studies. *MIKO, a space between* is a large web of intersecting movements, places and concepts.

For this paper, I will articulate the key points noted in the Master of Fine Arts in Dance Reflection requirements with a sense of rigor and commitment. In order to address the compulsory prompts, I will organize the work as follows: research, choreographic process, performance description and analysis, and reflection. I will write with a sincerity that allows for foibles and gaps to exist. These missing pieces will provide room for the work to grow into. For it is truly in the spaces between that this work flourishes.

RESEARCH



Figure 2. Hermetic Symbol for Earth and Spirit⁵

One of the reasons I love dance is because it doesn't require a linear narrative. Its ambiguity provides spaces for the audience to connect the imagery to their personal life. When I first ventured on this research, Professor of Theatre Directing Robert Castro advised me to look within as to why I am personally interested in this topic. I was surprised to find that pieces of my past experiences draw me to the questions this research poses.

Therefore, in addressing the research of this project, I begin by providing key personal events, people and places that motivated my primary questions and intentions. Next, I will address the research that supports my primary claim that dance is a symbiotic knowing of self, other and environment. I will divide this concept into two sections: Dance Self, Dancing Other, Dancing Environment and Knowledge, She Dances. Each part will elaborate upon certain philosophies, theories, dance artists and performance practices that directly influenced the dance making, methodology and performance of MIKO, *a space between*.

Arrival to Research:

“Instructions for living a life. Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.” — Mary Oliver⁶

Practice: Lie down on your back and look up at the sky. Take two deep breaths in through your nose and out your mouth. What does the sky reveal to you about yourself today?

⁵ Wheeler, Alchemical Symbols, 12.

⁶ Oliver, Mary. “Sometimes.” Read A Little Poetry, 8 Apr. 2016,

Observation: The sky is covered in white clouds. The clouds block the sun from view.

“What is the difference between internal and external space?” This was my first question when I began my research for *MIKO, a space between*. More specifically, I wanted to investigate how places influence us and how we in turn influence spaces and places. Where does this place end and I begin? Considering places and people in an interwoven relationship led me to ask, “How can the act of dancing alter the sensation of a place?”

Observation: The sky is grey with a few patches of white light peeking through the clouds. The palm trees are swaying wildly.

This sky reminds me of a fall day in Chicago. Yellow, brown and red leaves fall in the wind. When I was a young girl, I would sit on the ledge of our living room window and gaze out to the sky and sing. From the window of our inner-city Chicago apartment, the view mostly consisted of concrete sidewalks and brick buildings from every angle, but there was always a little piece of sky to look at. My singing with the sky would hold solace for me in an alcoholic home. I felt calm and peaceful in a home that often felt fearful and angry.

Observation: The bright lights of an airplane flicker across the sky. Three black ravens wiz close by me, and I feel the breeze created by the force of their wings.

Novelist Pico Iyer states that we travel to be “moved within.”⁷ American writer and art critic Lucy Lippard elaborates, “Travel is the only context in which some people ever look around. If we spent half the energy looking at our own neighborhoods, we'd probably learn twice as much.”⁸ In my own life, travelling awakens my attention to new places, feelings and thoughts. I notice colors, foods and voice in a different way. I am inspired to look, watch and listen closely. The movement of my body into a new surrounding heightens my sensitivity to notice.

As a dancemaker, I am curious about the states that travel produces in how we watch, listen and ultimately move. I have been fortunate to travel and live in many places across the United States as well in Europe and Asia. These places certainly moved me within and transformed me. Yet, they also taught me how to pay closer attention to the places I encounter on a daily basis. Choreographically I began to ask, “How does taking interest in a place change this place?” What if I acknowledge things both abroad and at home with this willingness to notice and be moved by them? Would the places that I am noticing change? Would the places in turn be moved? How can I embody the state of a traveler while dancing?

Observation: A few darker clouds appear. They are shades of grey. The sun sneaks behind a cloud and the sky feels ominous.

How is it that places hold feelings? When you arrive at them, you shift subtly or noticeably. In my time spent with the Sanbeski River Valley in Japan and backpacking

⁷ Tippett, Krista, (The Urgency of Slowing Down) Interview with Pico Iyer, On Being, June 4, 2015
<https://onbeing.org/programs/pico-iyer-the-urgency-of-slowing-down-nov2018/>

⁸ Lippard, Lucy R. The lure of the local: senses of place in a multicentered society. New York: New Press. 1997 23.

throughout the North and South Islands of New Zealand, I found myself sensing and attuning to the different energies of a place. With a traveler's awareness, naivete and curiosity, I perceived some places as having a renewing or rejuvenating quality. Was it because of how I noticed them or was it due to their location, history and geological formation? Did I personally invent the feelings of the place or did we make it together? And if you travelled there, would it feel the same to you?

Philosophers Mark Johnson and Hilary Putnam explain that experience is "an organism-environment interaction."⁹ Neither are independent entities, but they are tied to reality through "our embodied imaginative understanding."¹⁰ Place and person make each other. Environmental psychologist Cindy Katz and geographer Andrew Kirby argue that the "externalization of nature is built into our concepts of science"¹¹ which leads one to believe, like myself, that nature and places are 'out there' or objects. Perhaps places could indeed be within me or you.

Observation: I see a dark rain cloud in the distance. It is raining there but the sky above me is foggy and I remain dry.

In Japanese Shintoism, mikos are female dancers who attend to energetically cleansing or maintaining a space. When one arrives at these sites, they are meant to feel the positive effects of their dancing. Mikos are:

- Japanese Shinto dancers
- They dance to heal themselves and the land.

⁹ J.P. Antill. *Sophia Geography: Exploring Spirituality, Landscape and Archetypes*. Harpagornis Publishing Limited, 2016. 37.

¹⁰ Ibid., 37

¹¹ Ibid. 38

- They practice animism.
- They dance to uplift the space and themselves.
- They wear white and red.
- They tend to the Shinto temples- sacred places of nature.¹²

Mikos traditionally dance on Shinto shrines which reside on sacred land that has been preserved for centuries.¹³ There is a strong and consistent history in these places that I have not found to be true on American soil. Native American ecologist Robin Kimmerer speaks to the immigrant quality inherent in American culture and the dire need for natives and immigrants alike to find a sense of belonging, connection, respect and kinship with land.¹⁴ American land history is complex and hidden. Includes the denial of the Native American genocides that have taken place on American soil. La Jolla Shores has a history which combines a long Native American ancestry with Spanish and American colonization.

Learning about and acknowledging La Jolla Shores' history became a necessary aspect in the dance making for MIKO, *a space between*. As an American dance maker of European immigrant descent, I had to contemplate how my personal lineage meets La Jolla Shores' history. Curator and art historian, Miwon Kwon in her article, "One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity," explains that, "we are currently in a moment of 'relational specificity,'¹⁵ which addresses the spaces between things, persons, places and thoughts next to another." These relational specificities need to take into account the histories and contexts of places as well as of

¹² Fairchild, William. "Shamanism in Japan." *Folklore Studies* 21(1962) 70-92

¹³ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁴ Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 9.

¹⁵ Kwon, Miwon. 2002. *One place after another: site-specific art and locational identity*. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press) 110.

people in relating to space and place.¹⁶ The notion of relational specificity would be a guiding principle with dancers and our discussions of how each of us, with our own unique histories approaches the spaces we worked with. This led to practices such as making offerings in addition to seeking more knowledge about the site's history. This aspect of the research was sensitive but important. It certainly began a long, deep and continuous exploration on how to connect with places and their unique histories with a sense of respect, care and curiosity.

Observation: The sky darkens and raindrops begin to fall on my sky, slowly at first then faster.

On a rainy day in the middle of New Zealand's winter, I attended a poetry meeting and met Rawiri Smith, a Maōri Environmentalist and storyteller. I will introduce Smith as he chose to introduce himself:

I prefer to introduce myself through our traditional framework known as pepeha

| <u>In the Maori Language:</u> | <u>In English:</u> | <u>A Fuller Translation</u> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Ko Maungaraki taku pae maunga | Maungaraki is my mountain range | Duck mountain is my range |
| Ko Kahu taku maunga | Kahu is my mountain | Hawk is my mountain |
| Ko Parikuiti taku pari | Parikuiti is my cliff | Narrow cliff is my cliff |
| Ko Ruamahanga taku awa | Ruamahanga is my river | Water hole trap is my river |
| Ko Wairarapa taku moana | Wairarapa is my sea | Glistening water is my sea |
| Ko Kourarau taku roto | Kourarau is my lake | Hundreds of crayfish is my lake |
| Ko Mangakahakaha taku manga | Mangakahakaha is my stream | Strong stream is my stream |
| Ko Hurunui-o-Rangi taku marae | Hurunui-o-Rangi is my sacred land | Feather of the sky is my marae |
| Ko Uhimanuka taku ngahere | Uhimanuka is my bushland | Manuka shade is my bushland |
| Ko Wairakau taku marakai | Wairakau is my food garden | Wooded water is my garden |
| Ko Takitimu te waka | Takitimu is the migratory canoe | Ebbing tide challenge, the canoe |
| Ko Ngati Kahungunu te iwi | Ngati Kahungunu is the tribe | Bent misshaped hawk is the tribe |
| Ko Ngai Taneroa te hapu | Ngai Taneroa is the sub tribe | The long man is the sub tribe |
| Ko Tahu Potiki te tipuna | Tahu Potiki is the ancestor | The youngest line of ancestry is ... |
| Ko Nukupewapewa te tangata | Nukupewapewa is the person | A younger siblings tattoo is the ... |
| Ko Parikuiti te taniwha | Parikuiti is the powerful monster | The narrow cliff is the powerful ... |

Figure 3. Rawiri Smith's Introduction

¹⁶ Ibid.,110.

Smith and I had various conversations about the environmental-human bond. Smith taught me that in the Maōri language the word for people is *tangata whenua*, or people shaped by the land. I loved the notion that people are indeed shaped by their environments and how it alludes to the reciprocal relationship between people and land. Choreographically, this concept along with various other perspectives that Smith provided, directly influenced and inspired the dance practices. All the scores aspired to enhance the reciprocity between people and environment.

Observation: The rain paints my windows with water droplets. Rain on my skin as I didn't make it inside before the rainfall. Wet. Soaked. Cold.

My brother and I decide to walk the few miles from our home to Lake Michigan. As the cold-water laces throughout my body, it opens places within myself that I thought had gone numb. Splashing the waves around, I feel a deeper connection to my body, my brother and the water, which we move within. We are dancing.

In her book *Chronology of Water*, Lidia Yuknavitch states:

This is something I know: damaged women? We don't think we deserve kindness. In fact, when kindness happens to us, we go a little berserk. It's threatening. Deeply. Because if I have to admit how profoundly I need kindness? I have to admit that I hid the me who deserves it down in a sadness well.¹⁷

I, like many women, have survived abuse and sexual assault. I coped with it through an eating disorder. Honestly, I never thought I would give voice to these events but these events did shape me and the work I make. When I began writing and contemplating about this project, I wrote: I immersed from this deep inner self struggle through the kindness of others and through the

¹⁷ Yuknavitch, Lidia. *Chronology of Water, a Memoir*, Portland, Hawthorne Books and Literary Arts, 2010, 76.

unconditional love of nature, in particular with water. These generous moments of connection are what inspire my dancing now.

Observation: Rain drops dance on the sand. I watch as they make puddles and then mini-ponds. Pools of water falling from the sky.

When I initially pitched my thesis proposal, I wrote about the curative effects of water in my life. I also mentioned my dance background performing within water tanks and warm ponds with Copenhagen-based artist, Pipaluk Supernova. I wanted to build a large water tank to dance within for my thesis. I was discouraged from working site-specifically, so this seemed the best way I could work with water at the time. Luckily, this idea was never actualized for which I am grateful.

Theatre and Dance Production Manager Michael Francis introduced me to potential sites at Scripps Institute of Oceanography, which were approved for a past theatre performance that never materialized. I agreed to work with these places. I spent several months from spring to fall quarters coordinating with the Theatre and Dance Department and Scripps Institute of Oceanography to secure the rehearsal and performance dates. I received a Creating Conversations Interdisciplinary Grant from the Department of Arts and Humanities at UCSD for “Waves Internal,” which helped to ensure the actualization of MIKO, *a space between*. Ultimately, the site provided not just ocean water to explore but the *relationships between* ocean, land and sky which proved to be much more interesting and enriching for my research.

The ‘Waves Internal’ grant team includes Scripps Institute of Oceanography doctoral candidates: Noél Gutiérrez-Brizuela and Lauren Kim and UCSD doctoral music candidate, Kathryn Schulmesiter. We had several meetings to discuss our research and our interests. We

also engaged in dance and musical experimentation together inspired by the oceanographers' data. "Where Water Meets Land" score in the performance was inspired by Noël Gutiérrez-Brizuela's turbulence research. These were some of our shared questions:

- How can we create repeatable scores for shorelines? Can we re-create this work along shorelines again in multiple places?
- How do music and dance shift the vibration and feeling of a place? How does place shift dance and sound?
- How can we create a reciprocity between place and people that recreates new and regenerative ways for engaging with place?
- How can we create and deepen empathic bonds with place through the practices of dance and music?

Observation: The horizon over the ocean blurs as the sky darkens. Now it is hard to decipher where sky ends and water begins.

In New Zealand, I tracked places where water and land met as a result of my conversations with Smith about movement. Smith described environmental movement as a meeting of water and land or *Taiao*. *Taiao* is the word for environment and universe in the Māori language. It combines the words: *tai* or tide with *ao* or earth/land/cloud. Movement occurs where these opposites meet.

Last year I participated in Stanford University's Compassion Cultivation Program (CCT). This program was created by the Dalai Lama with leading scholars in the field of mindfulness at Stanford. One of the key practices in this training involved inhaling the pain of a place, person or

situation and exhaling kindness to this place, person or situation. This required building a sense of internal kindness within oneself that could then be shared with others. Like water meeting land or *Taiao*, I became curious about how an internal vibration or intention could meet spaces and places we danced within. Can dance shift the vibration of a place? How can dance uplift a place? These practices became guiding principles for the generation of movement scores and approaches in MIKO, *a space between*.

Observation: The sky is black. Stars peak through a few clouds.

We are granted permission to dance from 4:30-7:00pm on weekday evenings at the site. It is winter and the sun set between 4:00- 4:30pm for most of the rehearsal process. As a result, many rehearsals were spent dancing in darkness.

Native American ecologist Robin Kimmerer recalls that when she asks her students about the human-earth relationship, all respond by saying, “it’s not good.”¹⁸ Through emission of fossil fuels and pollution, humans are radically changing the state of the environment. People are depleting and destroying the very things which they depend upon and need. It would seem that the human-environmental relationship is doomed. Yet, the project asked can the dancing body reveal otherwise?

Throughout this project, I explored with fellow dancers how dance practices can provide empathetic pathways to connect with the environment. If dance offers the body a felt knowledge of the larger ecological system which it rests within, how can this understanding alter life-style choices and regenerative actions? Kimmerer asks, “We can love the land, but does the land love

¹⁸ Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 6.

us back?”¹⁹ This question inspired the dance processes that we explored. We kept asking, what can the practice of dance reveal about the knowing of this reciprocity.

My intention for making this dance became: to create practices of kindness and gentle awareness that bring about a shift not just within dancers but also in the places that we dance within. Dancing places are both within and without us, evolving with every breathe and re-meeting us in each moment as they unearth the invisible threads between us. The practice of dancing responds with a gentle attention, a kindness and a responsible freedom in this intimately vast world that we dance together.

Dance Self, Dancing Other, Dancing Environment

“... an urgently necessary role for the arts and culture to play, would be to work toward creating alternative life-disciplines and generative social ecologies that can assist in reversing the habitual cycles of systemic creatural and environmental destruction which currently have a death-grip on our lives and on the future of the human species.”²⁰ – Michael Kliën

Ma means the space between in Japanese. Butoh performance artist Yokko Usami and I have been engaged in an on-going collaboration. Together, we co-created what we call, ‘Ma Practice.’ This practice has three parts: 1) sensing and attuning to oneself, 2) sensing and attuning to your partner and the spaces between you and your partner, and 3) sensing and attuning to place you are dancing within and all of the spaces between. Movement qualities can vary depending on day and place but a focus on inner sensitivity and subtly is encouraged. This

¹⁹ Kimmerer, Braiding Sweetgrass, 9. 340.

²⁰ Kliën, Michael. / Valk, Steve Framemakers: Choreography as an Aesthetics of Change Limerick: Daghdha Dance Company, 2008

practice continues to reveal nuances to me about my body's inter-relational nature. This practice influenced the creation of scores for MIKO, a space between. The dancers engaged in Ma Practice and elaborated upon it in rehearsals.

Ma Practice Part 1: Take a walk with a friend, preferably outside if possible. Pause. Feel your body in this moment. Notice if it desires to move in any way.

Ma Practice Observations: My right hip aches. I feel a softening my in lower back. Shoulders soften. Melting edges. Feel a gentle sway. Sway up my spine. I feel the heat of the sun on my shoulders and ground uneven underneath me. The wind wraps around me weaving me here.

Intersubjective and philosophical paradigms support an interwoven understanding of self that this dance practice reveals. Philosopher Christian de Quincey recounts that while swimming with dolphins he found a new and intersubjective way of knowing himself. Quincey claims that "intersubjectivity is an experience of engaged presence- not wholly graspable by intellectual analysis. It is at least partially extra-rational, involving feeling and direct, shared, subject to subject experience."²¹ He highlights how knowledge of oneself requires moving exchanges. In addition, phenomenologist David Abram advocates for a philosophical approach to understanding the body as an interconnected network of systems. Abram describes bodily senses

²¹ Christian de Quincey. *Radical Knowing: Understanding Consciousness through Relationship*. Park Street, 2005, 266.

as “a sort of open circuit that completes itself only in things, in others, in the encompassing earth.”²² These philosophies articulate how I experience myself while dancing.

According to dancer and scholar, Kimmerer LaMothe, “the movements- that are making us- are not properly ours, but rather enabled and supported by the movements of others moving around us, within us, passing through us, and preexisting us.”²³ Various dance artists and their practices have assisted me in understanding the self as an inter-relational system. Practices such as Barbara Dilley’s “contemplative dance practice”²⁴ and Mary Overlie’s “viewpoints” engage the dancer and ask her to attune with the space and fellow movers in order to discover movement.²⁵ Similarly, Kazuo and Yoshito Ohno’s butoh dance improvisations such as “ma” and “*hana* or becoming a flower”²⁶ and Meg Stuart’s various scores such as “levitate,” employ imagery-rich improvisations that expand the sense of self through dance.²⁷ In these improvisations, the dancer becomes a fluid matrix of movement or an engaged presence with her surroundings. These artists and their processes directly influenced and inspired my approach to making scores for MIKO, a *space between*.

Within the first few weeks of rehearsals, I spoke to dancers about viewing the dancer as a fluid matrix. One way this interwoven perspective of self can be directly noticed in the work is in the vocabulary for practices such as: allow the space to move with you. The dancers read about intersubjectivity and phenomenology and also practiced it through improvisations. We danced to find a sense of internal and external expansion in our dances.

²² David, Abram. *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*. Vintage Books, a Division of Random House, Inc., 2017. 33.

²³ Kimmerer L. LaMothe. *Why We Dance: a Philosophy of Bodily Becoming*. Columbia University Press, 2015. 267.

²⁴ Barbara Dilley. *This Very Moment: Teaching Thinking Dancing*. Naropa University Press, 2015. 30.

²⁵ Mary Overlie. *Standing in Space: the Six Viewpoints Theory & Practice*. Fallon Press, 2016

²⁶ John Barrett. et al. *Kazuo Ohno's World from without and Within*. Wesleyan University Press, 2004. 64.

²⁷ Meg Stuart and Peeters Jeroen. *Are We Here Yet? Damaged Goods*, 2014. 89.

Ma Practice Part 2: Notice the space between you and your partner. Notice how the space feels. How does the space desire to move?

Ma Practice Observation: I move, she moves. Eyes open. Eyes closed. We shift, we sync, we mirror, we play. The space between us feels charged We are dancing each other.

How can we dance with otherness? This question led me to investigate postmodern feminist critical theory in order to illuminate my understanding of otherness. Social feminist Zillah Eisenstein argues “multiplicity and cohesion exist simultaneously,”²⁸ and advocates for a diverse ecosystem of individuals working together to create “polyvocal” or various perspectives. In compliment, feminist scholar and social activist bell hooks exposes the hypocrisy and traps in postcolonial discourse, language, and thinking around the discussion of difference and advocates for a “politics of difference.”²⁹ Ecosystems depend on biodiversity just as the human matrix relies on individuation of experience. These writers reframed my understanding of systems. They also motivated me to strive for a kind of connection in this dance project that does not mean sameness but rather a multiplicity of experiences. As a result, it was important for me to include dancers from various movement backgrounds, ages and body types. We had a team of eleven unique performers ages eighteen to fifty-one.

There is a vast canon of community-inclusive and audience participatory dance works that also inspired MIKO, *a space between*. For example, Minnesota-based artist Vanessa Voskuil’s community-inclusive dance performances engage participants in St. Paul through the support of a

²⁸ Zillah Eisenstein. 2004. ‘Feminisms from Elsewheres: Seeing Polyversal Humanity’; in *Against Empire: Feminisms, Racism and the West*. London & NY. Pp: 181-226

²⁹ hooks, bell. ‘Postmodern Blackness’; in Williams, P.&Chrisman, L. Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. 421.

city-wide initiative, which makes dance more accessible to people of various ages, ethnicities and incomes. Voskuil's diverse performances also include interviews that document dancers' perspective in order to provide 'polyvocal' opinions of the process.³⁰ Joanne "Bob" Walley and Lee Miller in their practiced-based PhD performance at the University of London employed a variety of tactics to engage audience as voices and actors within the performance itself. For instance, they collected stories from local truck drivers and shared these accounts with audience on tape recordings. In their book, "Between Us" they provide various examples for finding ways to practice otherness with audience, including allowing audiences to have a varied and contradictory experiences in a performance.³¹ I will elaborate more in the performance section, but I was inspired to create a performance that allowed for space for various perspectives and experiences.

These examples also shaped my dance methodology in two key ways. One, the dancers shared journals throughout the process as a means to connect with each other and to articulate the scores and rehearsals into their own words. These words and drawings would clarify the process and refine the scores we made together. The second aspect this research highlighted was the role of audience in the work. Unlike a dark theater, the audience would not be hidden. Viewers would be viewed. I wanted to explore ways to see and allow audience into the work without asking them to perform, but acknowledging their presence. Dancers practiced noticing audience in the performance and even during rehearsals. We would often get a group of surfers or scientist or dog walkers who would stop and watch. We would acknowledge them and often they would wait until

³⁰ Vanessa Voskuil. "The Student." 2014, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³¹'Bob' Joanne Whalley, and Lee Miller. *Between Us: Audiences, Affect and the In-Between*. Red Globe Press. 2016. 240.

we took a break to talk with us about what they saw and ask questions. These dialogues with passing strangers are somewhere in the work too.

Ma Practice Part 3: Begin to feel your body and the space. How do they feel together?

How do your body and the space desire to move?

Ma Practice Observation:

Dancer Anna Halprin explains, “I have been sensuously present in my natural environments: melded with the aromatic turf of mountains, pulled in by the power of the sea, released by the shoots of birdsong in the wind...” and demonstrates how dancing can be a means for embodying the interrelated networks between body and landscapes in a deeply intimate and sensual way (qtd. in Hayes).³² Halprin’s experience confirms geographer Yi-Fu Tuan’s argument that place and space are linked systems between people and the environment.³³ Environmental works such as Ana Mendieta’s “body siluetas,”³⁴ creates life-size body sculptures made with found earth materials, and Juliet Batten’s “100 Women Project,” which encompassed a hundred women making sculptures in the sand, display practices that enrich interactions between people and the land.³⁵ In tandem, Jennifer Monson’s iLANDing scores offer numerous prompts for engaging with environment, such as keeping a diary of the weather.³⁶ These artists and works

³² Jill Hayes. “Dancing in the Spirit of Sophia.” *Dance, Somatics and Spiritualities: Contemporary Sacred Narratives*, by Amanda Williamson et al., Intellect, 2014, 77.

³³ Yi-Fu Tuan. *Space and Place: the Perspective of Experience*. University of Minnesota Press, 2014. 37.

³⁴ Untitled. (Siuetas Series). Guggenheim Museum, New York. 1978.

³⁵ 100 Women Project.” 1985, Auckland, New Zealand.

³⁶ Jennifer Monson. *A Field Guide to iLANDing: Scores for Researching Urban Ecologies*. 53rd State Press, 2017.

became a grounding force and vocabulary for the work. They directly shaped the making of the “light body” score.

I was particularly inspired by these artists because their works all have a degree of practicality. Their work asks you to get outside and dig or collect leaves or notice the weather. There is an unapologetically mundane beauty to these tasks that excites me. In creating scores for MIKO, *a space between*, I wanted engagement with the environment to be stupidly simple- a look, a touch, a feeling. Things we overlook. I was curious about how these banal actions, once slightly reexamined, could actually provide meaningful ways of reconnecting to one’s environment.

Knowledge, She Dances

“Dancing is not nonverbal. Nor is it preverbal. Dancing may actually be an ongoing enabling condition required to keep acquiring verbal knowledge throughout our lives.”³⁷

– Kimerer L. LaMothe



Image 1. Light Body near Mount Bruce, New Zealand

³⁷ LaMothe, *Why We Dance: a Philosophy of Bodily Becoming*, 278.

Practice: Trace the shape of your body in the ground with whatever natural materials are at hand. Observe the form you made. Lie in it. Dance in it. Look at it. What does it teach you about knowledge? This earth? Your sense of place?

After a performance at Aratoi Gallery in New Zealand, I engaged in a talk back with the audience. The audience was an incredibly generous group of mostly local artists, art supporters of my current residency and fellow artists in residents. We posed the question, “What is dance?” I spoke about dance as an embodied knowing of oneself in the world. Dance as a source of knowledge making and in turn dance as a way of being in the world. A fellow poet, Melanie Brown, and I noticed that both our artist talks veered away from the arts as a means of self-expression and instead suggested that artistic practices serve as means for discovering new ways of being with the world today.

Upon reflecting on this experience, I came to ask- when is knowledge ever *not* embodied? When does learning, thinking and feeling ever occur without a body? Why did I so easily make this assumption that some knowing is embodied and other kinds are not? Cartesian egoic thinking, ‘I think therefore I am,’ could perhaps be responsible for my assumption that any form of knowledge is actually disassociated from a body. The rise of phenomenology and intersubjectivity studies both rebuke the Cartesian model and recreate a new understanding of human thinking based upon experiential and inter-relational aspects. Philosopher, Christian de Quincey explains, “intersubjectivity as an experience of engaged presence- is not wholly graspable by intellectual analysis. It is at least partially extra- rational, involving feeling and direct, shared, subject to subject experience.”³⁸ Dance Artist, Ruth Zaporah explains that throughout her thirty years of dancing and acting, she found cannot separate the mind and the

³⁸ Quincey, *Radical Knowing: Understanding Consciousness through Relationship*, 267.

body.³⁹ She shares that “the body knows itself through the mind as the mind knows itself through the body.”⁴⁰ The body and mind are linked. Knowledge cannot occur detached from a body.

Alternatively, another reason that I might have categorized dance as an embodied knowledge is because dance is not text. Dance artist and scholar, Kimerer LaMothe explains that artists who dance and want to write about dance “find themselves impaled on the horns of dilemma. If they claim that it is possible to capture in words what happens in dance, they undermine their own case: the action of dancing is not important.”⁴¹ LaMothe continues to elaborate her point that if a dance writer defends dance as a kind of nonverbal and experiential knowing than dancing is not pure knowledge either because “dance has value relative to the kind of knowledge that matters most.”⁴² In other words, dance counts as knowledge when it looks like text or acts like text or when it is completely removed and taken out of textual interpretation. There has to be another way. I argue that this new way begins with re-examining our understanding of knowledge.

The etymology of the word knowledge comes from old English, *cnāwan*, which means to acknowledge or recognize. The actions of acknowledgement and recognition run throughout the dance practices of MIKO, *a space between*. In fact, one challenge to the group was to keep noticing new things in the spaces we danced within. We kept uncovering more and more things. “Did you see the hummingbird or that white puppy?” we would ask each other. Other times we said aloud what we were seeing. We found the action of acknowledging helped consistently place us in the present moment. Everything we noticed kept changing.

³⁹ Zaporah, Ruth. “Dance: A Body With a Mind of Its Own.” In *Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisational Reader* edited by Ann Cooper Albright and David Gore, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut 10 Nov. 2018. 21.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴¹ LaMothe, *Why We Dance: a Philosophy of Bodily Becoming*, 278.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 278.

Ben Spatz in his book, *What a Body Can do*, questions educational systems that require long and consistent hours of children sitting at desks writing⁴³. He argues that rather than “seeing physical education as a means to the acquisition of skills”⁴⁴ we should see it as a “critical and embodied” introduction to “physical culture.”⁴⁵ For Spatz ‘physical culture’ is understood as “a field of knowledge rather than a means to known end.”⁴⁶ Understanding knowledge as a field transforms it into something relational and systematic as opposed to a singular graspable object. It is a kind of knowledge that is qualitative as opposed to quantitative. A kind of knowledge that moves and interacts.

When knowledge is viewed as an acknowledgement or a field it acquires relationship. Instead of owning knowledge, it becomes an interaction. A meeting of me and you. Or me and sky. Or the ocean and the sand. In order to understand or learn there is an inherently symbiotic exchange. Symbiotic is defined as, “the intimate living together of two dissimilar organisms in a mutually beneficial relationship” or a “cooperative relationship.” Its definition reveals two points: One, that we exist in relationship. I cannot live without a relationship with air, water or sunlight. I cannot exist without of the context of place. I exist through noticed and unnoticed acts of reciprocity between trees, people, places and things every single day. Two, the contrast between things creates a cooperative opposition. In other words, the difference supports and creates a reciprocal relationship.

Dance transpires in these symbiotic relationships. Dance is meeting place and the exchanges between me with me, you and place. Dance is the courage to unknow in order to

⁴³ Spatz, Ben. *What a Body Can DO, Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research*, London, Routledge, 2015, 106.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 108.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 107.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 107.

know in a new way. LaMothe describes dance as a “bodily becoming.” The etymology of the word become can be traced to Old English becoman to ‘come to a place’ and the German word bekommen ‘get, receive.’ Both these origins of the word speak to the essence of embodiment. To have a body is to have a place. The body relies on the reciprocity between itself and place. Dance is the recognition and appreciation that we as humans shape our environments just as much as they are shaping us

I have come to conclude that knowledge is never without a body or embodiment. And in turn, it is never without place. Yet does not remain stagnant. It shifts, changes and interacts between things. It is not some kind of stagnant thing that we can place in a pocket or hold on to. Knowledge evolves. Knowledge dances.



Image 2. Light Body: Fjorlands National Park, New Zealand

Can the disrespect of women be mirrored in the disrespect of the land? Ecofeminist Carolyn Merchant explains that, “the ancient identity of nature as a nurturing mother links

women with ecological change (qtd. in Antill).⁴⁷ The Maōri word for land is *whenua* and it means both land and placenta. Scholar Joseph Campbell remarked that women are described as “land, water, and sustainer of life” throughout world myth.⁴⁸ These examples prove that there is an undeniable likeness through world cultures of land as woman. This parallel pushes me to ask what is the role of women today given our ecological crisis?

While traveling throughout New Zealand, I read Yi-Fu Tuan’s *Place and Space* and Janice P. Antil’s *Sophia Geography, Exploring Spirituality, Landscape and Archetypes*. Both provided theoretical frameworks for being with landscape, place and space. Antil discusses the separation created in patriarchal cultures between the celestial, light or spiritual and the earth. This fragmentation has led to rampant disassociation and ultimately destruction of land as well as most things other than man. In Maōri culture, man is viewed as a guardian of the land, animals and all sentient beings. In Christian culture man is given dominion over all living beings. Antil claims that the patriarchal culture ownership and control over land as well as women have been linked.⁴⁹ There is a parallel between our glorification and ownership of beautiful landscapes and the subjectification and objectification of women.⁵⁰ Lucy Lippard adds, “Men have dominated the field of landscape photography just as they have dominated the land itself. Thus, shooting a virgin landscape has been man's work - hunting, not gardening.” This research begged the question that had to be asked before beginning this work: How do I work site-specifically as a women with a team of all female collaborators?

I am still unpacking this question. Choreographically, especially in the last few years and in creating MIKO, *a space between*, I have felt increasingly inspired to emphasize feminine or

⁴⁷ Antill, *Sophia Geography*, 90.

⁴⁸ Campbell, Joseph. *Goddess: Mysteries of the Feminine Divine*, The Joseph Campbell Foundation, 2013. 14-21.

⁴⁹ Antill, *Sophia Geography*, 117.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 119.

yin qualities (possessed by men, women and nonbinaries) in my work such as: receiving, resting, listening, being or surrendering. Mostly because I need them. I need these qualities to not be subordinate but valued in my life and in my culture. According to geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, space transforms to place in the pause.⁵¹ Place is a “pause in movement” because the pause makes it possible for a locality to become a center of felt value.⁵² I have found in my own life, I wasn’t pausing long enough to actually feel a place or feel myself. Slowing down in my dance practice shifted everything. I am still in a phase of pausing long enough to feel my breath and feet again. For me, this is gardening as opposed to hunting. It requires patience and the results might take time to notice. In fact, much of the movement might remain underground for some time. But overtime, the seeds become a sustainable source of dance nourishment.

These are some of the research seeds planted before I began rehearsing MIKO, *a space between*.

⁵¹ Tuan, *Space and Place*, 3.

⁵² *Ibid.* 6.

CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS



Figure 4. Hermetic Symbols for Water and Land⁵³

All of the scores and practices for MIKO, *a space between* were directly influenced and formed by the eight female dancers, three musicians and four designers as well as the sites we danced in: La Shores Beach, Pawka Lawn and Vaughan Hall. They would be different with different dancers and different places. The scores look for simple, doable actions that can shift the felt experience of place in daily life. These practices ask what transformations might occur by dancing consistently as a group at these sites.

These are some of our questions:

- Can the dance become a means to shift or uplift not just ourselves but the places that we inhabit?
- Can a group of eleven women with shared dancing intentions create ripple effects on the energetic matrix we exist within?
- How does the act of dancing embody these multiple ways of knowing/being/experiencing in the world?
- How can dancing remind and reconnect the body to its simultaneously present and historical consciousness?
- What is displacement? How does it aid in knowing placement?

⁵³ Wheeler, *Alchemical Symbols*, 12.

- What is the experience of ancestry embodied? How can amnesia pasts and broken lines of history be present in the dancing practice?
- How does dance connect me to the water layer of my body? How does water connect me to layers of me? You? Place?
- Who am I and who are we when in the state of dancing?
- How can dancing illuminate new ways to engage in the world?
- When is dance an act kind of kindness?

To address these questions, we practiced and co-created many different scores, space cleansing exercises and games. We also drew upon aspects from The River Principle Score from my prior project, *The Human Body Time Machine*. We condensed these explorations into four main scores for the performance of MIKO, *a space between*. These main scores are: Light Body, Where Water Meets Land, Where Water and Land Meet Sky, and Web of Light. Since The River Principle score influenced the directions and intentions of these scores, I will begin by briefly describing this score. Next, I will describe the four main scores. I will provide the research questions that motivated the score followed by the score’s directions for dancers.

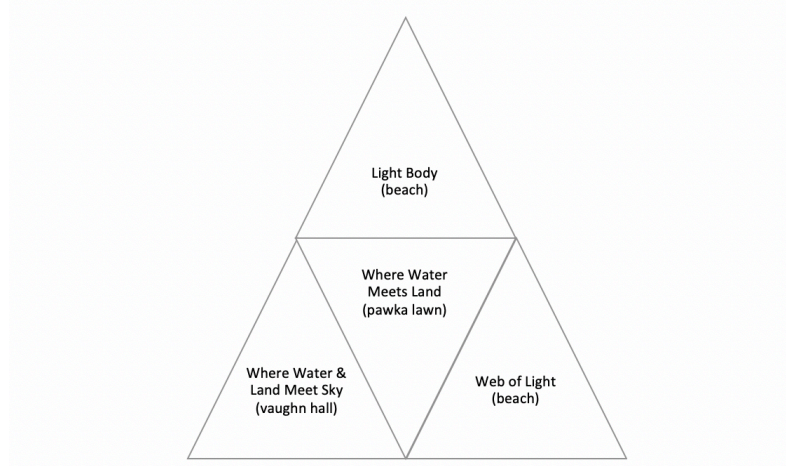


Figure 5. MIKO, *a space between* Score Chart

The River Principle

“What is magic? In the deepest sense, magic is an experience. It’s the experience of finding oneself alive within a world that is itself alive. It is the experience of contact and communication between oneself and something that is profoundly different from oneself: a swallow, a frog, a spider weaving its web.”⁵⁴ – David Abram

This score was inspired by the Sanbeski River Valley in Gunma, Japan and *shinrin-yoku* (森林浴) or Japanese forest bathing, the practice of resting in nature as therapeutic means for healing. It began with the questions, “how can dance nourish me?” How can I be in a practice that sustains me – all of me- body, mind, spirit and soul? At its core, this score uses feminine/yin principles to generate movement.

This score investigates time, in particular the feeling of eternal time. What can my body tell me about eternal time? For my body eternal time felt like a kind of embrace, a kind of being held-ness and a flow. Like a river’s pattern it was at once “still and moving.” Inspired by the dual nature of a river, I created the score.

Directions for Dancers:

This score is simple. It is practical. It begins with resting and allowing the earth to hold you/me/us. It might just stay here. It might also move into me moving/changing/ or the passing present. How can you do less and receive the dance more? Quite simply, how can you allow for other things in the space to do some of the work too. Or all of it.

The River Principle Both/Add Word Box:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Eternal time Intersubjective | Passing present Subjective |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|

⁵⁴ Abram. *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*, 88.

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| WE | Me |
| Ocean | Drop of Water |
| Dancing | Dancer |
| Wet | Dry |
| Interactive happening | Happening of one thing |
| Being held | Holding |
| Gray Whale post-chase caress | Gray Whale Mating Chase |
| Song | Voice |
| Flipper consciousness | Thumb consciousness |
| Being done through me | Doing |
| Conduit | Maker |
| Resting Shapes | Forming |

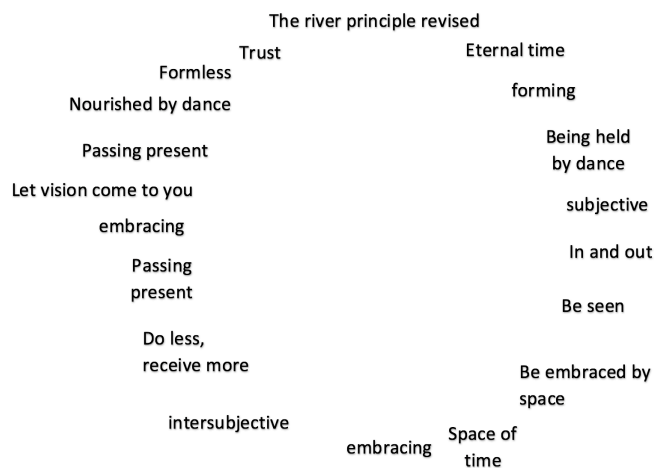


Figure 6. The River Principle Score

After this experience I wrote:

As a dance maker, I found this score to be an act of trust. The more I trusted in the dancers and gave them space to find the dance, the more they trusted in themselves and the places we were dancing. This trust could also be described as a trust in the creative intelligence of the universe that surrounds us and as is within us.

Six of the eight dancers in MIKO, *a space between* performed The River Principle Score *Human Body Time Machine*. We practiced this score at the beginning of the rehearsal process and it became fertile soil from which the other scores grew.

Light Body Score

“I’ve come to the conclusion that we’ll never become people of this earth until we experience becoming one with the universe. Above all else, we’ve got to realize that we belong to, and are part of this entire universe”⁵⁵ -Kazuo Ohno

After I completed my second-year project and spent several months of practicing The River Principle score, I was interested in the action of embracing. How is the body embraced by space? In tandem to this inquiry, I became fascinated with the works of Ana Mendieta particularly her body siluetas.⁵⁶ Mendieta would form, mold and shape her body into various natural locations.⁵⁷ She worked at various sites such as shorelines, forests and fields in the United States, Mexico, Cuba and Italy. As a Cuban-American immigrant the siluetas were at times a search for home or belonging; they were also connected to Mendieta’s spiritual explorations in Afro-Cuban Orishi rituals.⁵⁸ She lit some of her siluetas on fire with candles and explosions. Most of the light bodies are photographed and filmed without her physical body in the image.

I was introduced to Mendieta in “Land and Light” independent study course with Professor Alena William. This course exposed me to a vast array of site-specific and land art works. In New Zealand, I came across the work of ecofeminist, Juliet Batten, who did a piece “100 women” with a hundred women at a shoreline outside of Auckland.⁵⁹ Batten asked women to build circular mounds together and then share experiences about shifts and changes in their lives. Her hopes were to bring women together through the environment.

⁵⁵ Ohno, Kazuo. *Kazuo Ohno’s World From Without and Within*. Wesleyan University Press, 2004, 264.

⁵⁶ Breder, Hans, and Klaus-Peter Busse. *Intermedia: Enacting the Liminal*. Books on Demand, 2005, 22.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-11.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁹ “100 Women Project.” 1985, Auckland, New Zealand.

I felt a guttural reaction and fascination with both Medieta's and Batten's works and began to explore the practice of tracing my body in various locations. Sometimes the body would be more a mound and sometimes it would be more literal. Always, I would work with a spot of earth and what was there. Sand. Fallen leaves. Pebbles. Over time, this grew into a practice called light body as an homage to Medieta's work. Throughout my time in New Zealand, I made over fifty light bodies.

While making a light body I would notice the shape of light pouring over it. This got me thinking about light. Light is often a metaphor for knowledge. Antil's *Sophia Geography* explains that there is a presence that she calls Sophia or wisdom in the land that needs to be reconnected with.⁶⁰ These simple sculptures initiated a provocative dialogue between myself and the land. They were an acknowledgement that at some point my body will return to land. Making a light body provided a moment to connect body, feet, hands to earth. Like the practice of Japanese forest bathing, they provided time in nature to rebalance. Lying in the light bodies, the knowledge I received was sensorial, vibrational and felt like the movement of light.

Light Body Score Directions for Dancers:

Make light bodies of your body in fetal position facing the ocean. Head to north, feet to south. To be done in pairs. Mark one large arch/half circle around the body on ground (from feet to forehead) and then trace the front body from toes to head. Dig about one shovel's width deep into sand and pile sand to circular edge making a half circle.

Spend a moment in your light body. You can: lie down, dance, stand or sit in your light body. Notice its shape. Listen, does it have a message for you? Allow it to remind you that your body is of the land and will return to the land. Feel the sun move through you and into the

⁶⁰ Antill, *Sophia Geography*, 191.

ground and feel connected to the circuit of light streaming through you from the sky to the ground and back from the ground through you to the sky. Know that at your deepest essence you are a conduit for light. Feel the light within you at your center charged with your internal light, your eternal loving-kindness. Rest in this light and connection.

This score was created with dancers and set designer, Yi-Chien Lee. We tried various shapes and formations but the fetal position with a half circle created along the spine was our collective favorite. Yi-Chien loved the half circle shape. Upon learning more information about the native peoples of La Jolla, the Shell Midden and Luiseño tribes,⁶¹ we discovered that they practiced flex-burials, which is to be buried in the fetal position. This affirmed the decision.



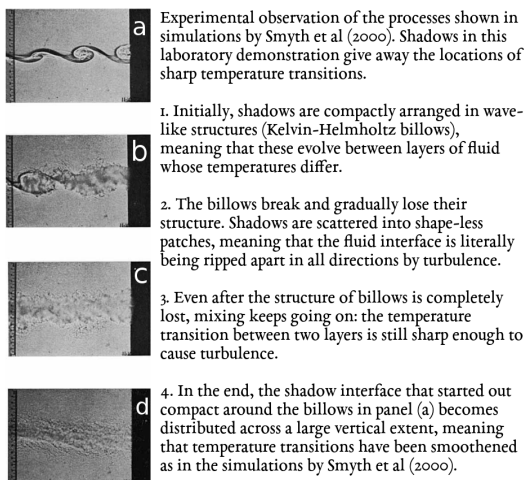
Image 3. Light body Score Photos

⁶¹ Carter, Nancy Carol. *Chronology of the Indigenous Peoples of San Diego County*
<https://www.sandiego.edu/native-american/chronology/> (accessed Dec 1, 2018)

Where Water Meets Land Score

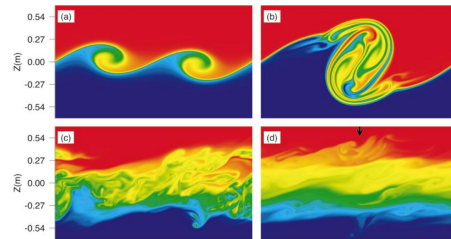
“Everything waits to be noticed.”⁶² – Art Garfunkel

For this score we addressed the research questions: How do we meet place and how does it meet us when dancing? This score’s title stems from my conversations with Rawiri Smith on *taiāo* or the movement found where water meets land. It is also influenced by Waves Internal’s grant team oceanographers Noël Gutiérrez-Brizuela and Lauren Kim’s research on wave and cloud patterns. Gutiérrez-Brizuela shared the effects of turbulence in his research on waves. He explained how water movement patterns are formed through the contrast in water temperatures. These shapes ultimately dissolve into each other through turbulence or a merging of their opposite states. Both Gutiérrez-Brizuela shared graphs that displayed the patterns which demonstrated how ‘complimentary opposition’ creates shape and dissolution.

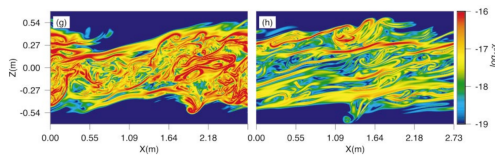


From Thorpe, S.A. Experiments on instability and turbulence in a stratified shear flow. *Journal of Fluid Mechanics* (1973)

Computer simulations of two layers of fluid mixing through turbulence. Initially (panel a), warm (red) and cold (blue) water are separated by a very sharp transition. However, as time progresses (panel b, c, and so on) turbulence acts to mix everything together. The wavelike pattern puts cold (heavier) water above warm (lighter) water, which is unstable and the crazy patterns emerge. As a result, in the end configuration (panel d) the transition from cold to warm water is smooth: turbulence created new layers of water with intermediate temperatures.



Below, panels g and h now use color to present the “Turbulent rate of thermal dissipation,” which (as its name suggests) results from turbulence and acts to smooth out sharp gradients in temperature. In other words, this is what actually transformed the initial temperature configuration (panel a) into the smooth thermal gradient in panel d.



From Smyth, B. et al, The Efficiency of Mixing in Turbulent Patches: Inferences from Direct Simulations and Microstructure Observations. *Journal of Physical Oceanography* (2000)

Figure 7. Noel’s Research On Turbulence.

⁶² Garfunkel, Art. *Everything Waits to be Noticed*. Blue Note Records. 2002.

‘Complimentary opposition’ became a key concept in this score for investigating the meeting of two different things: self and space; self and other; water and land.

The dance in this score is almost invisible. It is simple yet internally complex, expansive and state-inducing. The dancers worked closely with their gaze, breath (the whole score is patterned to breath) and their connections with fellow dancers and with the space. The dancers reveal the space to themselves, each and audience.



Image 4. Pawka Lawn

My research interest in viewing place with a traveler’s curiosity that looks closely with this care and attention prompted this score’s gaze work. I was inspired by Nancy Holt’s land art in which she frames how viewers see the space through varying circular shapes⁶³. Similarly, in workshops and classes with dance makers Katie Duck and Yolande Snaith, I practiced eye gazing techniques such as looking near, close and far while dancing. I wanted to make a dance that invited dancers and audience to see the space from these various perspectives.

⁶³ Williams, Alena J., and Pamela M. Lee. *Nancy Holt: Sightlines*. University of California Press, 2015. 10-22

The site for this score, Pawka Lawn, co-created the score as well. Pawka Lawn used to be the original Scripps Library but is now an open lawn with several semicircular blocks in rows like an amphitheater. The blocks provided various perspectives for viewing the space from sitting to standing to walking around.



Image 5. Dancers In Rehearsal

We benefited from Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen’s research on body fluids as well as the use of the breath to inform ways of meeting the space with our bodies. Both breath and fluid patterns originated from the heart space: the lungs and heart respectively. We especially focused our awareness on the heart space in the body as the origin of the movement. We used the pathways of both the lymphatic and intercellular fluids, which Cohen explains move in towards the heart and out to the extremities respectively.⁶⁴ We traced, felt and experienced the patterns of water

⁶⁴ Cohen, Bonnie Bainbridge. Sensing, Feeling, and Action, The Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering,

meeting flesh in our bodies. We paired this imagery with breath: inhale lymphatic awareness of water moving towards heart and exhale intercellular awareness of water moving from heart to extremities into the space. We would continue to use breath in various other patterns which linked our breathing with our movement throughout the score, which is elaborated on below.

Where Water Meets Land Score Directions for Dancers:

This score expands the dancers' attention and energy with this space. Like a ripple this score slowly expands awareness and spacial orientation as it progresses. We begin with resting shapes and we feel the support of another body and/or the space. We feel the space as alive, supportive and nourishing. We continue to activate the space and each other with our breath, gaze and movement.

Intention and Focus: This scores meets, connects and acknowledges. We use this acknowledgement to very gently and slowly refuel both us and the space inside and out. Our gaze and movements open and expand space both around us and within us. There is a gentle expansion that occurs as we choose to listen, see and recognize ourselves, each other, the audience and the space. As we acknowledge the space through breath, gaze and touch we also gain and merge with its support. We acknowledge that the space is moving and shaping us. When in doubt allow the space to dance you.

Basic Pattern: Inhale, be formed by space. Exhale, dissolve into the space. Repeat.

Notes: This is true is when in resting shapes, partner walk, 'square dances' and 'F-cubed.' When sitting or lying down, the space might form you differently than walking or dancing but the same actions remain the same.

Contact Editions, 1993. 66-83.

There are many different portals we explored to enter this score. All of these ways either emphasize seeing the body as water and land, and/or the aliveness of the space. All of the following portals can be used in the score. Portals include:

- The Gaze (visual)

This score began with us looking at the space: near (something close i.e. hands), middle (mid-range gaze i.e. the flower about 5 feet from me) and far (the distance such as the horizon). Try speaking aloud everything you notice.

Pattern: Inhale see the space and allow what you see to form you. Exhale and soften as you allow the gaze to expand to the space around what you were being formed by.

Notes: Shift from seeing things that are close, medium and far and let yourself be surprised by whatever your gaze catches.

- The Gaze II with Touch (visual and kinesthetic)

This score is similar to gaze but adds touch.

Pattern: Inhale see the space and touch what you see (If near physically touch and if far imaginatively). Exhale and soften as you allow your gaze to expand around whatever you were touching.

- Water Body Fluids (kinesthetic)

This portal uses the research of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen on the circulation of the body. It also connects to the pattern of a shoreline: i.e. a wave that pulls in and then expands out on the shore.

Pattern: Inhale, draw water from extremities to the heart as you allow the skin of your body to take form. Exhale, allow the water within your body to flow from your heart to your extremities and into space.

Notes: The fluids of the body do the ‘heavy lifting’ in this score. It helps to activate your lymphatic body (inhale) and intercellular (exhale) water ways.

- The Image of the ocean waves on the sand (visual)

This portal expands upon the Water Body Fluids but in a visual way. It uses the imagery of a wave on a shore for emphasis.

Pattern: Inhale and envision how the waves pull away from the shore and reveal the form of the sand/rocks/earth beneath as your body makes a form. Exhale and envision how the waves pour over the sand as you allow your form to dissolve.

Notes: In this sense your body is a shoreline- forming as the waves move away and dissolving as the waves come to the shore, again and again.

- An embrace between you and the space (kinesthetic)

This portal relates to the embrace work with partners throughout the score. The embrace work reminds us that the space is embracing us with the ground, sky, air and gravity in every moment. When we connect with a partner in an embrace it reminds the body of this embrace of space through the touch of a partner. We practiced this score with partner’s guiding touch for a kinesthetic memory.

Pattern: Inhale, allow the space to embrace you into a form. Exhale, soften into the space and its embrace.

Notes: We are allowing the parts of our body around the heart, back of heart and arms to be especially activated here (which is similar to the Water Body Fluid). As with all the scores, we let the space form us. Just as our partner formed us. We soften into the space just as our partner held us.

- Free Form Flow or F-cubed

This portal culminates others to allow for more continuous movement.

Pattern: Inhale form. Exhale formless. Shift direction to every direction (North, East, South, West). Repeat. Other ways to think about it: Inhale land, exhale water.

Notes: You can play with your timing-staying in a form or dissolve for longer or shorter periods. The most important thing is to keep breathing and allow yourself to see the space as you shift directions. Let all your previous focus and the space support you here. If it feels easeful, flow between several different portals throughout this score as a means to explore various passageways in your body.

The order of Where Water Meets Land varied slightly for each dancer. It is designed so each dancer has similar but subtly different patterns. It moved as follows:

1. Resting Shapes
 - A. (together, apart)- different for each pair.
 - B. embracing, partner walking through space
2. Partner Dance to Square Dance: Embrace: Inhale into space- be formed. Exhale dissolve into space. Shift facing, repeat. Inhale make eye contact with person on your group. Exhale find each other and embrace. Repeat. Eventually shifting partners with group.
3. Square Dance to F³. See space. Catch someone's gaze. Catch audience's gaze and expand.

This score rests on the power of acknowledgment. How can we see and be with ourselves, each other and the space again and again? The acknowledgement of each other and space allow both to do the dancing with us. To move us. To shape us. There are many portals for a reason, so that you can keep looking at the same place in many different ways. It challenges the

dancer to find new ways to see the space. In turn, the space can open up new forms for you to witness within yourself.

At times this score might feel impossible. It rests on trusting that the space is alive and can move with you. The score is here to help you get out of your way so that the space can show you its way. Allow your breath and gaze to help you stay present in the score.

Where Water and Land Meet Sky Score

“What is dancing actually? To dance is to channel and you don’t have to know that your channeling. It’s something that moves you that’s invisible. You’re following something, your being moved by something.” – Lisa Nelson on the Transpersonal⁶⁵

Where Water and Land Meet Sky score was made with Vaughan Hall, which was under construction for the entire rehearsal process. There was scaffolding throughout the building as the roof was being remodeled. As a result, the only spaces available to dancers were the balconies. We almost always rehearsed inside Vaughan Hall at night. The darkness drew our attention to the sky and stars. We began to explore how we could pull down and activate sky energy into the space. It was especially interesting to explore this idea in a place where we could not see the ceiling. Yet, the open four floor corridor did provide a vertical quality in the architecture of the space.

Vaughan Hall felt different to myself and the dancers compared to the lawn or the beach spaces. Dancers said the building felt anxious, stressful, unhappy or haunted. They didn’t feel positive vibrations in this place. Inspired by mikos we spent a of time exploring ways to the clear

⁶⁵ Nelson, Lisa in *Landscape of the Now, A Topography of Movement Improvisation* by Kent de Spain, New York, Oxford University Press, 2014. 84.

and shift the energy of the space. Jasper Sussman, the composer and vocalist, was inspired by our movement and asked if we could explore sounding as another means to purify the space and dancers. She led the dancers through two intensive sound healing sessions during which she guided dancers to bring sound into certain parts of their body. The dancers noticed that sounding shifted how they felt in Vaughan Hall. The sound work became a basis for the score-to uplift ourselves and hopefully the space.

Compositionally, this score was also influenced by the set and costume designers Yi-Chien Lee and Doddi Vincze, who desired to hang the dancers' jackets throughout the open stairwell. I loved the idea of passing jackets and layers of ourselves to each other. It connected back to research questions about the difference between internal and external spaces. The jackets became things we were releasing or purifying as well as the things that connected us. Coincidentally, Oceanographer Lauren Kim observed that the dancers' actions of circulating their jackets mirrored how the ocean purifies itself through a "conveyor belt" circulation system.⁶⁶ Where Water and Land Meet Sky score was truly a collaboration with sound and

⁶⁶ Talley, Lynne D. *Closure of the Global Overturning Circulation Through the Indian, Pacific and Southern Oceans: Schematics and Transports*. *Oceanography*, Special Issue for P. Niiler. Scripps Institute of Oceanography February 19, 2013.

design. As a result, the desires from sound and design would form the main movement patterns for dancers.

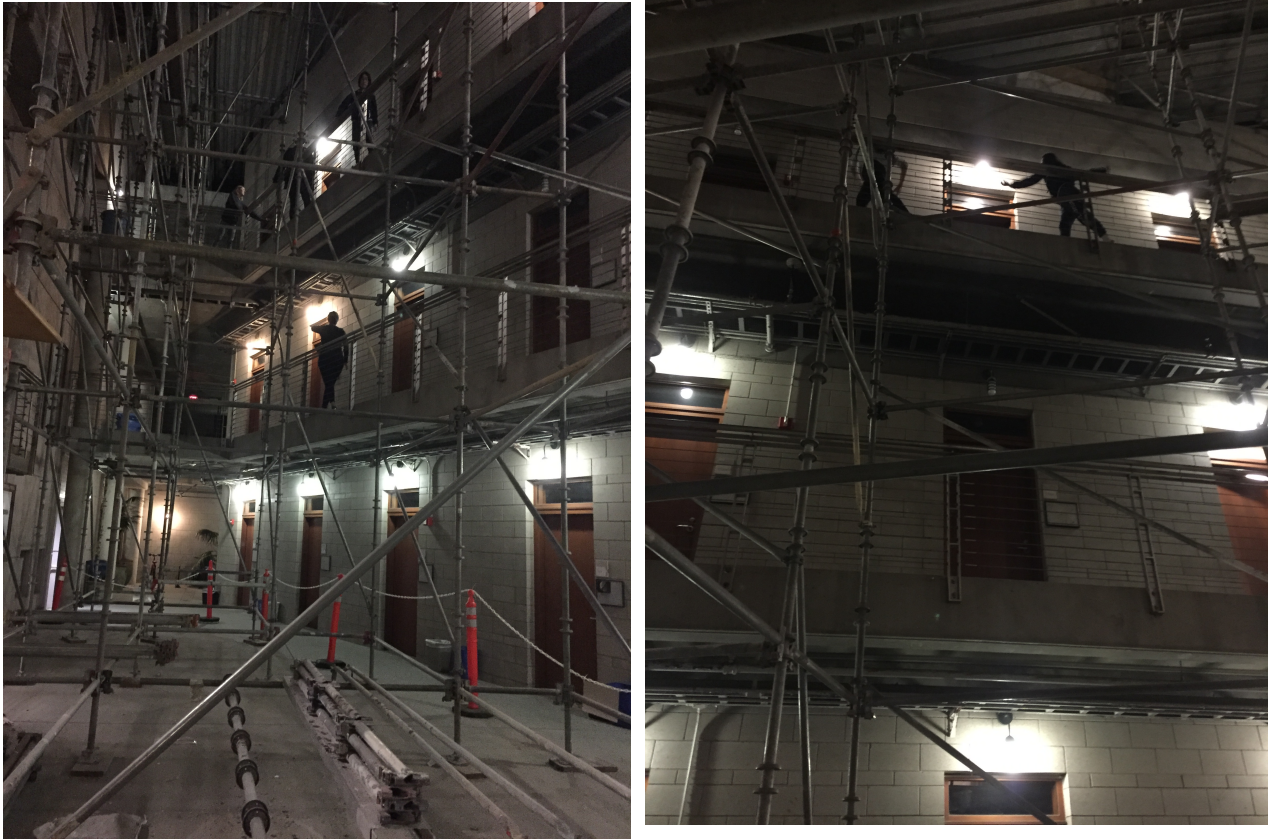


Image 6. Vaughan Hall Rehearsal Photos

Where Water and Land Meet Sky Score Directions for Dancers:

General Patter: Active the energy of the sky, particularly the stars. Channel this light energy through our hands, movement and sounding to purify and uplift yourself, each other, the audience and the space.

Intention and focus: To bring light and healing into our bodies through movement and sound. As we purify and uplift ourselves and each other, we hope to purify and uplift the space and audience as well.

Order of Score:

1. Hands & Texts: As I touch/rub/open and close hands I am activating my palms with light. I am pulling starlight down from my sky through head (particularly back of eyes) and out hands.
2. Sky Arm Phrase: As I see others and the space, I draw in starlight and move it into space, my body, my fellow dancers and the audience.
3. Group Body Song: I move this light through space with my dance and then with my sound/voice and even with my jacket. Through touching, exchanging jackets and singing with the group, I merge with them as we collectively heal ourselves.

Notes for sounding: Start sounding and notice where you sense a shift or a vibration (a sympathetic vibration) in your body, or notice a space in yourself, the one that comes to your consciousness first, and intentionally sing with that space in your attention, noticing any shifts. Explore vowels... finding the spaces in between the words “why” and “yow”... u o a e i, i e a o u. There may be sympathetic vibrations in different areas of the head if they’re directing their breath or their sound, say, out the front of the bridge of their nose vs. out the top of their head.. or with lower sounds, in their chest. They’ll get more vibration if they direct it that way, just by thinking, and send more air into the sound. Notice the natural resonance occurs because of the shape you’re making (vowels) and how that shape pairs with the pitch you’re singing, so this is a concept to explore.. low low will be ahhhhh, middle low eeee, and as they rise, ooooooh, uhhh, aaaah.. just making more open shapes. But that’s just something they can play with or think about as an aside.

Where Water & Land Meet Sky Part II

I did not originally intend to dance in this project. However, I debated potentially performing the solo I performed this past summer in New Zealand and at Movement Research's open performance this past fall. Composer Jasper Sussman suggested placing the solo between Vaughan Hall and beach sections. Her hope was that it could surprise the audience to discover dancers on the beach as well as provide a connecting thread from Vaughan Hall to the beach. As a result, this score connects Where Water and Land Meet Sky with Web of Light scores.

The original solo stems from research on kites. Smith explained that the Maōri believed the kite was a messenger and connector of the body with the spirit world. It was also influenced by the statue, Spring Stirring, which is located up the hill just north of Vaughan Hall. I face this statue in the solo and mirror its shape. The dancers and I often visited this statue to make offerings and acknowledge the ancestral energy in this space. The solo became a small offering to the native people of this site as well as a blessing for this energy to continue to grow. I used the 'Ma Practice' to generate three observations which formed the three sections of the dance.



Image 7. Spring Stirring at Scripps Institute of Oceanography

Score for Where Water and Land Meet Sky II:

A prayer to Spring Stirring. A statue. A place. A person. A feeling. A space between us.

1.

Wrapped in something soft.

Open eyes to feet to horizon. Held. Melt.

Night sky many stars in elbows and bellies.

2.

The clouds around me hold me up.

Front, back, side to side

The floor below me, she is a current.

Back, forth, side to side

Hips and fingertips connect and weave webs

3.

Flames on shoulders.

Hot. Cold.

Open. Close. Wings.

Feel Waves as

They brush down your spine

Colliding smooth.

Like rocks on waves and waves on rocks.

Becoming in the spaces between.

Web of Light

“Coastal Areas, beaches, and inland waterways appear to be particularly efficacious in this regard. Regular contact with these and other natural environments reduce health inequalities by providing three major health benefits: a reduction in stress, increased physical activity, and stronger communities....”⁶⁷ – Wallace Nichols

La Jolla Shores co-created this score with us. Dancing on the beach at night, we again felt drawn to light and heat. We also felt a sense of joy, gratitude and appreciation for the ocean that we desired to share with audience. This score stems from the previously mentioned imagery of kites and flying kites. The dancer’s running forms are also inspired by Lauren Kim’s research on the water temperatures of La Jolla Shores during the exact times of our performance. These temperature changes are a reflection of the effect of the sunlight’s movement (sunset) throughout the score and relate to the dancers’ intention of working with light.

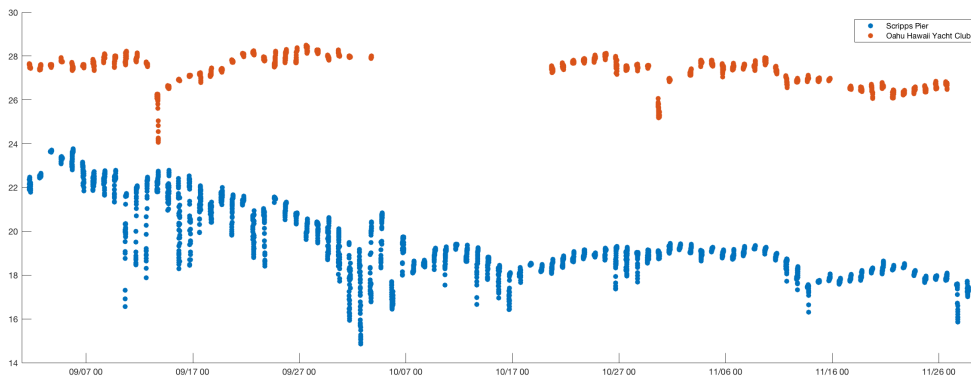


Figure 8. Lauren Kim’s Temperature Research

⁶⁷ Wallace, Nichols. *Blue Mind: The Surprising Science That Shows How Being Near, In, On, or Under Water Can Make You Happier, Healthier, More Connected, and Better at What You Do*, Back Bay Books, Little, Brown and Company, 2015.198.

Directions for Dancers in Web of Light Score:

Pattern: Run as if you were flying a kite the patterns of the water temperature. This movement eventually leads the whole group into an orbital clump from which we break out and start moving like a wave towards audience and back to water in a wave-like motion.

Focus and Intention: The final time at the beach is an opportunity to weave all the threads of light and kindness created in our bodies, in the group, and in the space together. As we weave this web of light, we uplift ourselves and the audience in its support and grace. We can relax, release and enjoy the work, focus and transformation of the dance. We connect the energy made in our light bodies pre-show to this moment now. Think of the body like a kite ready to lift off. You must move quickly to get enough momentum to fly and you must also feel rooted to the earth and your light body. You are again channeling this light from your light body through the space, in all directions as well as above and below including the audience. Your feet are the strings that connect you to the earth and your heart is the center of the kite. You weave light together and into the sky and stars and with each other.

Score Order

1. Run your water temperature pattern. Some dancers lie stand in light body.
2. Gather in moon orbital clump trying to stay between your sun and your earth.
3. Find a forward and backward motion running to audience and shoreline. Run to walk.

Then some dancers run into ocean. Return.

4. Bow.

Notes on Process

The process as a whole had some unexpected developments worth mentioning. For instance, the entire collaborative team of performers and designers just happened to be all women. Although, it was never a requirement of the research, this arrangement certainly shifted the group dynamic. Feminine or yin principles and perspectives such as receiving space, surrendering and allowing already run deep within my work and practices. This configuration made these feminine/yin qualities even more pronounced. Interestingly, mikos in Japan are also only women. When discussing our all-female cast with the dancers, we agreed that we felt dually a sense of empowerment and vulnerability. These feelings continued during the performance as well.

I should also mention that a dancer had to leave at the end of December due to a family emergency. I tried replacing her but the whole cast agreed it was too late in the process to have a new member join. As a result, I took her place. This changed some of the choreography especially for Alisha, who was this dancer's partner in the first twenty minutes of the performance. I find performing as well as directing a work to be challenging. Luckily, my stage manager, Willie, was incredibly supportive. She encouraged me to step out and watch during tech which I did and she took notes for me when I rejoined. Willie was generous and supportive and I am very grateful for her assistance. Yet, the dynamic was challenging and not ideal.

Another aspect of the rehearsal process that surprised me was the importance of ritual. We began each rehearsal with an opening and closing circle. We spent a lot of time investigating the ancestral history of the land and learning about the Shell Midden People, who were Paleo Native Americans said to originally inhabit the shores.⁶⁸ After one month of rehearsing, I began

⁶⁸ Carter, *Chronology of the Indigenous Peoples of San Diego County* <https://www.sandiego.edu/native-american/chronology/>

making offerings of tobacco, different stones and shells to the space and its ancestors every rehearsal. I asked for permission and offered gratitude. The dancers joined me often. Over two months, we buried tons of crystals throughout the area. Each dancer also assumed the role of being a guardian for a certain elemental aspect of the space, which included: sun, moon, grass, trees, wind, sand, rock and ocean. Each guardian led the dancers in warm-ups to attune us with their particular element. Adding ritual reminded me of my work with Meg Stuart in which we worked with a witch, who invited us to call in the four directions and elements for the dance making. We would incorporate acknowledging the directions especially in the “Where Water Meets Land” score. I also took a workshop with Keith Hennessy that played with reframing rituals. He had us bury dancers and make their ‘graves’ into sculptures. This memory resurfaced while working with the light bodies and the research on flexed burials. All of these rituals, especially the acknowledging and offering to the ancestral energy in the space, greatly altered how we experienced each place and the dance. Ritual proved to be a powerful and necessary tool in this process.

Throughout the rehearsal process, all eight dancers shared four collective journals. The journals were another place to meet, share and process the dance rehearsals. Dancers wrote or drew pictures to articulate their experiences with the scores. Below are some entries:

connected
adjusted
effortful & effortless
self & other
finding balance in relationship
in sync
quiet
sensitive
↗ finding each other's comfort
go with flow
easy
attuning nervous systems
↘ bumping into each other at first a lot
strong unison
being in sync at first felt mechanical
giving permission to do your own thing
helped relax - easier than to move
in between being in sync & finding
own movement

Image 8. Dancer's Observations for Where Water Meets Land Score

Friday 16 November

Thank you

for inviting me to take up space
to exist inbetween
with all of you

I feel that dancing & being in these spaces
feeds the abandoned parts of myself.

connecting my spirit to my body & my body
to the earth & back again.

I resonate deeply with the idea that MKO has
something to do with uplifting & healing space.
our connections to one another are powerful.

I sometimes like to think of it as emotional
weather. By intentionally moving in a space,
& with each other & within our selves,
I think ^{agree that} we can create an emotional
weather that uplifts & heals us.

This has required quite a bit of bravery. I haven't felt
comfortable dancing in front of other people before.

I get nervous before our rehearsals, but
once I'm with everyone that melts away.

Thank you. Ella

Image 9. Ella's Journal Entry on Dance Research

(11/27)
After Tuesday's rehearsal my body was buzzing from all the sounding. Jasper had worked on my feet and I could still feel it walking back to my car. I am really excited about the voice work. Also found the fluid-inspired movement helpful for connecting with the space in new ways.
—Alisha

Image 10. Alisha's Observations on Sounding with Jasper

11/30 - Recalling the rehearsal after Thanksgiving - the task of finding spaces and seeing them from all directions - loved playing with upside down and subtle changes where a plant or tree limb blocks part of the view and with a small movement of the head the view changes and something new is revealed... tree limbs framing and re-framing what I see... exploration of negative space
Alisha

Image 11. Alisha's Where Water Meets Land Score Observations

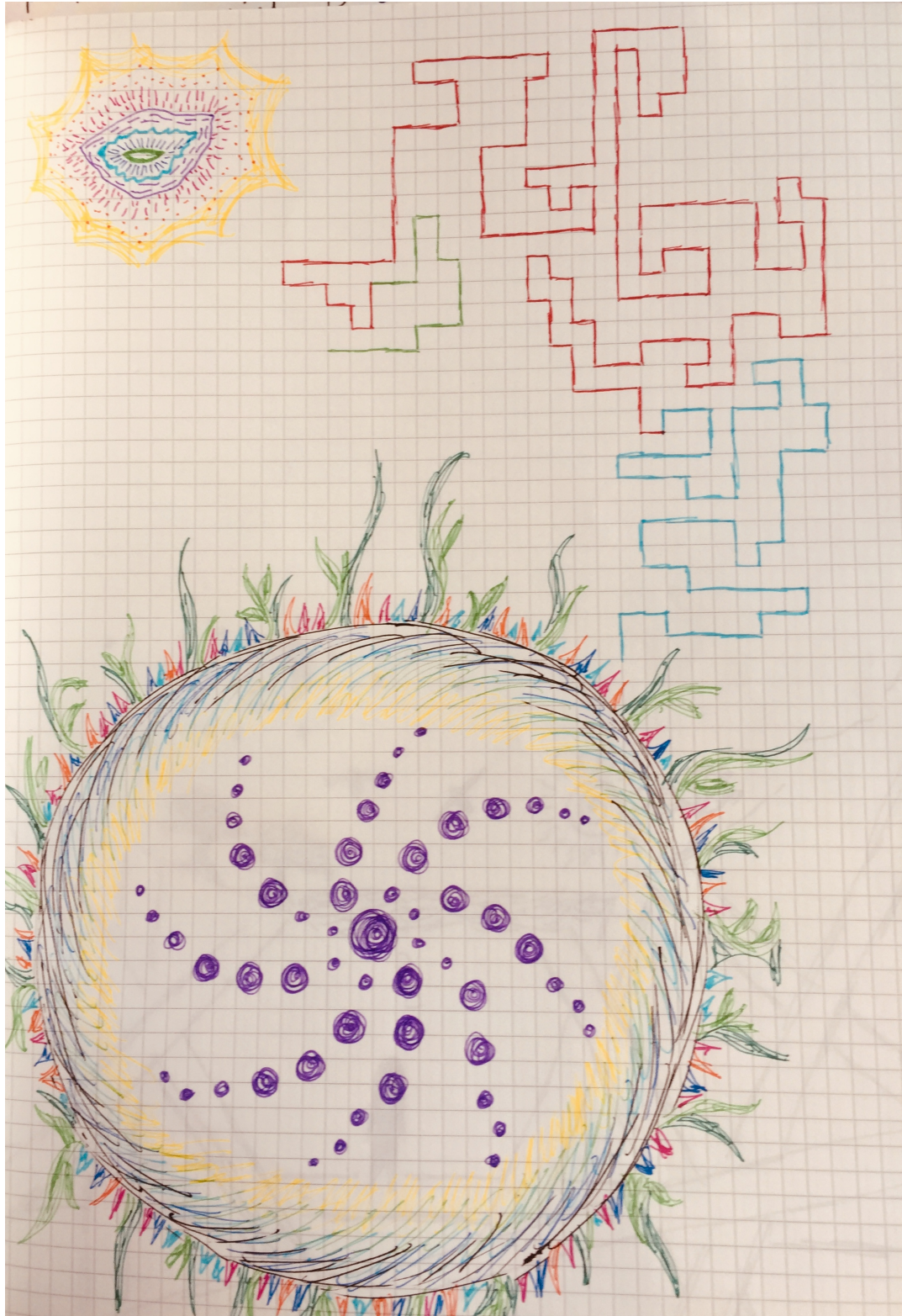


Image 12. Performance Drawing by Abby

CONNECTING TO THE EARTH. - AND TAKING YOU WITH ME

Recently I have been unable.

Recently I need something to ground me.

Tuesdays and Friday rehearsals do that for me.

I do not want to let go of the amazing people I have been connected with.

I want their presence, their dancing, their lessons, to stay with me forever.

I want to connect with the space, connect with the Earth, even when MIKO is not there anymore.

I want to keep growing, keep learning, and listen to myself.

Amazing dancers


Amazing humans

Amazing teachers.

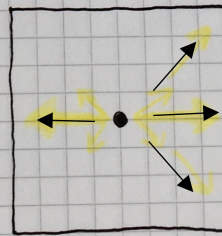
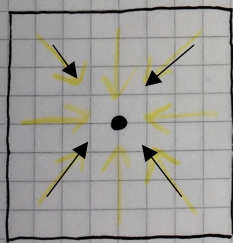
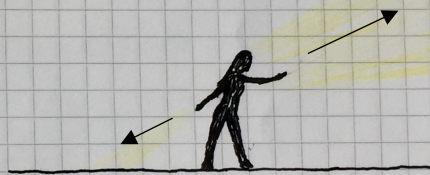
I will take you with me everywhere I go.
Always.

Image 13. Dulce's Observations

THOUGHTS ON 12/4 REHEARSAL

When I'm warming up before moving around a lot, it helps me to imagine absorbing/releasing  through my head, fingers, + toes.

When we expand from the circle and connect with the space, where I hold my gaze is where I send my energy, and that's the way the light moves.



If I'm connecting with an object that's near, I ~~send~~ absorb the light + send it into the object.

If it's something far away, I send the light out towards it.

Get ready for lots of drawings, I like to color.

- Abby

Image 14. Abby's Where Water Meets Land Score Observations

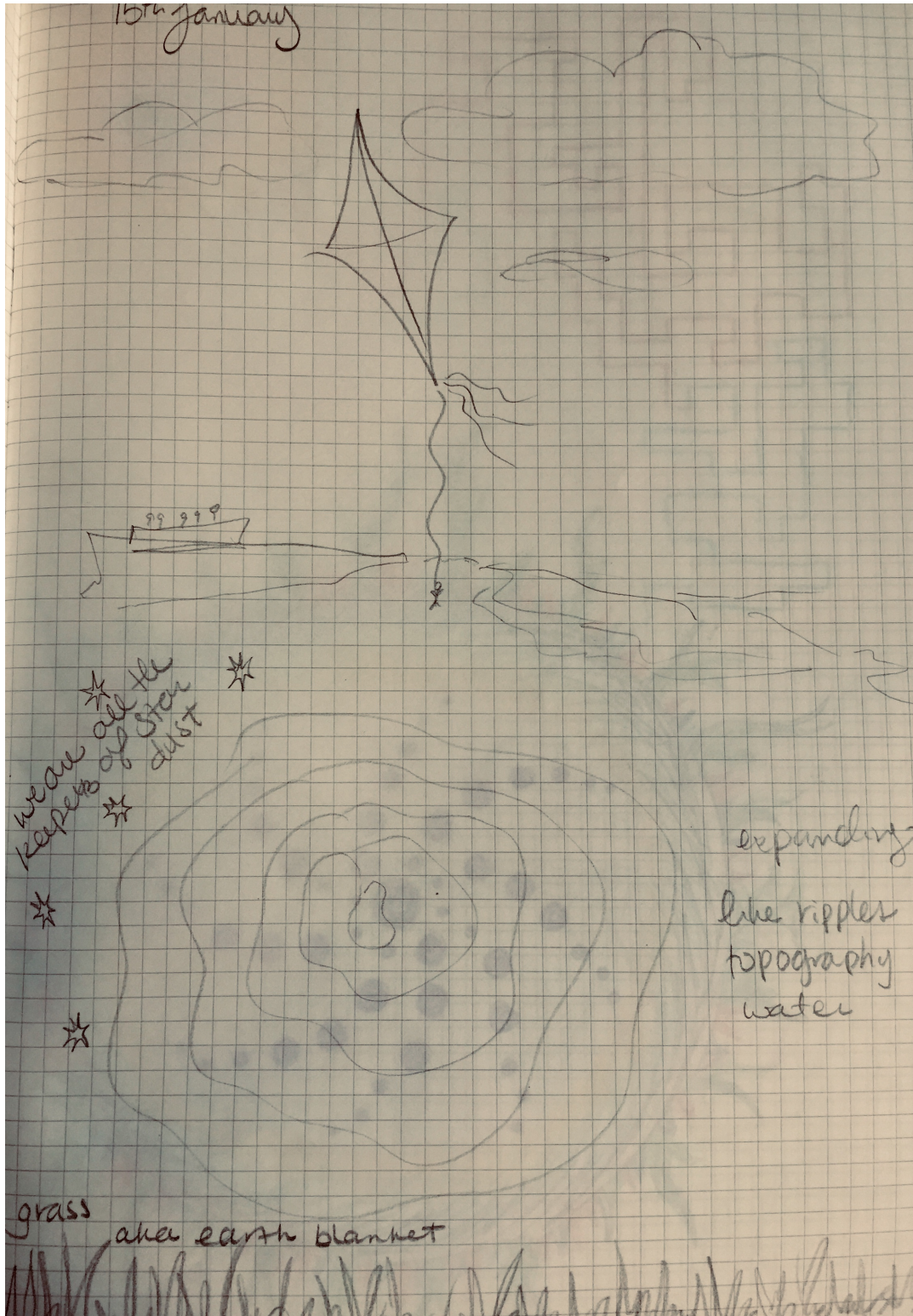


Image 15. Ella's Drawing Post Rehearsal



Image 16. Alisha's Drawing Post Rehearsal

Wow! I can't believe this is all coming
to an end so soon! This experience
has changed the way I relate to other
people, to nature + history, and to
myself — which is exactly what I needed.
Over the last year and a half I've had
more self-doubt than I thought possible
surrounding my major, failed friendships, etc.
But the time spent with a group of such
down-to-earth people gave me a new,
brighter perspective; I'm closer to understanding
who I am, how I move, and the way I want
to connect w/ people around me. A huge,
giant thanks to Aurora for her love, wisdom,
& support over the last few months. ♡♡
Thank goddess I took beginning contemporary
dance!

-Abby

Image 17. Abby's Journal Entry

01.14.2011

Taking a risk and writing in pen.
I haven't been ready to quite articulate
my thoughts -- though I've taken journals
before more than one occasion to read.

FOR ME THE STRUGGLE IS ALLOWING
MYSELF TO BE SEEN - FULLY.

I hold two feelings simultaneously --
1 * I want to be known / seen / acknowledged /
and yet understood

2 * I ~~don't~~ want the scrutiny - judgement
so I make myself small.

often I think I slip by un-noticed or remark
in life.

But then I hear Aurora says
my absence was felt at the one
rehearsal I had to miss -- that I
have a presence. It's hard to
believe at first. and then
return to the world remembering
that I have an impact --
I do not go unnoticed.

So what would I like my
impression to be?

what is it already?

Image 18. Alice's Journal Entry

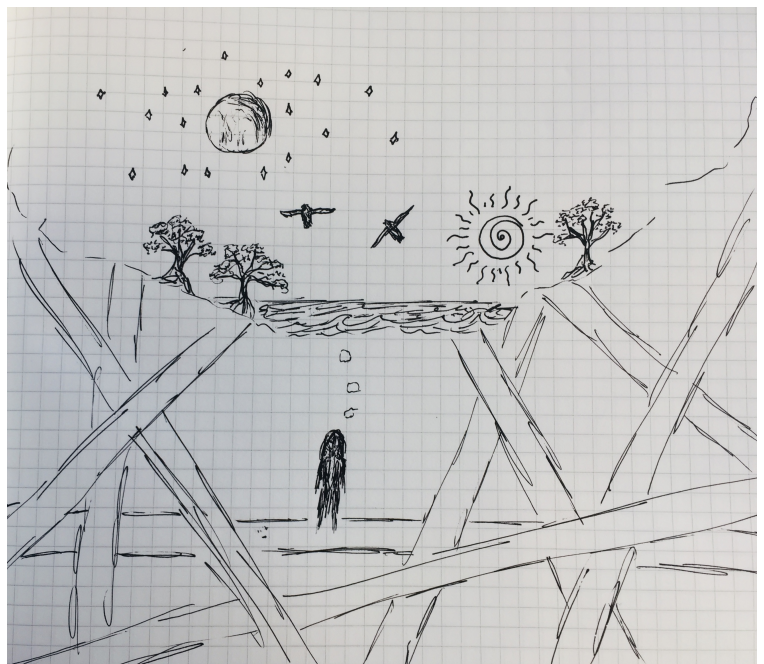


Image 19. Ella's and Dulce's Drawings Post Performance

After the last performance, the dancers meet to watch a sunset and process the experience. Many courageous, vulnerable and empowering insights were shared. For the sake of brevity, I will share one dancer's reflection, Diana Valdes- Contreras. who felt compelled to write a short response about her experience.

MIKO, *a space between* and a personal reflection by Diana Valdes- Contreras:

While originally from Mexico, I grew up in San Rafael, California and started to develop a certain identity that could be best described as 'ni de aquí, ni de allá', which means 'not from here nor from there'. As a Mexican-American woman I have always felt like I didn't belong anywhere. When I moved to San Diego in the fall of 2017 to attend University of California San Diego as a transfer Sociology major, I felt worst. I'm a first-generation university student and starting my own journey at UCSDS while breaking generational cycles of poverty and abuse was too overwhelming. I then started to fall into the day to day activities associated with school and work, while the feeling of 'ni de aquí, ni de allá' was growing stronger. I didn't connect with the school nor other students at a level that would motivate me. I felt like a machine that couldn't connect with anything nor anyone. Then I met Aurora.

When Aurora invited me to dance in Miko, *a space between*, I immediately jumped on board. I had this sense of curiosity about her work. Throughout this whole experience until we brought it to the audience, I felt a sense of numbness in my body melting away. It is hard to explain and uncomfortable but it was serene and peaceful at the same time. It was a mental state that I had never mentally nor emotionally allowed myself to explore before. The work that we did for those two months wasn't making sense to my logical self. I realized that my numbness came from this space of 'reason'. I wanted to understand what was happening and why we were doing this. Aurora guided us all though Miko into recognizing our inner and outer beauty while

embracing whatever struggles we have overcome. It was intense in the best way. Like peeling myself open to the beauty or love both within me and around me.

We built this powerful feminine community that collaborated with ancestral energy to help us carve a spiritual sanctuary that didn't need to be physical but it was and it wasn't. It's in us. Thus, we can bring it with us wherever we go in the world to continue our own inner journey. The concept of allowing the space to shape us created a sense of awareness within me that later developed into inner strength. I learned that by truly allowing one's self to see the space that we occupy in the world we can recognize the unique connection that has always been there between the space and us throughout history. Every human being that stepped on the same grass, that touched the same tree and saw the same ocean was there. History felt real and intense. This translated into inner strength that emerged from all the untold stories of everyone that had been in that space.

For instance, on the lawn, while being in resting shapes, we did a lot of breathing. When we connected sight with breathing a whole new world appeared in front of my eyes. We truly connected with the space while learning to listen and speak without talking or using the social construct of language to communicate every detail. This helped us build confidence within ourselves and in a sense gave us permission to become vulnerable enough to connect deeply with each other. This was just the first part of the dance. I could never be grateful enough for having had this opportunity. If I could compare it to something, I would say that this two-month experience takes care of 10+ years of therapy. I hope that other women in the world get the opportunity to experience art, nature and human connection at this level. It is a true blessing.

PERFORMANCE

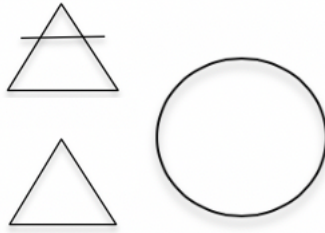


Figure 9. Hermetic Symbols for Air, Fire and Spirit⁶⁹

Description

“Find ways to rupture the traditional representations that objectify the female body by alluding to, including, or focusing the audience’s attention on the ‘elsewhere.’”⁷⁰ -Ann Cooper Albright

The MFA Dance Reflection Paper asks the choreographer to describe their performance as if the reader has not seen this work. Since I choreographed and performed in the work, my perspective is biased in various ways. As a result, I will include my descriptive narrative in tandem with a student Rhiannon Coleman’s feelings about experiencing the work as an actual audience member.

The performance begins an hour before audience arrives. Dancers make light bodies on the shore, crew cleans and prepares the spaces. Audience is asked to meet at deck next to the Ellen Browning Scripps Pier. Stage manager Willie Mae Michels welcomes the audience and explains the nature of the performance: the show is site-specific and travels to various locations, the audience will be guided by dancers, crew and musicians, and she asks the audience to participate through their watching and listening. She then encourages the audience to notice the

⁶⁹ Wheeler, *Alchemical Symbols*, 12.

⁷⁰ Albright, Ann Cooper. *Engaging Bodies: the Politics and Poetics of Corporeality*. Wesleyan University Press, 2013, 67.

meeting of water, land and sky. The audience might notice the horizon, or the light bodies below, or a couple running on the beach. They might notice the absence of dancers. The intention is to allow time for the audience to arrive and begin to notice the meeting of things in this case, the meeting of water, land and sky.

At 4:40 the dancers enter Pawka Lawn. Three performers walk to the deck to greet audience. They walk connected arm in arm meeting one body to the next to the next. They arrive and shift directions. As they shift their gaze, they speak. If audience close enough, they might hear dancers naming what they see. If not, they notice that the dancers are seeing the space and audience. One dancer steps forward and welcomes the audience. She says, “Thank you for being here today as our audience. Your watching and listening support us, the dancers, the places we will be within and all of the spaces between. Thank you.” The three dancers again link arms and lead the audience to Pawka Lawn.



Image 20. MIKO, *a space between* Performance Pawka Lawn Photo 1

The dancers are in resting shapes on cement blocks. Eight women move slowly, resting and shifting their gaze. Their simplicity challenges audience to slow down and notice the space. Gradually, the dancers begin to walk through the space in pairs. They notice the space which includes the hummingbird in the tree, fellow dancers, audience and the surfers passing. Some dancers begin to embrace. They separate from one another into the space and return back to each other. Their movements are sparse and pedestrian. They touch the grass or a tree. They reach towards a cloud. The dancers' movement is quiet and bare but filled with focused intention. All the dancers seem connected through their attention. Eventually, dancers are moving throughout the space. The dancers are practicing the "Where Water Meets Land" score. They embrace, they rest in shapes, they crawl on stairs.



Image 21. MIKO, *a space between* Performance Pawka Lawn Photo 2

Rhiannon Coleman shares her feelings in this section as:

The first part of the performance, out on the steps, made me feel happy and calm. I liked being surrounded by people. Even though people are living their own individual lives, it was nice to have people just sitting around being together, it was nice knowing that there are people around. It was also nice to see people just relaxing and absorbing what they see around them, the space that exists surrounding everything. It felt good to appreciate all that surrounds us that we normally don't think about on a typical day. I enjoyed the sight of strangers interacting with one another.



Image 22. MIKO, *a space between* Performance Pawka Lawn Photo 3

Dancers begin to move around Vaughan Hall. They dance on outside balconies and stairwell overlooking the lawn. They invite the audience to notice the spaces between the outside lawn and inside hall. Eventually audience enters this building. Inside, audience is given tea in an effort to keep them warm. Dancers walk along the balconies above audience. There are two vocalists sitting on the balconies as well making sounds that mix with the dancers speaking. The dancers are speaking about the space, what they notice. They are also speaking about times when

they have felt misunderstood and times when they felt seen. Audience is met to hear mysterious mumbles. There are blankets and chairs laid out in the back stairwell. Audience can relax and lie down on the blankets. The dancers begin to dance along this stairwell, some move their arms and look upwards as if bringing aspects of the sky into the space. Others take off their jackets and begin to cover themselves making their bodies into figures that dissolve into the space. Soon the dancers begin to make sounds. Some audience members said that the performers sounded like whales or lamenting women. They begin to pass their clear jackets between themselves and along pulleys. The sound escalates until the two vocalists crescendo and lead the audience back outside to the walk way between Vaughan Hall and Pawka Lawn.



Image 23. MIKO, *a space between* Performance Vaughan Hall Photos

Rhiannon Coleman explains:

For the second part, I felt relaxed. Even though I felt alone, I didn't feel lonely because I know there are other people around. With the music, movements of the dancers and the audience, I felt completely relaxed and it felt good to relax. The environment as a whole played a major role in how I felt. Being in a small space along with hot tea and chairs and blankets made me feel comfortable, inviting me to relax. When I felt there was a lack in space horizontally-wise, it was made up with a lot of space above us. It made me realize all the space that many do not consider and recognize. But seeing the space above us, made me feel small in comparison.

Outside, one dancer is waiting down the pathway in a resting shape that mirrors the shape of the Spring Stirring Statute. She is at least ten feet away from where the audience stands. It is now twilight and she is lit by lights and silhouetted. She moves slowly and close to the ground towards the audience. Swaying toes to heels, she begins to stand. She moves towards and away from the audience, like a wave meeting the shore, until she begins to run, eventually running out of sight.



Image 24. MIKO, *a space between* Performance Solo Photo

The audience follows and returns to the deck overlooking La Jolla Shores Beach. The double bass player is waiting and begins to accompany the vocalists. The audience looks again at the beach, which is now dark with a different horizon view. Dancers begin to run onto the sand below. The dancers move towards and away from the audience and shore. At times, they are far into the distance and almost disappear into the horizon. At other times they are close to audience and lay or stand in their light body. They run with enthusiasm, looking up at the audience and the sky as if they are bringing the meeting of these things to audience. They eventually orbit each other before running towards the audience and back towards the ocean. They slow to a walk towards the audience and then they turn around and run into the ocean. They return and bow.



Image 25. MIKO, *a space between* Performance Beach Photo

Rhiannon Coleman shares:

The two last parts made me feel free. The setting of being out in the open with the brisk cold air to wake you up, gave me the feeling of being free. Also, the performance included a lot of movement across the floor, also impacting how much freedom of space we have. The running around on the beach made me really feel free and made me want to go somewhere as to test my freedom of space and see where I could go or end up. I really enjoyed watching the performance.

Throughout the performance, the audience traveled throughout various locations, each with a different orientation for viewing- looking down, out, up and down again. Audience might add and vary these perspectives but each space offered and invited audience to play with their perspective. Audience also had an opportunity to view some places like the lawn, deck and beach twice- before and after sunset. The choreography directed the audience's attention. This is

not a dance that highlighted technical virtuosity. Rather it focused on nuances in mundane human actions. Dancers show up as themselves with a willingness to be with and be moved by each other, the space and audience.

Analysis

“Both traditional and modern healings have much to contribute to each other... but practitioners of both methods must think in a profound way about creating a bridge between the two. In opening the dialogue, the most important question to address first is whether or not both sides are sincerely and from their hearts interested in contributing to the health of humanity”⁷¹

-Maria Alice Campos Freire

I will evaluate the performance of MIKO, *a space between* in four sections: Is This Dance? Designer Collaboration, Watching Women Watching and Audience Dynamic. These sections were created in response to conversations I had with various audience members and my own experience with the work.

Is This Dance?

Gaining approval to have my thesis occur site-specifically required several compromises. The first being that I could only rehearse and perform at certain times on weekday evenings. If I wanted to work at Scripps Institute of Oceanography (SIO), I had to have set performance dates and times. In some ways, this limited the work and the explorations we could do. I could not work durationally or use headsets. Gaining the site itself was a bit tiresome. I worked closely with Production Manager Michael Francis to get my approved performance dates. Unfortunately, none of my dance faculty committee members were on campus at this time. Regardless, I was

⁷¹ Freire, Maria Alice Campos and Schaefer, Carol. *Grandmothers Counsel the World, Women Elders Offer Their Vision for Our Planet*. Trumpeter Book, 2008. 74.

happy to gain permission to work site-specially at SIO. I understood that by doing so and as a graduate student in the Theatre and Dance Department this meant I needed to make a performance with set dates and times.

Professor Yolande Snaith shared with me, “You can either take your work in the direction of performance or in the direction of experiential happenings.” In my personal dance performance and making history, I have done both kinds of work- performative and experiential. Do these models always need to be separate? If so, which model would best serve my research and dance making?

If I had to select which category my work fits into, I would say it aligns more in the experiential happening camp. I have created several durational and immersive performances in which audience is invited to wander through various settings or listen on a headset to a guided movement experience. I feel fairly skilled in creating meditative playtimes for audience to explore, sense and contemplate their human experience. I have and continue to make community-inclusive work which includes dancers from various backgrounds, abilities and ages. I truly love working in these ways and intend to continue to do so.

That being said, when I was faced with the opportunity to work site-specifically I knew this would also require me to work within a performative structure. I found this proposition both limiting and a potential for experimentation. What would this research look like as a performance? I had already made an experiential work for audience and dancers, *Human Body Time Machine*, within the confines of the university setting (meaning it still had to be within 1.5 hours with performance dates). I knew I could either repeat this format again or challenge myself to try something a little different. I became curious about how this dance research would read if I surrendered to it being a performance and went with the theatre department’s demands.

When I work durationally with headsets or maps for audience there is sense of free exploration present. In these pieces, I do not need to direct the audience's focus to one action at a time. There is a vulnerability in selecting one event for everyone to view, especially when this event is subtle. It is not what one might expect to see in a dance performance. This challenge sounded risky, interesting and worthy of exploring in an educational setting. What would happen if I set the work up as a performance anyhow and invited audience to watch and listen?

The results? Vast. How does one judge the success of a performance? Over the past few weeks, I have received feedback from dancers, actors, stage managers, visual and performance artists and non-artist audience members positively moved by the performance. Below are a few comments that they shared with me:

“This show was unlike anything I have ever seen. Thank you and your team for your courage and your bravery. This changed my life.”

“I cried the whole time. You broke something open that was numb. Thank you.”

“I feel like I meditated for an hour and a half.”

“Congrats on your stunning performance. I loved the whole experience. The solo and beach running were my favorite. I felt so uplifted. Thank you.”

“I felt in it. In the safest most delicious way. Thank you so much.”

“I was so moved. Sunset. Voices. This work was so delicate and beautiful, thank you.”

“I really wanted to get in touch to thank you for such a serene and generous evening. It was so clear how much had been invested in relationship building and deep personal growth with your cast. You took us on a continually surprising journey - and as an audience member I felt so cared for the whole way (especially thanks to the yummy tea!). The vocal stuff inside was breathtaking... lying on the floor looking up at the levels, I felt like a deep sea creature looking up towards the surface of the ocean and watching layers and layers of ecosystems float above me, each its own world that I couldn't access because of my gravitational limitations, but which I could nevertheless admire and imagine from afar.”

“Thank you for your show, it was an exercise in presence in the best way.”

Honestly, I was surprised by how many audience members expressed gratitude for the experience given it's not traditional format. EcoTv and “Let's Talk about the Weather” podcast both asked to run a special about the performance. Bill Bowen of the La Jolla Light newspaper has written a positive review of the performance as well. The entire collaborative team shared that the experience was positive and transformational. This feedback affirms that the performance positively affected and offered meaningful experiences for some audience.

Yet, it is also important to note that the work was not what you might expect a dance concert to be. Nor was the choreography what one might normally label as dance. I am sure some audience did not enjoy the experience. We did have audience leave. I find the contrast of audience responses encouraging and insightful to the complexity of the human experience. As a choreographer, I do not expect to please all audience, but I do wonder would a different, less traditional format have served the work better?

Australian comedian Hannah Gadsby created a stand-up routine, “Nanette” on Netflix.⁷² Her performance involved her revealing violent, cruel and sad events in her life as well as social-cultural critiques. Her work evoked a lot of positive and negative responses from critics and fans. Some people claimed that it the work was not stand up because it did not follow the traditional framework of standup although it was staged as a traditional show.

MIKO, *a space between* performance did not fit into the normal confines of a dance performance. It's long use of duration and minimal movement demanded a lot from viewers. Although some truly enjoyed these demands, I do believe this work could thrive as a durational

⁷² Gadsby, Hannah “Nanette.” Directed by Madeleine Perry and Jon Olb. Written by Hannah Gadsby. Netflix. June, 2018.

happening or for small (1-7 people) audience. I have intentions to explore the work this way in a future iterations. The scores will be used in a durational day-long practice in June as part of International Water Day. I am also recording and collaborating with musicians Jamie Shadowlight and Kevin Zhang to create guided movement audios from the scores. Yet, given audience responses, I am intrigued to further explore this works relationship to audience in performative settings as well. Maybe calling it dance is problematic, which I like. I think this is part of what makes the work interesting and provides potential for growth.

Gadbsy wrote in response to critics claiming her work is not comedy, “I’LL SETTLE THIS: my show is NOT stand up comedy because I got jack of an art form designed by men for men. Female artists often defy genre.”

Throughout this paper, I have used the words dancer, dance making, dancing, moving and choreography interchangeably. My reasoning for doing so is twofold – 1) we need more words to describe dance making and 2) as a student, teacher and scholar of dance I intentionally want to expand the scope of what we call dance in the world. Not to discredit technique and tradition but to also build new dance possibilities so that the field of dance can grow with the current world. Expanding and challenging the definition of dance broadens the potential boundaries and roles of dance in education, performance and life.

Designer Collaborations

I received an awesome team of female artists, who primarily design traditional theater productions for this project. We all worked and communicated well together. Yi-Chien Lee, the set designer said, “I am so grateful to do this show because I feel like most of the things I design at UCSD are from the white male perspective. This performance feels human. I feel honored to be a part of it.” Doddi Vinzce, the costume designer also added, “This project is for my soul. I

am doing it on top of my given work load because I believe in this work. I need this work in my life.” It was humbling and exciting to have a team so dedicated to the work. I wanted the designers to have space to explore their creative ideas and theatrical approaches. As a result, I’d say there was a higher level of theatricality in the performance than my work needs. Yet, I was happy to provide a place for the designers to explore and experiment with their craft especially as MFA students.

In order to have a costume designer for my performance, I was told it had to be a very fast process. There would be no room for refining or changing anything. I had to have a set cast no larger than fourteen people three months prior to the performance. Achieving a cast in advance was not an easy feat and not how I like to work. I much prefer the group to unfold over time. However, I appreciated having a costume designer and a budget for costumes. I enjoyed Doddi’s enthusiasm and input.

I did not get to see the finished costumes until tech week. At this point, there was not much I could do to adjust them. I had to go with it. I did not have room to process or refine with Doddi, which was hard for both of us. That being said, I think Doddi did an incredible job and created a very beautiful design. That being said, I have some questions about how the jackets read and congruencies between the costume design with the work.

When I met first with Doddi, we spoke about having jackets for the performers. The work would be outside in winter. We needed jackets. I provided pictures of women wearing large wool and down jackets. I desired a pedestrian yet slightly feminine look with textures. Doddi wanted to make the jackets. She initially wanted plastic jackets, but I felt uncomfortable purchasing and using non-recycled plastics. Instead, Doddi found a chiffon-like material for the jackets. The material and the white color resembled a wedding veil more than a textured jacket. Oddly

enough, the detail that I find most distracting was the clasp. It made the jackets into a cape or a veil. None of the jackets I picked out for Doddi closed but we had to clasp the jackets she made because they were so delicate and light, they could easily fall off while dancing. The other aspect that wasn't in the design but happened due to the budget, was each jacket was the same.

Originally, the jackets were to be different styles and cuts. I think this variation would have changed how the whole group of women appeared. There was a celestial, even bridal quality that one could read into the work due to the jackets.

Yet, some audience members did not read the jackets this way at all. They said they found the jackets simple and not distracting. Others said they found the white easy to distinguish dancers and the jackets interesting to look through. I too did enjoy that you could see through the jackets. This aspect supported the “between-ness” quality throughout the work.

The lighting design also added a level of theatricality to the work, especially inside Vaughan Hall. Lighting designer Minjoo Kim wanted to bring in theatrical lights. Again, what she created was beautiful. It also made the work more theatrical, which might not have been necessary but was also interesting.. The work in Vaughan Hall in particular had a performative quality with the vocal work, jackets being hung and the lights. This section was the most collaborative so it felt correct to allow these aspects into this interaction. Yet, I believe that this work can exist in a less theatrical setting. My final question with the design is: Did it distract or enhance the experience? I was in, so it is hard to tell. Honestly, I think it did both. Different audience members had contrasting opinions as well.

Watching Women Watching

The cast was all women, which contributed to how the work was viewed. Ann Cooper Albright in her article, “Mining the Dancefield; Spectacle, Moving subjects and Feminist

Theory,” asks, “are we to assume that the only way to present the subject-ness of a female character is by erasing her object-to-be-looked-at-ness?”⁷³ Again, in choosing to present this work as a performance for audience meant inviting eight women to be watched and hopefully at times, to watch with audience. I wanted the dancers and musicians to be seen and noticed along with the space in such a way that alluded to the aliveness of both. One dancer, Alice said, “This piece is so political. We are fully clothed women asking audience to watch us watch and then we are asking them to listen to us sound!” As a performer, this felt vulnerable. We really didn’t have much to hide behind, (except a very thin jacket). The dancing was us and the spaces around us.

The costumes greatly affected how the dancers were viewed, especially the white jackets in the lawn section. On Pawka Lawn, the dancers are in various resting shapes as they witnessed the space. Here, the overall choreography was sculptural. My doubt with the white jackets is that it added more a presented model (object) than an engaged human being to the audience. That being said, I felt the clothes underneath the jackets and the sneakers dressed the dancer in a simple way that complimented the everyday quality I originally wanted. Finally, the jackets added an element of feminine ritual for me, which showed up in the dance process as well. It was not my original intention but it came through in this work. Mikos are in fact temple ceremonial maidens.

On the subject of women, many audience members shared with me how beautiful the work was. Beautiful was a word used often to describe the work. The theatrical design aided in created a beautiful setting. I also think there is something innately beautiful in women being women. I probably should and could write much more to this statement but I will stop here. I

⁷³ Albright, *Engaging Bodies: the Politics and Poetics of Corporeality*. 64.

think there is still more to reflect on and many performative questions to explore about women in performance.

Audience Dynamic

The second word I heard a lot from audience was spacious. This surprised be just given the large audiences. We really had more audience than I thought could be comfortable or spacious for the performance, especially inside Vaughan Hall. Alas, many people still said the work left them feeling ‘spacious.’ I found this revealing as to how different audience members experience space.

Each performance was different and provided information for this work. The performances unexpectedly sold out and we over sold tickets. We had to turn several people away. The team envisioned an audience of forty to fifty people, especially since the performance times were at 4:30 pm on weekday evenings. However, we ended up having an invited dress of twenty people, opening night had 65 people, second night 75 and closing 85. The larger numbers shifted the audience and dancer dynamics. As a result, the crew team and I needed to make adjustments in audience management. It could have been useful to have three more performances to further explore the audience and dancer relationships and potentials.

For opening night, Jim Carmody described the audience as, “calm, enraptured and committed.” Indeed, the audience seemed ‘with us’ and focused. We had several people crying opening night. There was a gentle sensitivity present.

The second night was the most unexpected. For starters, the audience was large and harder to manage, and the crew was not prepared. The crew spoke to me after, “the audience was so loud. They kept talking!” Willie shared that while she was calling the show a dance professor tried to have a conversation with her, which was confusing and uncomfortable for her. The

audience surprised the whole team. One young boy started dancing on a block, one woman started touching dancers and two other women danced by the bass player. Yet there were at least 30 people quietly and intently watching. There certainly was a multiplicity of experiences occurring. Audience members seemed to have various performance histories. Some I recognized from past works of mine, which have been more interactive; for others, this might have been their first dance performance; and others might see so much dance that they come with certain assumptions about behaviors.

Friend and performance artist, Sandy Huckleberry came to watch a couple rehearsals and gave me feedback about audience. She encouraged and I agreed, that the role of audience for this work was to watch and to listen. We tried to emphasize this in our talk to audience. This worked until Thursday night. All past audience members were meek and Willie felt she wanted to encourage them to feel free to move around. Thursday's audience wasn't meek. Most people said that the few audience members dancing around or touching dancers were distracting and provoked confusion on their role as audience. The crew ended up asking these audience members to focus on watching and listening. This is not to say that their expression was not valid. The biggest lesson from this performance was that we needed to be much clearer with our audience, especially given the larger number of people.

Closing night was our largest audience. Yet, this audience mirrored the audience of opening night. We made two major changes on closing night for audience which made a significant difference. Willie placed greater emphasis in her speech on watching and listening. When we performed with a smaller audience, there was a nice pattern where the audience usually watched on the perimeter of the lawn for the first ten to fifteen minutes and then began to enter the space. We returned to this pattern for closing night. Willie asked the audience to stay on the

perimeter of the lawn until the first pair began to walk into the space. Then, the audience was free to enter the space to view the movement from various perspectives. This configuration went well. It might not have been necessary with a smaller audience but greatly helped with 85 people. I also liked how it gave the lawn an intentional shift of attention in the middle. Willie said, “We should have done this every night.” I agreed.

Audience Responses

Zen

The grass and cement meet under the sun
Energy and space begin to run
The wind carries all sort of smells and sounds
Hand-in-hand or apart, there are floating spirits seen in gowns

A soothing cello starts to play
The spirits switch to stand, sit, or lay
They feel the space and each other without physical touch
Through their fingertips, animation, and very so much

I sit on the side to observe nearby
Hands to myself, I look to the sky
But I feel the metal railings the spirits quickly brush
Their energy met mine and I began to blush

The orange rays begin to disappear
Space moves and the spirits adhere
Away in the distance, the cement meets a new friend
A dull box with glass and no loose end

This simple box actually had more to give
There was wailing inside, it was difficult to relive
The spirits cry out in help or maybe it was something else
It was a journey that was hidden

Up and down the stairs they went
The white cloth and movement were symbols to vent
The cries became a sound of relief
Helping was a cup made of different tea leaf

Darkness hits and we're out the doors and to the sand
Everyone was back to the natural energetic land
The instruments and earth were together again
The moment and sight was more than just a feeling of zen

Figure 10. Zen Poem Performance Response

The Space, the Breeze & Other Things






I saw them sitting in the open
space
Sun rays falling on them
They didn't seem to care
They sat there and smiled at me
Then I knew
They could make me happy
Air breeze blowing their white
veils
White veils everywhere
I feel the Miko spirit
Oh, I don't know just why, they
simply caught my soul
I feel the Miko spirit
They seemed so natural and
kind, they crept into my soul
To my soul
I knew I had to follow them
They smiled up at me
And they took my soul
And we walked through the
space with our souls together
And I knew
They had made me happy
Air breeze blowing their white
veils
White veils everywhere
I feel the Miko spirit

Figure 11. Miko Spirit Performance Response

We see, we watch, we listen and we feel
What's the difference between you and me?
No difference between men and women
between short and tall
between races and gender
between audience and performers
As we are all part of the show
We wish to catch things we don't own
We wish to embrace people we lost
What is left in the procedure of chasing dreams?
Tomorrow will be a fresh new day.



Image 26. MIKO, a space between Performance Responses

-  The first stage of the performance. Meeting at the Scripps pier. Color inspired by the sea. Pattern of walking.
-  Entering the square. The sunset painted a golden color on dancers' white dress. Smooth collides shown by arrows.
-  In the building. blue & purple lights filled the space. Teas help audience to relax and immerse.
-  Outside the building. Various light sources are all orange and connect with the sunset. No music but dramatic movements.
-  The color of the beach at night. A mysterious color and sense. Looks like wave.

Color & Pattern
Space & Movements

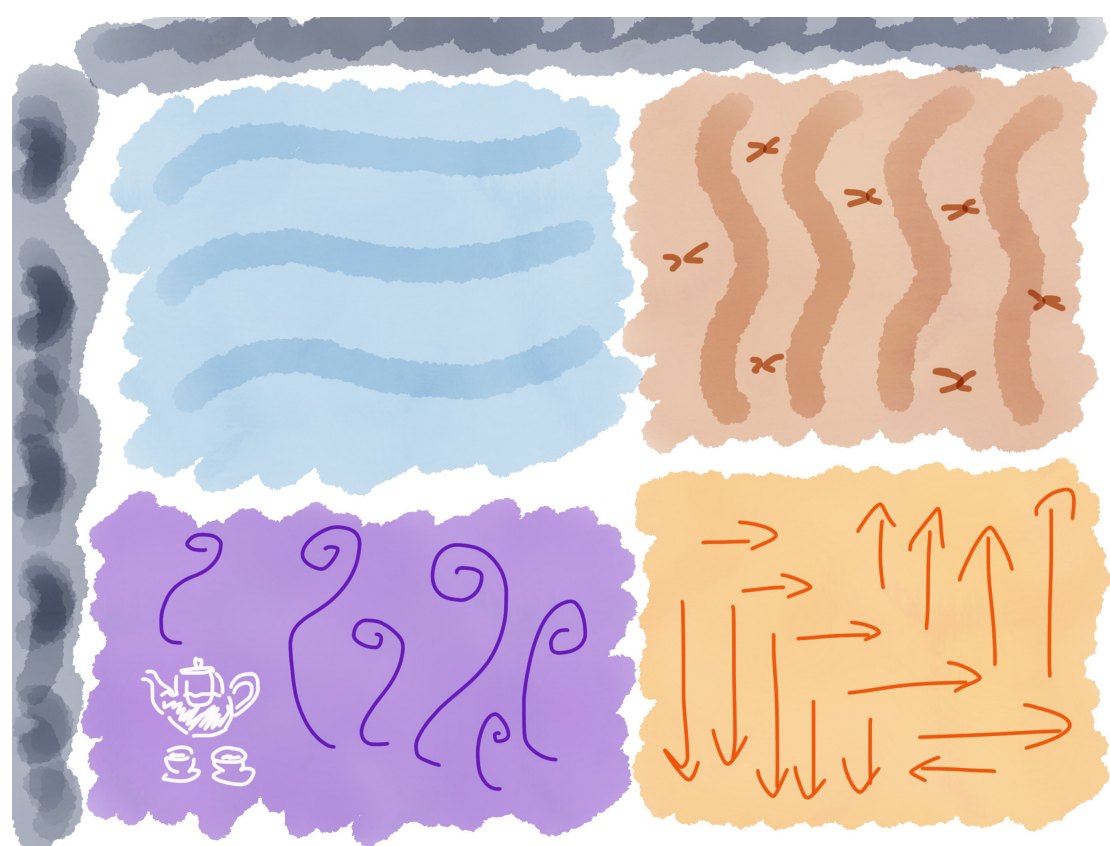


Image 27. MIKO, a space between performance response artwork 1



Image 28. MIKO, *a space between* Performance Response Artwork 2

REFLECTION

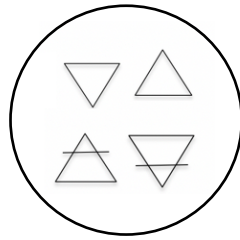


Figure 12. Hermetic Symbols for Spirit, Water, Fire, Air and Earth⁷⁴

I began this paper acknowledging that this work feels like the beginning. It still does. There are many pathways for further exploration and growth.

The Waves Internal Grant Team is still meeting, and we will lead a workshop for children on our research this March. We are writing an article that we hope to circulate through our perspective fields. We are considering potential ways to recreate music and dance performances simultaneously along the Pacific Plate next year. The team and I both desire to explore our questions without the confines of a set performance. To have open workshops and durational versions of the scores. I want to play with the research for a while. Without it needing to be anything or make any sense. Mostly because I know meaning will unfold from these free explorations.

I will be presenting performance alongside research for UnFix NYC, a dance event to raise awareness for climate change. This event will be an opportunity to explore these questions and scores in an open format with different dancers. It could be interesting to explore the scores not just durationally but also with groups over a week, month or year. Possibly, dancers could gather for a two-month retreat at specific sites or meet consistently throughout a year.

⁷⁴ Wheeler, *Alchemical Symbols*, 12.

Additionally, I would love to explore sharing the work developed with small audiences of one to three people.

Especially since the work involves shorelines, it leaves much room for various site-specific explorations at beaches. And many more questions. How does the dancing shift at different shorelines? With different dancers? With varying times of day? Durationally? Over months? Over years? Who generates the scores? How are they repeated? Perhaps the most critical question going forward is how do I choose to document and organize the dance materials and research?

We made a short documentary film about MIKO, *a space between* with video artist Nicole Nelson. Katy Gilmore also filmed the work to collaborate on another short film of the performance. Exploring this work through video is exciting and a potential avenue for the work to unfold. Nelson's film work captures the dancer's subtle movement well. The camera's close, near and far perspectives complement and re-frame this work in a new way. Film could provide a valuable way for this work to be witnessed.

In regards to the research, the processes and concepts, these too need more time to develop, refine and grow. I appreciate Professor William's encouragement to continue my inquiry in dance as a source of knowledge further. I desire to go deeper into this exploration especially with scientists. Professor Clancy's accounts of how often in his collaborations with scientists the data and scientific perspectives are valued over the dancing. I would like to continue dancing with scientists as a source of knowledge making that stands not below but alongside scientific knowledge. How I do this, I am still contemplating.

In concerns to methodology, I would like to focus on an entry point for the work. Although it is vast, I appreciate Professor Clancy's advice not to narrow myself. I do, however,

desire to distill where I want to enter: is it mikos and purification of space? Is it water and body fluids? Is it place and shorelines? I do not yet know.



Image 29. MIKO, *a space between* Rehearsal Photo

I have gained a multitude of important perspectives while working on this piece. Yet, the lesson that feels most pronounced of all is - the transformational bond that can be generated between a group of women working consistently and committedly with a place. The group connected deeply with each other and with the site. In some strange way, the group and the site rejuvenated each other. I am curious to witness how the next steps unfold.

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