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MOVERS + SHAKERS: The Liveness of Devised Costume Design

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McQueen, Danae

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

MOVERS + SHAKERS:
The Liveness of Devised Costume Design

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Design)

by

Danae McQueen

Committee in charge:

Professor Judith Dolan, Chair
Professor Amy Adler
Professor Victoria Petrovich
Professor Deborah Stein

2016

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The thesis of Danae McQueen is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2016

DEDICATION

Rebecca Vail:

My best is usually the same thing as my worst and you still like me. That's amazing.

Mom, Dad, Nathan:

Never a lack of love, enthusiasm, and understanding. So grateful.

Judy Dolan, Janet O'Neill, Melissa Ng, Dominique Hill, Jaymee Ngerwichit:

A true woman of costume blows your mind and then helps you put the pieces back together - thank you for the collage you've left me with.

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File 2. *Movers + Shakers* Jeffery/Marta Photo

File 3. *Movers + Shakers* Charlotte/Magda Photo

File 4. *Movers + Shakers* Larry/Janice Photo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Three years ago, Judy Dolan took a chance on a class of three very different designers. These women of costume are a part of me, and my art is indebted to them. They persevere. They explode assumptions. They make me better.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

MOVERS + SHAKERS:
The Liveness of Devised Costume Design

by

Danae McQueen

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Design)

University of California, San Diego, 2016

Professor Judith Dolan, Chair

A costume designer's task is, at the very least, to provide wearable objects for performers in a production. But we are more. We are visual artists who translate two dimensions into three. We are text analysts, and sometimes we are dramaturgs. We are collaborators and idea-sharers. We are psychologists and psychoanalysts for both the real and fictional characters that surround a production. We are of the body and of the mind.

I don't always achieve all of those things – but when I do, it is my most realized and fulfilling work. **MOVERS + SHAKERS** was one of those processes.

But it was more than just a personal artistic success.

Devised theatre takes the singular parts of the form, the one-on one collaborations (with director; with artistic team; with other designers; with actors), and adds another element – liveness.

The first day of rehearsal is usually the marker of the beginning of the end for a costume designer. Eighty percent of the work is behind us – the research, the conversations about character, the renderings. Those final few weeks are about finishing.

In this process, we turned the ratio on its head. Twenty percent of the work was in the preparation, while the remaining eighty happened in the rehearsal room. The design was directly influenced by staging, but staging was also influenced by costume. The result was an entirely motivated and collaborative design.