Proposal: Choreography
Name of student choreographer: Aria Roach
Number of dancers: 5-7
Semester of presentation: Fall 2015
Title ideas: Sabras

I. The Seed: Project Inspiration/ Intention

I will investigate the overwhelming commotion of urban society juxtaposed with the tranquility of the desert. I am interested in how the business of our daily lives creates isolation and a lack of acknowledgement of our surroundings and those around us. I am also interested in how the desert, with no distractions, unites us, encourages us to form deeper relationships with one another and therefore explore and reveal our inner personalities. The silence makes us listen to our echoing thoughts, which otherwise might be drowned out.

To create movement, I will take inspiration from pedestrian interactions and body language, contrasted with the texture of dust, sand, seashells, and vast sky. I will explore how even in the desert, which is usually disregarded as a wasteland, there is life and beauty in the stillness that could not be constructed by mankind.
II. The Roots: Research Process – Investigate Your Inspiration

• Bibliography:


This video is a sneak peak of a performance that I saw in Tel Aviv in February 2015. This piece, along with much of Naharin’s work, demonstrates how highly athletic movement can be combined with compelling expressiveness and originality. I would like to use these qualities in my own work. This piece also takes the audience on an adventure, using the stage to portray an environment other than a proscenium. Analyzing Naharin’s work here will help me to create a desert on the stage.


This book is written by a woman who traveled throughout Palestine, Syria, and Jordan, and it is said to include vivid imagery. It would act as a basis of information about desert landscapes, a reference for emotional experiences in the desert, and descriptions on which I could base my movement invention.


This workshop experience working with several Batsheva company members showed me how deeply imagery can enhance a dancer’s understanding and replication of choreography, as well as the choreographic process itself. After working so thoroughly this way, I would like to base my next choreographic process on visualizations of imagery-based concepts in order to maintain the authenticity of my movement and to produce a dance that is not just made up of empty steps.


This video demonstrates both intricate partnering and detailed use of gestures, which I would like to incorporate in my choreography. Although Lock’s work is ballet-based, I think the precision of movement and inventiveness of gesture will help inspire me when working on hurried city-like relationships.
This Ted Talk is informational in that it addresses how meditation, or clearing the mind, acts as illness prevention and is good for the health. The idea and importance of meditation is part of what I hope to explore in the concept of the desert’s stillness.


This poem explores the relationship that many people have with searching and longing for some sort of greater power. Often, people search for God or a higher power in the desert, and the desert is seen as a symbol of finding one’s spirituality. I do not want to explicitly reference religion in my piece, and I am unsure how I might incorporate this concept more vaguely my piece, but feel I should acknowledge it in my research. Rumi’s writing is also beautiful, and provides additional images and concepts that might influence my movement.


A memoir of a French aviator, this book contains themes of friendship and camaraderie while recounting a near-death experience in the desert. It would be an interesting reference to view the desert as a negative place of suffering. I might like to explore how suffering, often associated with the barrenness of the desert, relates to hope and reveals humans’ inclination to persevere.


This book compiles photography by Steinmetz, taken from his flights over extreme deserts throughout the world. The book expands my original idea because it includes photographs of many different types of deserts, which might be interesting as influences to my choreography beyond the deserts I have experienced.

Uwe, George. *In the Deserts of This Earth*. Harcourt Brace Jovaniovich, 1977. Print.

This book is another traveler’s experience with the desert, but it also includes scientific observations and information that might help develop my understanding of my topic.

The lyrics of this spoken word piece express frustration with societal ignorance and comments on the nature of city dwellers. Watsky uses vivid imagery to depict examples of how humans are moving too quickly through their lives focusing on materialistic things that don’t matter, a concept I would like to touch on in my work.

- Responses:
  1. I will continue developing my own voice within modern dance, prioritizing expressiveness, athleticism, and partnering. Given the nature of this piece I may also use pedestrian movements and gestures.
  2. I am interested in modeling my style and choreographic process after Ohad Naharin, because his movement is highly expressive and often emotionally charged without being showy. He works from a lot of imagery, which I would like to infuse in my process of creating and teaching my movement so that my dancers are all on the same page. He also uses technical dance steps without being limited by codified technique. I would like to use this combination of imagery, expressiveness, and innovation in my work.
  3. At this time, there are no other visual, musical, or theatrical artists after whom I would like to model my work.
III. The Flowering

https://www.pinterest.com/ariaroach/senior-project/

My Pinterest board is a collection of images that I have taken myself or found to help portray the atmosphere I would like to create. The images of the desert are from my trips to the Negev, or Israeli Desert, which capture the scenery, openness, and serenity that inspired me to choreograph. I also included some photos of possible costume ideas and color schemes for costumes and lighting. These colors and ideas relate to both urban business and desert calmness, giving a sense of contrast.

IV. Reflection

1. Does my movement reflect my original proposal, and how has it developed, grown beyond, or stayed exactly with my original intentions?
2. What is the theatrical impact of my work?
3. Have I succeeded in creating movement to embody the contrast I hoped for between the desert and urban settings?
4. Can this piece intrigue the audience without them knowing the premise of it?

Proposal: Performance

WHO: I will be performing in Kara Robertson’s Senior Project.

WHEN: Fall 2015