I. The Seed: Project Inspiration/Intention

I intend to create choreography inspired by the sculptures of Auguste Rodin. Themes present in his work include an obsession with hands, intimacy and eroticism of relationships, and capturing motion action. He revealed the creative process by casting work in progress and leaving drill holes and scaffolding material in finished pieces. Many sculptures have been both cast in bronze and carved from marble. I want to investigate how the two mediums effect the way I respond to the design, focusing on the characteristics between the marble and bronze mediums for movement quality.
II. The Roots: Research Process – Investigate Your Inspiration


I included this web page because some of Rodin’s most famous sculptures cast in bronze are listed along with pictures of each sculpture. When I am comparing the bronze version to the marbled version it will be helpful to have access to these photos to differentiate the quality in each form.


The article above provides detailed information as well as a video on the wax casting process that Rodin and his staff used to make bronze sculptures. The plaster, molds, wax, fire, and metal are all shown in the process. The video is helpful to visually understand details of bronze sculpture and how the creation is different from carving marble. I will be able to generate movement using the structural images from the creation process.


This is music I would strongly consider using in my piece. I like the strong steady pulse and rhythm, and the layering of the chords in the background. The percussiveness would help drive the movement and stand as a base to vary dynamics and speed in my phrasing. Ambient sound represents the tranquility of Rodin’s sculpture work.


The Musée Rodin Paris website provides exclusive information about the sculptor including a complete biography, chronology, collections of work, and collaborations with other impressionist artists. It also includes video on how the bronze and marble sculptures are made. This is extremely useful for providing reliable information about Rodin and for me to be able to reflect on his work.


This book is a detailed biography of Rodin that reveals truths about how he made his way through life in Paris and Italy. I was especially keen to the section that talked about how he was introduced to modern dance because of his friendships with Lois fuller and Isadora Duncan. The Cambodian Ballet and Nijinsky also inspired Rodin. It reveals how he saw movement in a completely different way after he started spending more time in the dance studios and theatre. Although he
discovered dance in the later years of his life, his work was inspired by dance and changed because of it.


“I Had a Blue Bicycle, They Have My Blue Bicycle” portrays an intimate relationship similar to how I see the figures in Rodin’s sculptures. When watching Marina Mascarell’s choreography I feel the vulnerability of the dancers on stage and I feel as though I breathe the same air as they do. The placement of their hands to one another is precise and necessary. The transitions in the partner work are incredibly seamless. This work is beneficial because I think I have a similar vision in mind for duets and trios within my work.


This piece is also an example of partnering work that I am looking to experiment with. The use of the hands and specificity and response to each touch is what I want my dancers to investigate. This relationship has a more disconnected focus between the dancers but their connection to the movement still resonates with my ideas.


I have included the professional website of Nathalie Pubellier, whom I have had the pleasure of studying under during my time in Paris. Her movement generation process focuses on internal stimulation to produce sensation to guide the body. I am using her tools as a lens to guide my choreographic process. The website contains information on her current repertoire, artist statement, and videos of her previous work that I can use to stimulate ideas.


The Kiss is easily one of Rodin’s most popular sculptures and I when I saw it at the museum in marble I was fascinated at how massive the structure was. The spirals in the shape of the figures twisting around each other are so delicate but the kiss and the density of the structure remain heavy in my heart. This article provides information on Rodin’s inspiration for the work, themes, the mood and early reviews. This helped me to develop my own conclusions about what I saw in the sculpture and understand more about the making of the work.
This article includes information about the themes present in Rodin’s collections and how they shifted over time. His work was not seamless like most sculptors before his time; he focused on hands and feet, and was obsessed with romanticism and intimacy. The author reveals details about meaning behind The Gates of Hell, which is one of my main choreographic inspirations. He also includes a list of further reading on Rodin.

1. I am interested in investigating the physicality and technique in partner work to reveal the relationships in Rodin’s sculptures. I plan to create articulate gestures inspired from Rodin’s obsession with hands. I also want to use themes of over exaggerated facial expression as seen in some of his sculptures such as *The Scream* and *The Gates of Hell*. I will be investigating the technique and movement qualities of contemporary modern dance.

2. I am drawing inspiration for my movement style and choreographic process from Nathalie Pubellier whom I have rehearsed and studied with in Paris. In her technique classes and choreographic process she focuses on mental stimulation of the movement as a compositional tool. Her movement sculpts the backspace with spirals and spinal articulation, and includes resistance of intimacy with the body.

3. The visual artist that I intend to closely model my work is the sculptor and sketch artist Auguste Rodin. I envision replicating some of the poses with my dancers, mobilizing them and investigating partner work to capture the essence of the story in Rodin’s work and the feeling I have when looking at his designs.
III. The Flowering: What do you see/hear/taste/smell when you envision the work?

A. <https://www.pinterest.com/powersbd/senior-project/>
B. Photos from when I visited Musée Rodin in Paris will be posted on my blog.
C. I have been working mainly with strings and some electronic sound as I develop my choreographic ideas. I respond to the sound of cello and violin and I think those instruments compliment the intimacy and romanticism from Rodin’s work that I want to incorporate in my choreography. I like the idea of incorporating electronic sound as well. I am looking for something slightly chaotic and percussive but isn’t too jarring. I have been using music by Colin Stetson, Clint Mansell and Svarte Greiner to cultivate my choreographic vision thus far. For the choreographic process I want to incorporate guided improvisational activities and collaborate with my cast members for partner work. I feel that it is important to work together with my dancers for lifts and weight sharing to ensure that they are comfortable and that the movement comes naturally to them. For the first rehearsal I plan on having my dancers learn a movement phrase and rework it into a duet. I want to investigate possible partnerships, exploring the symbolic possibilities within these duets and collaborations. I also plan on recreating some of Rodin’s sculptures by sculpting my cast of dancers to mirror the qualities and poses of the sculptural forms, while considering the theatrical impact of the spatial design.
IV. Reflection**

1. Were you able to build a relationship with your cast members and bond as a whole during the choreographic process? How did that enhance or inhibit your work process?
2. Can you define your own aesthetic more specifically after completing the full choreographic process? Is there a new you/anti you?
3. Were you able to balance choreographing your own work and being in other choreographers work? What adjustments would you make in the future while managing both?
4. What did I learn about my strengths and challenges as a teacher while coaching my cast of dancers in this work?

PROPOSAL: PERFORMANCE WHO: Elyssa Berg

WHEN: Fall of 2016