

You Are Here

A Choreographic Memoir Exploring Anxiety in the YouTube Generation:

Interdisciplinary Study as a Therapeutic Process

by

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ABSTRACT

You Are Here: A choreographic memoir exploring anxiety in the YouTube generation is an evening-length performance which began as an interdisciplinary exploration of the therapeutic properties of creative writing and creative movement. Throughout the creation of this performance, the choreographer engaged in self-reflection from which arose the themes of anxiety, the Internet, and identity. As a result of this experience, she reached conclusions regarding her personal voice and agency, interdisciplinary art as therapy, the importance of dance as a coping mechanism in digital cultures, and a definition of the therapeutic process of choreographic memoir.

This thesis is dedicated to my mom, who dedicated one-third of her dissertation to me and without whom none of this would be possible.

She should also be given credit for my correct usage of both “who” and “whom” in that sentence.

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INTRODUCTION

When I first arrived at Arizona State University, I was confronted with an overwhelming surge of self-discovery. I was particularly affected by a story Professor Rob Kaplan told about why he chose to pursue a career in the medium of music. In the story, he grew up with a constant attentiveness to sonic rhythms around him. He said he would make rhythms with his stride and snapping of his fingers or chewing of his gum and was surprised to find that this was not something that everyone else was always doing. The next day, I walked down the stairs from my apartment and heard the words in my head as I colorfully described the way I launched off of the last step into the day. This is when I remembered that, when I was younger, I had a constant narration of my life—as if it were a novel—running through my head at all times. There was always a strong focus on descriptors of my personal movements, which is something I attributed to being a dancer. I believe, however, that this self-narration was meant to make me feel more significant. My movements mattered like the characters in a book.

Dance has always been a form of therapy for me. Like many dance artists, I use my choreography and performance as a platform for cathartic experiences to help me cope with life. Unfortunately, the esotericism of dance renders this catharsis a selfish pursuit. My pursuit of dance in higher education has been exclusively motivated by my desire to introduce others to dance so that they might, also, experience its therapeutic benefits. Therefore, I began contemplating ways to navigate the esotericism of dance to find more effective means of communication and expression.

Inspired by the reflection on my own self-narration, I chose to focus my creative activity on interdisciplinary work involving dance and memoir writing. I discovered, through my investigations into memoir writing, that the cathartic possibilities of creative nonfiction memoir writing parallel that of dance performance and creation (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Unlike dance, however, the cathartic properties of memoir writing were not rendered selfish by the medium's esotericism. This discovery—in combination with reflection on my personal and academic relationship to dance—led to my desire to explore my personal memoir choreographically as a therapeutic process of personal development. Therefore, I developed the term, “choreographic memoir” and proposed to define it through my creative process for *You Are Here: A choreographic memoir exploring anxiety in the YouTube generation*.

The process by which *You Are Here* was created began in the moment I was told, at the age of 22, that it was rude of me to not say, “Good, how are you?” when anyone asked me. This social convention is one that I was not taught and, therefore, had a lot of trouble understanding and employing. In an attempt to not be rude, though, I tried to integrate it into regular practice. When I started the processes of self-reflection I proposed for this project, I felt the urge to express on stage how engaging in this practice felt like self-inflicting pain.

I shared, with a friend, the idea of attempting to engage in small talk with an audience member while cutting my leg with a knife. While I was asking for her feedback on the feasibility of conversing and self-harming on stage, my friend, instead, surprised me by expressing that she did not understand or relate to my feelings about small talk. I

recorded myself talking about this conversation and spent a considerable amount of time contemplating why I was surprised about her reaction. I realized the importance of the Internet in shaping my expectations. YouTubers and many other members of the YouTube generation embrace their social anxiety and turn to each other and the Internet for likeminded individuals (Dove, 2015; Golbeck, 2016). I had so immersed myself in this culture that I had forgotten some people do not experience social anxiety. Thus, anxiety in the YouTube generation became the subject I would explore as I sought to define choreographic memoir.

GOALS AND QUESTIONS

The purpose of this embodied autoethnographic investigation of choreographic memoir was, in part, to help me feel prepared for my next steps in life. A common issue for graduate students is imposter syndrome—a form of anxiety in which one believes he or she is not capable enough to deserve everything he or she has achieved (Aguilar, 2015). It became clear to me that, before pursuing my career in higher education, I needed to cultivate a greater sense of self and agency as a dance artist and scholar in order to overcome my own imposter syndrome. In addition to my own personal-development goals, though, this investigation of choreographic memoir also needed to, through grounded theory, define the term “choreographic memoir.” The goals of the process, therefore, were

1. to develop a greater sense of self as a result of an exploration of the individual through the practices of memoir, autoethnography, and embodied

autoethnographic investigation; to develop a foundation for self-actualization as a contributing scholar and artist to the field of dance

2. to discover my personal processes of choreographic memoir and embodied autoethnography through creative investigation.

While I could attempt to assert that my perspective is unique enough to make this study a significantly unique contribution to the field, it would be more honest to identify my perspective as that of a kinesthetic learner (Fleming, 2011). I learn best through first-hand experience, and this fact is why I have chosen to employ a mixed-methods adaptation of grounded theory. I intend to develop, through the processes of autoethnography and creative choreographic memoir, a greater understanding of myself and of the practice of choreographic memoir (Maxwell, 2013, p. 49).

Questions that this study seeks to answer include the following.

1. Who am I and what can I contribute to the field of dance as a scholar and artist? The answer to this question is more of an asymptote toward which the trajectory of the project will progress than a simple, specific answer that the project seeks to identify.
2. What is choreographic memoir?
 - a. What are the practices of choreographic memoir that I employ throughout my personal investigation?
 - b. What are the potential therapeutic benefits of the practice of creating choreographic memoir?

LIMITATIONS

The greatest liability that limits the completion of this project is my current lack of education, research, and experience in the fields of psychology and dance therapy. While I attempted to use the literature review to compensate for this limitation, this review is in no way equal to a psychology or dance therapy degree. For this reason, I used this project as my introductory exploration of psychology and dance therapy from the vantage point of an experienced creator of dance. The creative lens through which this project is presented and viewed also accounts for this liability because it does not pretend to communicate a set of methods for dance therapy. It is, instead, a mode for my own self-development and therapeutic process as a dance artist and individual.

In qualitative research, it is generally understood that limitations and validity threats cannot be eliminated or minimized through the implementation of certain methods (Maxwell, 2013). Thus, the limitations of my study did not directly influence my methods, but were concepts of which I remained cognizant during all stages of the process. My research, in both content and method, is strongly influenced by the feminist principle of self-questioning and making the personal public in order to reveal personal biases and subjectivity (Stinson, 2008). The validity of my work comes from the fact that it is specifically contextualized and does not seek, or pretend to communicate, any universal truths.

CONTEXTUALIZATION

This interdisciplinary investigation of personal therapeutic processes of embodied exploration draws from the fields of somatic studies, autoethnography,

choreography/creative practices, and memoir writing; It also considers the impacts of anxiety and digital cultures/the YouTube generation on embodiment. Therefore, it is employing a mixed methodological approach that pulls from these disciplines to fit the needs of the researcher and the research as the process necessitates. The following sections serve to contextualize the research and situate it amongst existing research.

Methodological Framework

One of the major underlying assumptions of research in dance, including my own, is that of the human soma, as proposed by Thomas Hanna in 1986 (Hanna, 1986). More recently—with the trend toward including indigenous and decolonizing perspectives in qualitative research—this assumption has not only been adopted by a wider variety of disciplines, but also has expanded the mind-body (soma) to include place, space, or the environment (Tuck & McKenzie, 2014). This expanded perspective of the soma represents part of the ontological underpinnings of the proposed study. Specifically, the soma in this research is expanded beyond the body and the mind to include the experience of an online presence of digital cultures (Dyer, 2009A). It seeks to explore and explain the embodiment and disembodiment of the soma in the YouTube generation.

The two most direct methodological influences for this process were Becky Dyer's somatic phenomenological inquiry in dance education and identity construction and Jennifer Roche's individual hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry in the discipline of creative dance (Dyer, 2009A; Roche, 2015; Dyer, 2010A; Dyer, 2009B; Dyer, Allen, & Ramsey, 2010B). Both Roche and Dyer seek to communicate understanding through experience and embodiment in phenomenological inquiry.

Unlike Roche and Dyer, this study—while rooted in Roche’s and Dyer’s emphasis on the embodiment and experience—employed the methodologies of autoethnography and grounded theory. Autoethnography is a research methodology that uses reflections and descriptions of “personal experience in order to understand cultural experience” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). The writing exercises associated with autoethnography have been described as therapeutic for the participants of an autoethnographic study because they allow the participants to expose “issues with which they had to contend personally,” and, in doing so, eliminate feelings of isolation (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Additionally, this research is conducted through the feminist lens, which asserts that the personal is political and should, therefore, be made visible (Stinson, 2008). Thus, the conceptual framework of autoethnography will inform the reflexive component of this creative self-inquiry process and aligns with the subject of therapeutic exploration.

In addition to its personal therapeutic goals, this research was borne from the invention of the term “choreographic memoir” and sought to define it throughout the creative process. For this reason, the study incorporated an element of grounded theory, which is a “theory that is inductively developed during a study and is in constant interaction with the data from that study” (Maxwell, 2013). Throughout the development of *You Are Here*, the nascent concept of “choreographic memoir” became more clearly defined as an embodied process of interdisciplinary creation. The next section contextualizes the concept of “choreographic memoir” as it may have existed prior to the invention of the term by this project.

Choreographic Memoir

While the term “choreographic memoir” is new as it is used in this project, it is a well-established practice in art creation, including dance, that artists use their personal experiences as source material. The trend of autobiographical subject matter in postmodern dance emerged in the mid-1980’s and continues to develop today (Smith, 1985). Alison Bory, in her dissertation entitled *Dancing with My Self: Performing Autobiography in Postmodern Dance*, identifies and explores the works of choreographers since the 1980’s who have been implementing autobiographical themes in their works. In her dissertation, Bory concludes that the majority of the choreographers who are making autobiographical works are, in fact, engaging the material in a politically-motivated way. Bory’s dissertation provides the most significantly relevant conceptual framework (Bory, 2008). However, this project examines autobiography in postmodern dance from an interdisciplinary creative lens. Rather than viewing the dance as the creative act and the autobiographical information as mere subject matter, *You Are Here* examines autobiographical information through the lens of creative writing and memoir as it relates to creative movement and dance.

While many artistic works informed this exploration, the most significant was Jerome Bel’s *Veronique Doisneau*. In *Veronique Doisneau*, a solo performer speaks and moves through a story of her relationship with dance. She describes where she is in her career now, where she wished she could be, what she loved doing most, and why she is speaking and performing all of this (Bel, 2004). In an early rehearsal for *You Are Here*, I emulated Veronique Doisneau’s performance as a form of autoethnographic exploration.

The simultaneous exploration of my movement with my words and my words with my movement cultivated by this experience established the practice of embodied autoethnographic exploration as a part of the artistic process.

Creative Writing and Memoir. Creative writing is an immensely large discipline that includes a wide array of artists and artistic perspectives. Therefore, it is necessary that I identify the memoirists who most directly informed the approaches to memoir-writing that aided in the creation of *You Are Here*. Dan Chaon, Lynda Barry, Jerry McGill, Lydia Yuknavitch, and Kimberly Dark are all memoir writers and creative writing instructors that represent a diverse subsection of the creative writing field and from whom I have taken a creative writing course (Barry, 2005; McGill, 2012; Yuknavitch, 2010; Chaon, 2010; Dark, *Location is Everything*, 2008). Throughout the process of creating *You Are Here*, I employed several of their creative writing prompts and guidelines. Specifically, I employed the guidelines for free-writing taught by Dan Chaon. He employs a method he calls “X-pages,” in which he draws a large “X” on pages where he lists memories grouped by type. He also begins the first drafts of his memoir works by writing the words “I am” and describing where he is (Chaon, 2010). Kimberly Dark is another memoirist who heavily influenced the artistic process by which *You Are Here* was created. As both a mover and a writer, Dark embodies her works when she reads them on stage (Dark, *Location is Everything*, 2008).

Text and Dance. A perspective on the incorporation of text and dance that exists in the field of dance and was particularly influential on this project was presented by Jonathan Burrows in his book, *A Choreographer’s Handbook*. Burrows warns that

The text you choose to work with is in dialogue with the visual aspect of what you create. The most important thing is to consider the relative weight of what we will see and what we will hear: narrative text can make abstract movement seem light and incidental, and then delicate meanings we read in body language are easily buried under words (Burrows, 2010).

This balance was carefully considered in the creation and development of *You Are Here*. Visual aids, such as the table provided in Appendix A, proved particularly useful in my consideration of the balance of the various disciplines that interacted to create this interdisciplinary work.

YouTube Generation. As a member of a generation that was born after widespread commercialization of the Internet, I got my first email address at the age of 9 and was an active player of online video games before finishing elementary school. YouTube was invented around the time that I started high school, and I have been actively following its development ever since. Because the Internet has been so influential on my life, it follows that the Internet is a prevalent theme in my life study and memoir. The culture of the YouTube generation, therefore, presented itself as a thread through which this project examined the bridge between verbal and movement language (Workman, 2008). In examining my relationship to the Internet through memoir, it became clear to me that the intangibility of my online existence contributed to my anxieties, specifically agoraphobia and imposter syndrome. The isolation I felt as a member of online communities enabled my agoraphobia and the prevalence of How-To videos to compensate for any of my blind spots enabled my imposter syndrome (Smith

M. , 2013; Cullen, 2014). The contrast between these ungrounding qualities of the Internet and the grounding qualities of dance therefore, became the obvious and somewhat urgent dichotomy to be embodied in *You Are Here: A choreographic memoir exploring anxiety in the YouTube generation* (De Leon, 2009; Hackney, 1998; Guarino & Oliver, 2014).

Anxiety

I was once told that the first thing a therapist instructs a patient with anxiety to do is research what it means to have anxiety (Allen, 2015). Even though, at that point, I had not yet been diagnosed with anxiety, I began to do research. The American Psychological Association states that “though many types of anxiety disorders exist, research suggests that most are driven by similar underlying processes. People with anxiety disorders tend



Figure 1: Katherine Dorn performing a grounding plié while instructions for grounding when experiencing an anxiety attack are projected beside her

to become easily overwhelmed by their emotions” (Sauer-Zavala, Bufka, & Wright, 2017). As a result, people with anxiety can “feel very unreal or detached” (Vivyan, 2015). Therefore, common mechanisms for coping with anxiety are grounding techniques that help ground the experiencer in reality by calling attention to concrete, tangible aspects of the environment through the five senses (Vivyan, 2015).

Jennifer De Leon, scholar in the field of Dance Therapy, found similar grounding qualities in the *plié* for dancers. De Leon concludes

Working with the metaphor of the *plié* is to engage with the transcendent. This seemingly simple even quotidian movement contains that which would disturb the quiet vacuity that threatens to overtake us should we take too many things for granted. This paper recommends engagement with the *plié* as a powerful and provocative tool in therapeutic practice (De Leon, 2009, p. 97).

De Leon’s article was crucial in the creation of *You Are Here*, as it drew a direct parallel between codified dance movement and grounding techniques for coping with anxiety. As I explored movement and language inspired by her article and my own research into coping with anxiety, I made important discoveries regarding embodiment and the social somatic experience of digital cultures.

PROCESSES

This project is a personal therapeutic exploration that seeks to define the term “choreographic memoir” and draws from the fields of dance, creative writing/memoir, somatic studies, and online content creation. It is, therefore, a choreographed work of memoir entitled *You Are Here* and a written analysis of the methods and processes

engaged in the production of choreographic memoir through an interdisciplinary study. A review of literature and subsequent autoethnographic investigation into my personal experiences with the goal of generating creative nonfiction works of memoir in both movement and written language led to the creation of *You Are Here: A choreographic memoir exploring anxiety in the YouTube generation*.

The process by which I collected data began long before the November 18 performance date of *You Are Here*. About three months prior to this premier date, I decided to practice the embodiment of a YouTuber by creating and sharing a series of How-To videos and vlogs (Dorn, katdornoneword, 2017). One hundred days prior to the premier date, I began posting a picture on my Instagram account every day (Dorn, August 11-November 17, 2016). Throughout this process, I journaled on my embodied experience of this somewhat disembodied presence. Some of these journal entries—which can be seen in Appendix B—made it into the performance of *You Are Here*, while many others simply acted as practice-based research into the somatic experience of the embodied dancer and the disembodied YouTuber. It is from this experience and these journal entries that I developed an understanding of how to cope with anxiety when more than half of your existence is online/intangible.

Creative Process

In reflecting on my journal entries regarding my experience creating how-to videos, I drew a connection between the prevalence of imposter syndrome and the fact that how-to videos are one of the most common types of video on YouTube (Cullen, 2014; Smith M. , 2013). As I was quoted in the press release for *You Are Here*, “the fact

that there are so many ‘how-to’ videos on the Internet and on YouTube [means that] we have this place we can reference and say to ourselves we don’t actually know how to do anything, we just have the Internet all the time” (McCarty, 2016). From my experience, however, I found that creating how-to videos gave me concrete evidence that I knew something. Therefore, I considered the concept of the prosumer—a combination producer and consumer—culture of YouTube (Peters & Seier, 2009). In attempting to cope with anxiety while maintaining a regular online presence, it is beneficial to consider one’s presence on the prosumer spectrum and seek balance. The section of *You Are Here* entitled “These Posts Are Not For You” and its accompanying video—which was comprised of advice for coping with anxiety when half of your existence is online—arose directly from these conclusions.



Figure 2: One form of data collected—daily Instagram posts—in the ultimate performance of You Are Here.

In addition to creating videos on YouTube, my practice-based research as a YouTuber involved dedicating myself to regular self-promotion on my Instagram account. While posting one photo every day seems like a very consistent and monotonous activity, it turned out to be a particularly rocky roller coaster of emotions. I found myself wanting to hide from my screen. I found myself wanting to convince people I was still real. I found myself wanting to scream at people I'm not a robot, I'm not a marketing stunt, I'm still me. I fought myself day after day because I did not want to lose myself in trying to prove myself (Dorn, August 11-November 17, 2016). Fifty days into this countdown (and fifty days away from the performance), I broke down and cried in the studio after, once again, failing to figure out how to end *You Are Here*. I cried, and I journaled about it. Even though it was just another journal entry, this one seemed to require significantly more processing than the others. I considered posting it online, read it to a friend, recorded myself reading it, and listened to the recording. Throughout this processing, I realized the power of this journal entry was its emphasis on the one activity that, regardless of how overwhelmed I was feeling for any reason, helped to ground me in reality. While this journal entry was a reaction to my experiences posting on Instagram, it was truly about the grounding power of dance. This journal entry, despite all of its processing, became "Tears on Marley," the personal essay I read from my journal at the end of *You Are Here*.

I constructed the rest of *You Are Here* to follow the story arc of an anxiety attack. First, I established the setting and my character. I began with "Small Talk" to establish myself as a person who experiences social anxiety, and went into a series of How-To

videos that I created as a part of my research to establish my online character. I physically entered the space with “About Me,” the piece created using a process inspired by Jerome Bel’s *Veronique Doisneau* in which I moved and introduced myself and my relationship to dance, the way that an “About Me” section of a social networking site would.

The process by which the next section, “Google, You Don’t Understand,” was created began when I had an anxiety attack about three months prior to the premier of *You Are Here*. After experiencing this attack—catalyzed by an inability to communicate my reality to Google Maps—I wrote a personal essay about it, which can be found in Appendix B. The choreography of this section followed three stages of an anxiety attack

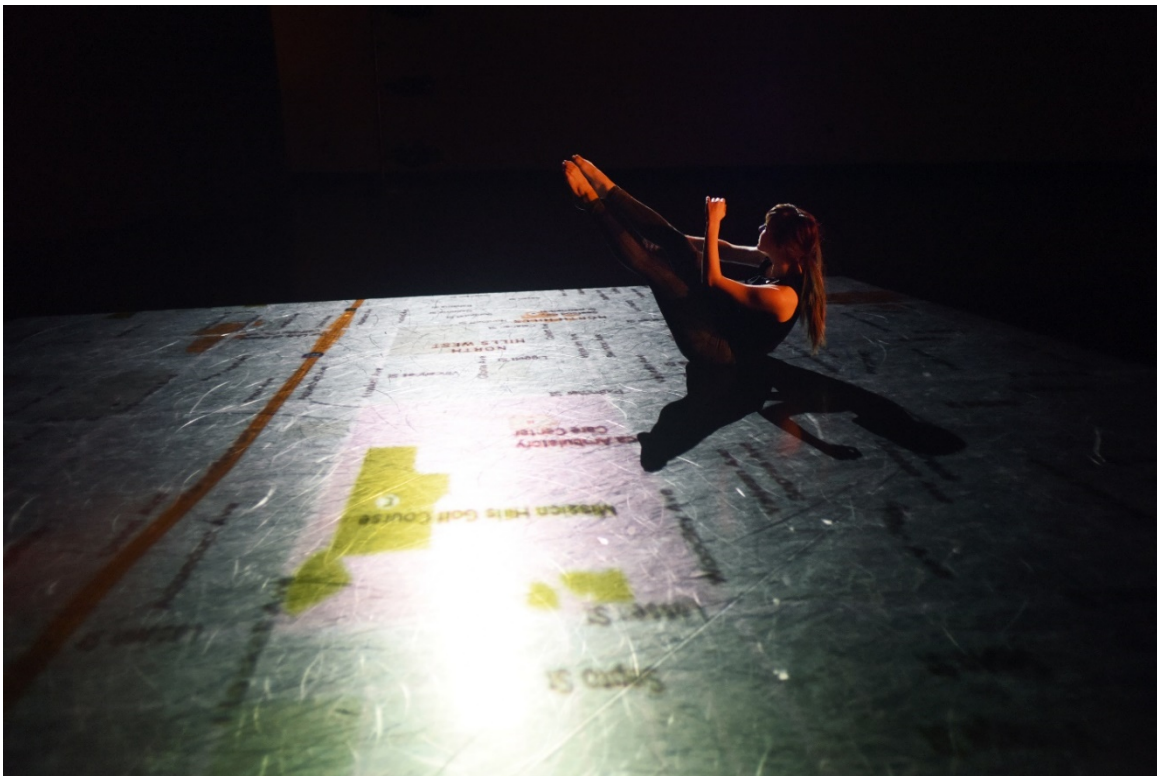


Figure 3: Katherine Dorn dancing enveloped in a Google Map for "Google, You Don't Understand"

that I extracted from this writing. They are (1) losing control, (2) embarrassment, and (3) losing your concept of self. Using the movement phrase from “About Me,” to represent my concept of self, I embodied these three stages in “Google, You Don’t Understand” while enveloped in a projection of the Google Maps journey that inspired the initial anxiety attack.

After embodying stage three (losing your concept of self) by deconstructing my phrase from “About Me,” I sought the parallels I saw drawn between grounding techniques and the plié by De Leon’s article, “The potent persuasive pleasurable unappeasable plié.” I restaged a piece from November 2015 entitled “To remind us some things are okay;” in which I spoke a poem inspired by grounding techniques while performing a series of grounding pliés (Dorn, To remind us some things are okay;, 2015). In *You Are Here*, this piece was performed while instructions for grounding techniques were projected on the wall beside me. It served as the grounding/recovery section of the anxiety-attack story arc. It was as a result of “To remind us some things are okay;” that I was able to perform, without deconstruction, my phrase from “About Me” in the section entitled “Identity Phrase” and to move on the more outwardly-focused sections of “These posts are not for you” and “Tears on Marley.”

ANALYSIS OF CONCLUDED PROCESS

The goals and questions on which this project was based can be divided into two categories. First, the project sought to assist me in developing a greater sense of self and achieving self-actualization through a therapeutic process of memoir and autoethnographic investigation. Second, this project introduced the term “choreographic

memoir” and sought to define it through grounded theory. The analyses of this project’s process, as it is concluded at the moment, are, therefore, divided into the categories of “Personal Therapeutic Outcomes” and “Defining Choreographic Memoir.”

Personal Therapeutic Outcomes

One of the questions this project sought to answer asked who I am and what I can contribute to the field of dance as a scholar and artist. From the beginning, I recognized that this project would not be able to concretely answer this question but, instead, hoped that it could assist me in make significant progress in developing self-confidence and a sense of self. In analyzing the process as it is now concluded, I am able to divide these personal therapeutic outcomes into the categories of (1) progress I have made regarding anxieties I have with my voice and (2) my understanding of interdisciplinary art as therapy.

Voice. “Ahem. How does my voice sound? I haven’t really had a voice in a couple months,” said a voice recording over loud white noise in a dark room. It didn’t sound like my voice, but it was. Forty or so minutes later, choking through tears was, undeniably, my voice cracking out the words, “What does it matter? I’m just a stupid dancer.”

Using my voice has always caused me anxiety. When I was in elementary school, I would occasionally lie and write a note to the teacher telling her I had lost my voice just so I would not have to speak to anyone that day. It was never because I had a big presentation or even because I wanted to avoid people; I just very specifically hated using my voice. In my first semester of graduate school, I took a required course—entitled

Rhythmic Awareness—in which we explored rhythm in a variety of ways as dancers, choreographers, and dance educators. A topic that we discussed on multiple occasions in this course was the importance of the voice in communicating movement qualities, rhythms, and musicality to students and performers. In a journal entry for this class in September 2014, I wrote

Why am I so afraid of using my voice? This question has been plaguing me my whole life. What is wrong with me? ... My voice has always been a source of insecurity for me and is a particularly significant insecurity on which I should reflect because it affects my ability to relay information as a teacher (Dorn, Triangle Square Circle 3, 2014).

Throughout this class, I expressed reluctance in working on my voice. I fought—through my journal entries—against any exercises that forced me to use it. I insisted that I could make it through life while still clutching to this insecurity.

As I embraced my love of written and verbal language and spent the next couple of years exploring it in relation to dance through works on the stage and in video, I had to accept the necessity of the voice in communicating spoken word. Of course, I strategically avoided using my own voice live. I used recordings and gave scripts to others in all instances when I was sharing something deeply personal. The only instance in which I shared my written word with my voice in-person was with a piece entitled *The Emotional Roller Coaster of Cat Food Commercials*, in which I played an immature version of myself to avoid the pain of judgement that comes from speaking as yourself in your own voice (Dorn, *The Emotional Roller Coaster of Cat Food Commercials*, 2015).

Because of the personal therapeutic goals of the project, using the voices of others and detaching myself from the character of my voice in *You Are Here* did not seem appropriate. As was made clear in my journal entries from 2014, overcoming my fear of using my voice is a crucial step in achieving those goals. So, I challenged myself to only use my own voice in *You Are Here*. While some sections were recorded, every section with spoken word used my voice. Each night, I stood and moved in front of an audience while sharing my personal embodied experiences with anxiety in my own voice. This was astounding progress from the beginning of graduate school, when I insisted I could teach dance without using my voice.



Figure 4: Katherine Dorn reading the journal entry written on day fifty of the countdown (Tears on Marley) on stage.

Further evidence of my success in achieving this goal can be found in my participation in Felix Cruz's *The Epic of a Queer Puerto Rican Trying to Make it Through their White-Bred Life* (Cruz, 2017). As a performer in this piece, I was expected to perform an intimate lip-synched pop concert and shout a series of expletives at a high volume. This feat is one that I know I could not have accomplished prior to the growth I experienced in the process of creating and performing *You Are Here*.

Interdisciplinary-Art-as-Therapy. In an attempt to find the potential therapeutic benefits of creating choreographic memoir, I found myself going beyond dance-as-therapy and memoir-as-therapy to the more complex concept of interdisciplinary-art-as-therapy. Interdisciplinary-art-as-therapy is a practice, by my definition, in which three or more art disciplines are utilized in conjunction so that their unique forms can express and address disparate therapeutic benefits for the creator/performer.

The process and performance of *You Are Here* integrated elements from movement/dance, creative writing/memoir, video art/digital media, and performance art. The movement and dance aspects, as mentioned in the section entitled "About Me," helped me—the performer—cope with the anxiety of performance and move through memories of anxiety in a way that allowed for a sense of closure. The creative writing elements offered the therapeutic benefit of analysis and communication. The verbal language involved in creative writing helped to surpass the esotericism in dance and facilitate my growth in communicating with others. Video art and digital media were incorporated to help me understand my relationship to others and to movement. Through my experiences working in video art and digital media, I came to understand the

important role dance has played in my life and have since been better able to reap the benefits of that role. Finally, the performance art aspects of *You Are Here* afforded me the opportunity to express myself in spoken word and, therefore, find the confidence in my voice that I lacked.

Part of the reason behind this project's personal therapeutic goals was to help me understand the potential contributions I can make to the field of dance as an artist and scholar. The new understanding of interdisciplinary art that I developed as a result of this process is one such thing I can contribute to the field as both an artist and scholar. Interdisciplinary art as a process to develop understanding is a concept I can and have begun to employ in the classroom, while interdisciplinary art as therapy is a concept I can contribute as an artist, as exemplified by *You Are Here*.

Defining Choreographic Memoir

In addition to the personal and therapeutic goals of this project, I sought to define the term choreographic memoir through practice. Choreographic memoir is an interdisciplinary exploration of the personal which specifically draws from the creative practices of dance (choreography) and writing (memoir). To understand this definition fully, one must understand the meaning of the term "interdisciplinary." This word was chosen because it implies an integrated and collaborative process in which each discipline influences and responds to the other. This differs from multidisciplinary, for instance, which would be used to describe a process in which the disciplines work together but do not interact and affect one another (Harris, 2006). Thus, throughout the process of creating choreographic memoir, one would explore the personal through multiple

disciplines which interact with one another to lead to personal and political discoveries and assertions. Because of the combination and collaboration of forms included in interdisciplinary work, choreographic memoir is especially beneficial in leading to personal and political discoveries regarding multiple understandings and embodiments.

This was exemplified in *You Are Here* throughout the process and in the ultimate product. As I created each section of *You Are Here*, I explored my embodied and disembodied (online) self in both writing and movement (and sometimes video). Those explorations then influenced and informed one another to create the final product. For example, the section entitled “About Me” began with a written explanation of my identity. I explored the same concept—my identity—through a movement phrase and realized the importance of my relationship to dance. As a result, I returned to the written language and elaborated on this aspect of my identity. This, then, informed a movement phrase I, in the final product, performed as I spoke the written words. Similar interdisciplinary processes led to the creation of each section of *You Are Here*.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Through the embodied autoethnographic investigation of choreographic memoir as a therapeutic process, I experienced significant progress in responding to this project’s goals and questions. I made concrete progress toward my goal of being more self-confident, made discoveries that I could contribute to the field of dance as an artist and scholar, and defined the term “choreographic memoir.” Additionally, I made unexpected discoveries regarding the embodied/disembodied soma of the YouTube generation and the power of dance to help manage the anxiety that results from such an existence. While

these discoveries were particularly important in achieving the personal goals of this iteration of choreographic memoir, further research into choreographic memoir would be fueled by my desire to expand the benefit it can have to others.

As I wrote, choreographed, and researched to explore my anxiety, I became familiar with the powerful role that dance has played in helping me cope. Thus, the theory that dance is a grounding technique for helping people cope with anxiety in the YouTube generation arose as a result of my grounded theory approach to this project. Anxiety is extremely common in the YouTube generation. It is, in fact, an issue discussed by many YouTubers as one with which they have experience (Dove, 2015). Many have speculated as to the role that the Internet might be playing in this phenomenon. Perhaps it is the plethora of information, the abundance of choices, or the constant need to maintain a certain non-physical social presence (Dove, 2015; Feiles, 2013). Through my embodied autoethnographic investigation into choreographic memoir, I found the disembodiment and intangibility of online existence to be significantly powerful in distorting my grounded experience of reality and, therefore, causing anxiety (Sauer-Zavala, Bufka, & Wright, 2017).

Inspired by my experience in creating and performing *You Are Here*, future research into choreographic memoir would seek to expand the concept of interdisciplinary-art-as-therapy to help others cope with the complicated soma of digital cultures. The collaboration of movement and language inherent in choreographic memoir, which I developed to overcome the esotericism of dance, could lead to work in dance advocacy. The interdisciplinary nature of choreographic memoir not only allows for more

collaboration across disciplines—thus, allowing for more diverse artists to experience the power of dance—but it also encourages the creation of works that are more accessible to audiences made of non-dancers. The future of choreographic memoir lies, at least in part, in dance advocacy.

My interest in creating the term “choreographic memoir” came from a revelation I had early in graduate school in which I realized I had a passion for combining movement and language. As I faced the fact that I would soon be applying for jobs as a dance educator, I realized I still had significant progress to make in terms of personal growth and self-confidence. Thus, I focused the embodied autoethnographic investigation simultaneously on my own personal therapeutic outcomes, as well as defining the term “choreographic memoir.” In creating *You Are Here: A choreographic memoir exploring anxiety in the YouTube generation*, I made concrete progress toward both of these goals and realized the potential choreographic memoir has to benefit others and to advocate for the power of dance.

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APPENDIX A
VIDEO OUTLINE

Thesis Video Outline

Timeline	North Wall	Balcony	Floor
	Sound	No Sound	No Sound
1. How to Live with Cockroaches 2. How to Get the Most out of your Shampoo and Conditioner 3. How to Make Friends 4. How to Avoid Going Out	Plays at top of Piece -How to videos Stops when I enter the space Content: How To Video Footage	Plays at top of Piece -How to video steps Stops when I enter the space Content: How To Video Steps	
5. About Me			
6. Google, You Don't Understand	Plays as I walk to far corner and remove microphone (sound only) This transition <i>needs to be exact</i> Content: Sound; "Like Leaves" – Brian Tritch		Plays as I run in a diagonal across the space (when music picks up) This transition <i>needs to be exact</i> Content: Google Maps from LA to Fresno
7. To Remind Us Some Things are Okay;		Plays as I walk to center and begin speaking and plieing Content: Steps for Grounding Techniques	
8. Identity Phrase			
9. These posts are not for you 10. Tears on Marley	Plays as I fall to the floor This transition <i>does not need to be exact</i> Content: Countdown and Sonora Video	Plays as I fall to the floor This transition <i>does not need to be exact</i> Content: How to Cope with Anxiety when Half of your Existence is Online	
11. Bow			

APPENDIX B
PERFORMANCE SCRIPT

About Me

Walk out with a microphone (hopefully on my head and that I can take off? So I can dance). Move while I am talking

Oh, gross I'm a human now. Hello, I'm Katherine Dorn and I've been dancing for twenty... two? Years. I started when I was three... Well, my parents wanted me to do gymnastics and started me when I was three. But they took me to a gym where there were two dance studios behind a big wall of windows, so I would spend every class watching the dancers and every time after class begging my parents to put me in a dance class.

My dad was reluctant, but they put me in the dance classes. My dad stayed reluctant for years, it was expensive, after all. So my mom would say, "it's cheaper than a lifetime of therapy" but, you know, here I am.

I was really good at tap. Like really good... for a four year old. I was really bad at everything else, but really good at tap. Ironically, I hated tap. I thought it was boring. So, at the sweet, innocent age of... six? Years old, I told my mom tap gave me headaches. I'm sorry mom, but it was the only way I could figure out to get you to take me out of tap and not the rest of my dance classes.

Anyway, you might be pretty annoyed right now by my movements. You're either annoyed that I'm moving and it's distracted you from my talking or you're annoyed that I'm talking and it's distracting you from my movement. But, honestly, this is just how I have to talk. Like, I lead my students through meditation sometimes in class and I noticed some of them have stopped closing their eyes when instructed and I think it's because I'm like (movement becomes far more exaggerated) "Inhale and imagine that your lungs are a lightbulb getting brighter!" Like, I don't blame them for wanting to watch. Or at least not trusting me to not step on them...

But the thing is, I'm a really anxious person. As my mom made clear, dance was my therapy. These movements are helping me think clearly and, well, I get really stressed in situations when I can't move like this. Like driving.

Google, You Don't Understand

Google, you don't understand. I can't turn left here. I can't. Give me a light. Something. Just not here. I can't.

I just got home from LA and I need to recover. I got in my car this morning with every intention of going out to get breakfast alone and enjoying it. Instead, I got in my car and got lost. I kept pulling over to tell Google I couldn't do what it wanted me to do along a curb where the signs all said no parking at any time.

The first time, I tried to stay calm. I said, "Okay Google, just take me home." Forget about breakfast. Forget about how badly I need a toilet because my roommate shoved me out of the dorm with an awkward encounter. I can wait the four-hour drive. Just take me home.

Google said turn around. Turn left here. Where you have a stop sign and a million cars in the big street onto which you are turning do not. Just turn left here and I'll take you home.

I turn right.

Redirect, Google.

You better fucking redirect.

It loads and loads and I cuss it out with every intersection that passes as I head the opposite direction of who knows what because where the fuck am I and who are all these people and why is everyone so aggressive. Like, I'm sorry for being in the middle of the road when you want to go across but what do you think driving up to the side of my car and honking will do?

Google loads forever. I say fuck it. I'll turn somewhere so I can get to somewhere to turn the way it wants me to turn.

Somehow. Magically. Ironically. Beautifully. Confusingly. I end up parked along the same curb.

No parking at any time the sign says.

Turn around and turn left Google says.

I can't breathe. I call my mom.

Do you want your dad to come get you she says.

And sit here for four hours in a car where I am not supposed to be parked? No, that's silly I say.

Well what do you want me to do she says.

I just want to breathe I say.

I choke on a Kleenex. I actually inhaled it into my throat and choke.

It's a good thing my mom's on the phone I think and don't say because my throat is coated in clean, white dust.

I can sense her worry as I cough until I can't anymore.

I start to calm as a car pulls up behind me and a family starts rearranging themselves. I can't have feelings in front of people.

So now I'm home and my mind is racing with the millions of things I need to do.

My throat is torn apart and I can't do anything.

I nearly died today I think and my mind calms down.

I deserve a rest. After all, I nearly choked on a Kleenex and died today.

I don't remember how I got home. I know I didn't eat and I didn't get that toilet until Google got me home. Or maybe I got myself home. I just know I never turned left. I just know that even as I sit here thinking about what happened I can't believe it happened. But my throat lets me know it did. My lungs feel funny.

To remind us some things are okay;

Enter casually from audience

The past is the past. It happened. You can't change it. This is now.

I have a spine.

It has a front.

And a back.

But I always forget about the front it has inside of me.

You can see my spine from my back.

My back has skin.

...

I am covered in skin.

It holds me together

I have this whole skeleton inside of me.

Under my skin.

All these parts.

Supporting me.

...

The past is the past. It happened. You can't change it. This is now.

Bend at the knees, hips, and ankles.

Bend at the knees, hips, and ankles.

Think down as you go up.

No, think up as you go down.

Like a rip tide.

Like the one that almost stole my mom.

I can still see her waving in the distance

The past is the past. It happened. You can't change it. This is now.

...

I am made of cells.

Millions and millions of cells.

Each with a nucleus, a mitochondrion, and a golgi apparatus.

All of them are a part of me.

They support me.

Millions of them.

On my side.

...

The past is the past. It happened. You can't change it. This is now.

Plie.

And up.

Plie.

And up.

Plie.

And full.

And half.

And up.

Plie.

And full.

And half.

And up.

And fold.

And half.

...

And up.

Cambre.

Return.

And rise.

Lower slowly.

...

The past is the past. It happened. You can't change it. This is now.

...

Plie.

And up.

Plie.

And up.

Plie.

And full.

And half.

And up.

Plie.

And full.

And half.

And up.

And fold.

And half.

...

And up.

Cambre.

Return.

And rise.

Lower slowly.

It's okay.

It's okay.

It's okay.

It's okay.

That's what I used to tell my cat.

Even when it wasn't true.

...

The past is the past. It happened. You can't change it. This is now.

...

...

These Posts Aren't for You

These posts are not for you. I'm not posting every day for your likes or your comments or even your approval. I know sometimes you might think that I'm posting to make it look like I'm succeeding in life. To make me look better. To make you feel worse. But that's not it at all.

These posts are not for you. I'm posting to remind myself that there is something solid and still in my life. I'm posting because I've been there and I've felt that and I'm tired of hearing "fake it until you make it and am currently "faking it."

But I'm not doing it for you. Because these posts aren't for you. These posts are for me.

Tears on Marley

September 23, 2016

I went into the studio and cried today.

I went into the studio to rehearse the seventeen minutes of choreography I had and create the remaining nine, but I just cried.

Then I took a picture of my tears on the marley.

Finally, something to document, I thought. Finally, something worth writing about.

Finally, I'd had a pure, concrete outpouring of emotion in relation to my thesis.

Up until this point, I had really just been in some strange version of numbness as I spent every waking hour—which was just about every hour—working and forgetting to eat. There were those two days where my body told me it had had enough and gave me a 103°F fever to make me rest, but I can't really know if that was directly tied to my thesis.

Numbness seems like a strange sensation to have when working on something about which I am so passionate that I've been studying it for twenty-two years and I've dedicated a thesis to it. Numbness and passion just don't go together. But, regardless of the passion I have for the topic and the subject and the field, the numbness is necessary to keep me from breaking down and crying on the marley every single second. You see, it's difficult to be passionate about dance.

It's really.

Fucking.

Difficult.

Because it doesn't matter how much you know that dance can save lives. That dance can prevent mental and physical illness. That dance can teach compassion, sanity, and empathy. That dance can save the fucking world. It doesn't matter because, as far as the rest of the world is concerned, dance is silly.

Dance is for strippers and little girls. Dance is something you grow out of. Dance is something you only do for fun.

It's really fucking difficult to hold on to this belief around which I have built my life when every interaction I have with my family, my non-dance friends, my students,

and anyone who ever asks “what do you study?” or “what do you do?” results in my entire existence coming into question.

So, in my last year of graduate school as I get my MFA in dance, I’ve had to be numb. I have to be numb to get any of my work done. Because the moment I think about how much all of this means to me, how much I’ve worked to get here, and how much I absolutely love the work that I’m doing and I want to share it with everyone in the whole fucking world—

I break.

I stop moving.

I walk over to the piano in the corner of the studio.

I crawl under it.

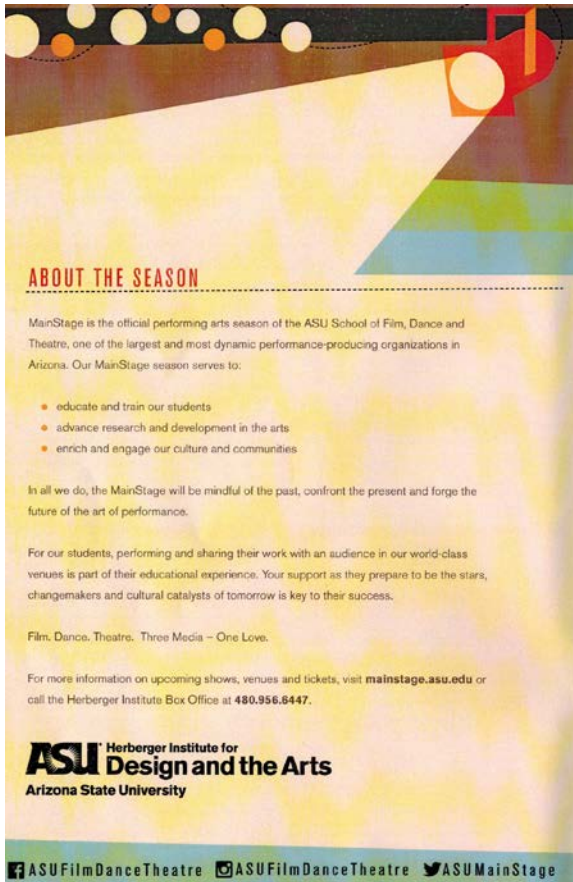
And I cry.

What does it matter? I’m just a stupid dancer.

APPENDIX C
PERFORMANCE PROGRAM



Exterior of program designed by Arizona State University Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts



ABOUT THE SEASON

MainStage is the official performing arts season of the ASU School of Film, Dance and Theatre, one of the largest and most dynamic performance-producing organizations in Arizona. Our MainStage season serves to:

- educate and train our students
- advance research and development in the arts
- enrich and engage our culture and communities

In all we do, the MainStage will be mindful of the past, confront the present and forge the future of the art of performance.

For our students, performing and sharing their work with an audience in our world-class venues is part of their educational experience. Your support as they prepare to be the stars, changemakers and cultural catalysts of tomorrow is key to their success.

Film, Dance, Theatre. Three Media – One Love.

For more information on upcoming shows, venues and tickets, visit mainstage.asu.edu or call the Herberger Institute Box Office at 480.956.8447.

ASU Herberger Institute for
Design and the Arts
Arizona State University

f ASUFilmDanceTheatre i ASUFilmDanceTheatre t ASUMainStage

Emerging Artists I

Friday, Nov. 18 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 19 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 20 at 2 p.m.

Dance Laboratory, FAC 122
Nelson Fine Arts Center

School of Film, Dance and Theatre
Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts
Arizona State University

Interior pages 1 and 2 of the program, featuring mission statement of Arizona State University's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts School of Film, Dance, and Theatre alongside dates, times, and location of the performance

You Are Here

Choreographer Katherine Dorn
Lighting Designer Jamie Arakas
Costume Designer Katherine Dorn
Media Designer Katherine Dorn
Performer Katherine Dorn

Small Talk

Additional Performer Felix Cruz

How-To

Music *Ice Cave* by Visager
Dark Sanctum Boss Fight by Visager
We're the Resistors by Eric Skiff
Eerie Mausoleum by Visager
Underlocked by Eric Skiff

About Me

Google, You Don't Understand

Music *Like Leaves* by Brian Tritch

To remind us some things are okay;

Identify Phrase

These posts are not for you

Tears on Marley

— INTERMISSION —

Lobby Installation

Cinematography Yingzi Liang, Rebecca Witt
Editing Yingzi Liang
Video Assistants Huixian Dong, Yayi Hu
Performers Lacey Garcia, Karion Houston, Yayi Hu, Sharon McCaman, Sandra Schoenewald, Rebecca Witt, Allyson Yoder

INK

Choreographer Yingzi Liang in collaboration with dancers
Music *Underwater [ASMR]* by Auracle
Electronic Music Improvisation (Analog Minimalistic Walk) by Jean Roupech
后情 by 秘密后院
Sopor by Kai Engel
Delete Everything by Johnny Ripper
Capilla by Blue Dot Sessions
Aesthetics of Disappearance by Johnny Ripper
Music Edited by Yingzi Liang
Lighting Designer Jamie Arakas
Costume Designer Yingzi Liang, Jacqueline Benard
Set Designer Yingzi Liang
Media Designer Yingzi Liang
Performers Lacey Garcia, Karion Houston, Yayi Hu, Yingzi Liang, Sandra Schoenewald, Rebecca Witt, Allyson Yoder

Biographies

Katherine Dorn BA, BS, is an MFA in Dance candidate at Arizona State University. After graduating *summa cum laude* with degrees in Theatre Arts and Business Administration from California State University, Fresno, Katherine has been afflicted with the tendency to type Arizona State University, Fresno. Dance has always been a form of therapy for her. Therefore, her pursuit of dance in higher education has been exclusively motivated by her desire to introduce others to dance in order that they might benefit from its therapeutic properties in the way that she has. Katherine's current research is centered around an interdisciplinary exploration of creative writing and dance, which she has termed choreographic memoir. From the written process of self-reflection that occurs in memoir writing, Katherine discovered the themes of anxiety and grounding in reality. Katherine considers herself a member of the generation that grew up on the Internet, which makes her existence more digital and intangible than most. However, she also considers herself a dancer, which makes her existence more physical and tangible than most. As Katherine grappled with these dueling identities, she developed the concept for "You Are Here" - a questioning, celebratory, interdisciplinary exploration of anxiety in the YouTube generation.

Yingzi Liang is an MFA candidate at Arizona State University in the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts. She received her bachelor's degree in Dalian University in China with a focus in choreography. After graduation she went to Beijing Dance Academy for advanced study. As a Chinese dancer studying in United States, she focuses on using metaphor as a tool in her dance creation and film-making. Currently she is investigating the differences between Eastern and Western cultures' use of metaphor, specifically addressing the metaphorical meanings of the colors black and white.

Interior pages 3 and 4 of program list piece and section titles and give performance credit and choreographer biographies

Concert and Dance Production Staff

Director	Tiffany Ana Lopez
Assistant Director of Dance	Mary Fitzgerald
Production Manager	Carolyn Koch
Technical Director	Melissa S. Rex
Costume Designers	Jacqueline Benard
Sound Engineer	William Swayze

Emerging Artist I

Artistic Director	Becky Dyer
Production Stage Manager	Johanna Hayes
Assistant Stage Managers	Angie Chatman
Light Board Operator	Alyssa Saenz
Sound Board Operator	Shay Lyons
Wardrobe	Miguel Jarillo Pedraza
Stage Crew	Members of DCE 260, THP 201

Event color key
FILM DANCE THEATRE

FALL 2016

FALL FORWARD!
Sept. 30, Oct. 1-2

OUT OF MANY
Written by the MFA Cohort
Directed by Kyra Jackson, Wyatt Kent and Phil Weaver-Stoesz
Oct. 14-16, 20-23

FEATHERS AND TEETH
Written by Charise Castro Smith
Directed by Ricky Araza
Oct. 28-30, Nov. 3-6

EMERGING ARTISTS
Featuring Yingzi Liang and Katie Dorn
Nov. 18-20

FALL FILM CAPSTONE SHOWCASE
Dec. 2

SPRING 2017

TRANSITION PROJECTS I
Feb. 10-12

TITUS ANDRONICUS
Written by William Shakespeare
Directed by Kristin Hunt
Feb. 17-19, 23-26

TRANSITION PROJECTS II
Feb. 17-19

MEN ON BOATS
Written by Jaclyn Backhaus
March 24-26, 30-31, April 1-2

HABOOB
Written by Marvin Gonzalez De Leon
Directed by Xanthis Walker
April 14-16, 20-23

SPRING DANCE FEST
April 21-23

SPRING FILM CAPSTONE SHOWCASE
April 28


Interior pages 5 and 6 of program list technical and production credit alongside a list of upcoming performances for Arizona State University's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts School of Film, Dance, and Theatre

APPENDIX D
PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Poster

E M E R G I N G A R T I S T S




You Are Here



A choreographic memoir
exploring anxiety in
the YouTube generation

Arizona State University Dance Lab, Nelson Fine Arts Center 122
Nov. 18-19 at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 20 at 2 p.m.
\$8 Student, \$16 General, \$12 Senior, \$12 ASU Faculty, Staff, Alumni

mainstage.asu.edu
ASU School of Film, Dance and Theatre
MAINSTAGE 2016-17

 ASUFilmDanceTheatre
 ASUFilmDanceTheatre
 ASUMainStage

ASU Herberger Institute for
Design and the Arts
Arizona State University

Postcard



Business Cards

