

I AM BUT A RUBBERBAND: DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY AND PERFORMANCE THESIS

by

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Through connection and collaboration with other artists, I have found that rich work is produced when each person feels like they made a part of the movement that they are having to do. We were put on this earth to connect with one another. Movement practice allows us to connect with individuals through our artistic outlet. When working as a dancer, I like to focus more on the process and ensuring that I am connected to the work. I want anyone involved in the process to be connected to the root of the work. I want people to know that every molecule in their being connects with the space they are moving in and each person they share the space with.

As a creative, I want to expand what is defined as movement practice and dance performance. I believe that the simplest gestural movement is just as rich as a larger-scale movement. Especially in movement within the eyes and facial regions. I want the dancers involved in the work are fully engaged down to their pupils. This brings intentional focus to the artists in the work as well as the observers of the work. As a dancer and choreographer, I value focusing intentionally and as a unit of individuals. Focusing unites the people in the room with the audience members as well as fixing their eyes on something which could focus their energy on that space creating a new world for the dancer and the observers. It allows them to express even for a moment as their true artistic self and they are able to take ownership of their movement. When facilitating this connection, there is a level of intimacy between the dancers that must be handled with care and genuine conversations. For the dancers to connect on this level, they must be in a comfortable, safe, encouraging environment to access a different layer of the creation process—humans connecting through pure energy and exploration. I push my dancers as well as myself to connect with the movement they are doing conceptually and

molecularly and find that this is the part of dance that started my passion for it in the first place—experiencing other parts of myself that can only be found through movement with myself and movement connection with others.

Through the process of completing this project, I have found that to make raw, expressive art, as a choreographer, I must sink into the raw, emotive sides of my psyche. This turned out to be a very challenging and difficult process for me as I usually approach creating work with logic and a concrete concept that guides my work. Though I started with a concept, as I started creating, I found that my mind was wandering to different thoughts surrounding another part of myself. A part of myself that I could not yet name, but I knew it was there. It was a part of myself that I had shoved so deep down into my mind, that I could not call it to the front of my brain at a moment's notice, but rather had to sit into the unknown and create from a space of uncertainty and fear. As I kept this mindset of creating, I discovered that more images of one person being rejected by someone or the opposite end of a spectrum of someone being one part of a larger whole. Through this process of following images that come to my brain when accessing buried parts of my mind, I was able to create a piece of work that taught me more about myself than any other work before.

The first section of this work focuses on the images of individuals being more than themselves, but part of a larger organism that is the human experience. This section of the piece focused primarily on what it means to be a small speck in the billions of people in the world and how insignificant yet freeing that concept can be. It is an introduction to a world in which we all are experiencing the same world, but our perceptions and realities of this world are vastly different. This section is interrupted by a duet with two individuals and focuses on the concept of connecting with another being in this world. In this duet, the primary focus was on what parts of

ourselves we conceal and reveal when first connecting with ourselves as well as others. This intimate nature of the movement is inspired by the vulnerability necessary to fully become more familiar with another individual and show parts of yourself to them as well. This duet begins to peak and just as the two individuals access their closest proximity, they are brought back to their realities as a group enters reminding them of their insignificance and forcing them to put up more walls to conceal the parts of themselves that they had previously showed. This is a comfortable feeling for some as it is a way to prevent others from seeing parts of yourself that one is uncomfortable showing and allows for their defense mechanisms to be activated. For others, it is a very restrictive and isolating feeling due to the fear that they may never truly connect to another person.

The following segment is about the individual who feels isolated and alone in a vast sea of people and communities. While being surrounded by so many individuals they feel utterly and completely helpless. As if they are trapped in a world that is working against them in their search for companionship. This then transitions into the realization of aspects of yourself that deter you from making genuine, authentic connections. These parts of yourself are usually a product of the environment you grew up in. Being constantly surrounded by conditional love being presented as unconditional love throughout my life has had me have a skewed view of what it means to give love and receive love. This was revealed to me throughout the creation of my project. Being unable to decipher the love someone is receiving throughout their life causes it to be nearly impossible to genuinely be vulnerable around individuals. It also creates for a lack of trust in yourself due to the fact that you do not have a clear idea of who you are as an individual or as a part of the whole. The end of the piece explores how one can go through the process of healing by taking the first step of realizing that this is their reality. Only then is a person able to begin to

unlearn these trauma responses and habits that make it possible to connect with the people around you and connect with yourself. This piece concludes with the thought that while this healing process is a journey, each step one takes towards healing these parts of themselves and allowing themselves to experience true unconditional love from themselves will allow one to make authentic connections throughout their time on Earth.

This project has changed the way I think about creative processes. It has shown me that when creating work, using different choreographic strategies can allow for your work to reveal different parts of yourself that surpass your conscious mind and sinks into your subconscious where the true root of your soul lies. Through my career as a creative, I hope to use this project and what I have learned about myself to get to know myself as a human first and an artist second.