memory, perception, & architecture in relation to choreography

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The endless round, it goes.
The endless round, we go.
only to come back again.
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-Victoria Lawrence
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INTRODUCTION

As a dance choreographer/performer/improviser, I am in constant dialogue with the space around me. I shape not only my body but the space surrounding me, shifting it in some way. Although influenced by its response, I remain capable of directing and shaping what I like to see. The conversation never ends. But, what is it that I like to see? What is it about my movement that leads me to form it and incorporate it into my choreography? What influences and propels my creative process? Do my past perceptions and memories influence the way I move and interact with the present world? Perhaps my past experiences that have been accumulated and stored in my mind/body have influenced the way I respond and react to my environment. Over time, I come to stylize bodily patterns/behaviors as I develop a relationship with my surroundings; the connection between memory and bodily experience inevitably shaped the way I created my site-specific dance installation, “Source.” My creative process was also inspired by my interest in architectural concepts. Very similar to how dance choreographers structure and order their pieces, architects go through an analogous process of creating tangible, visual forms, that represent how they relate to space and how they interpret their existence in this world. Utilizing architecture, memory, and perception as a way to understand my choreography in “Source,” I investigate and articulate how I relate to and shape space and movement.
THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MEMORY & BODILY EXPERIENCE
MEMORY

Memory plays an essential role in how a person moves (consciously or unconsciously); “memory, whether of a mythical past, last night’s dream, or this morning’s conversation at the breakfast table, begins in the body.” (Steinman, 11) Although we cannot see the inside of our bodies, we store and develop memories in our insides that include an array of experiences taken from a lifetime of personal encounters with the outside world. We populate our inside world with the people, places, and events that we have experienced in the outside world. The body accumulates memories over time and learns to associate certain cognitive and/or behavioral responses to certain stimuli. For instance, as I approach any sort of door with a knob, my mind relays to my body to contract my right forearm muscles, tighten my hand around the knob, and twist the knob clockwise in order to open the door.

The mind and the body are a unit. During our developmental process, from infant to adult, we progress through basic developmental movements in order to gradually acquire a fundamental knowledge of our environment. We eventually stylize bodily patterns/behaviors as we develop a relationship with our surroundings. The eyes squint in response to a harsh beam of light…. The weight of the body leans up against a wall for support…. Hands covered in water reach for a towel, drying one hand, then the other…. Burying the feet in the sand to feel the comfortable dampness of the salty, residual wake. If there is a wall nearby, my body leans up against it, yearning (consciously or unconsciously) for support to hold itself up. There is a pattern that has been established over the years with walls and my backside; I insert weight from my torso into the stationary wall, my quadriceps tighten and my knees flex softly. Is it bodily memory that has attracted me to walls for weighted support? Have I stored information over
these twenty years that have composed my relationship and ways of interacting with walls?

(Steinman, 11)

There is a continuous point of connection between memory and bodily experiences. Stimuli reaching the cerebral cortex of the brain—such as awareness of position and movement—connects with memories of previous sensory information so that the perception of sensation occurs on the basis of past experience. Thus, we carry a neuromuscular memory of our personal “bodystory.” (Olsen, 16) Our relation to up and down or in and out, to front, to back, to edges, shares space in our memories with more purely visual and conceptual matter. The experience of our bodies, of what we perceive, is collected over time. Memory is an extension of our existence/experience in the environment; it is not only stored in the body, but also expressed by it. (Bloomer, x)

Places can be remembered as they affect our bodies and generate enough associations to hold in our personal worlds. (Bloomer, 105-106) Our experience in space is created and shaped by our memories that result from our inside/outside interactions. Our bodies are areas in which memories of the world outside are domesticated, protected, and re-experienced. (Bloomer, 51)

As I feel the hard rain pouring down upon me as I run through the college parking lot, I am instantly reminded of the rainy summers on my grandparents’ lake when the rain would come down on the south end of the lake, giving us approximately 40 seconds to run indoors before it reached us at the north end; I remember the smell and sight of the rain, the taste of the humidity, and the feeling of the blood rushing into my muscles as I sped into the house. The sensation of the rain in the parking lot prompted this memory of the rainy summers on the lake. Memories are far more than visual, and are generally very complex. Memories are stored in the body as well as the mind; thus, they affect our movement.
**Perception**

The process of absorbing our surroundings informs us who we are as individuals. The human mind and body are in a constant mode of perceiving, forever in dialogue between self and environment. Perception is something we do; it is an *action*. The world makes itself available to the perceiver through physical movement and interaction. And as perceivers, our ability to perceive is constituted by our possession of sensorimotor knowledge. Perceiving is a skillful, thoughtful bodily activity and depends on our perceptual modes of self-awareness and perspectival self-consciousness (the ability to keep track of one’s relation to the world). (Noë, 2)

We probe and skillfully look at a scene, attempting to understand its elements of shape, structure, and being. We don’t take in the world all at once; rather, through the process of probing, we gradually bring ourselves into contact with it one piece at a time. (Noë, 4)

Sensorimotor knowledge feeds our exploration. We constantly explore our objects because they have potentials that are in need of discovering. Taken at face value, they are pieces of a whole, requiring us to actively move to grasp a better view/experience/understanding. We experience their unique properties due to our possession of sensorimotor knowledge. (Noë, 4)

Experiences are thoughtful and qualitative and depend on the perceiver’s exercise/use of her own sensorimotor skills. Perception is a way of thinking about the world. Our experience is directed *toward* things, attempting to uncover content, understand that content, and ultimately think about *how* we understand it. We perceive by paying attention to *how* things exist. How we see the world depends on what we are interested in and how we probe. (Noë, 35)

How we perceive and interact with the spaces around us is propelled by our drive to be happy. (Botton, 100) Thus, by understanding *what* it is that we are drawn to, we come to understand what we define as “beautiful” and what, in effect, makes us happy. As we see and
understand certain content that sharpens our feelings of happiness, we are more capable of understanding what it is that we wish to create. Touched by what we perceive, we become attracted. Attracted to our surroundings, probing with fascination, we create a dialogue between it and ourselves. The dialogue can invite feelings of happiness and appreciation. Thus, we create relationships with our surroundings through our experience of them. And these relationships inform us about our ideals and ourselves. (Botton, 100) We become more informed of who we are as individuals by understanding how we experience space.

Our experiences in space arise from our position and the sources of sensations—these encounters are shaped by the interaction between perception and thought. (Crickmay et al, 20) As the human form moves throughout space, it changes and is changed by it. Spaces influence the intuitive flow of the body, guiding it—shaping how it moves. Spaces speak to our sensory system through sight, taste, touch, smell, and sound.

The physical information and the mental information we acquire are inseparable and help establish our own whole sense of reality. (Steinman, 11) Physical information—bodily movement and position—is received by the proprioceptors (sensory nerve receptors situated in the muscles, tendons, and joints that send information to the hindbrain concerning the movements and positions of the limbs, trunk, head, and neck). (Olsen, 15) Proprioceptors provide continuous input to the central nervous system for interpretation and response, and are essential for movement coordination. The somatosensory cortex of the cerebrum has a precise map representing sensory information from all parts of the body, and works in conjunction with the cerebellum of the brainstem to maintain a continuous, cumulative picture of the body’s position in space. (Olsen, 15) Thus, the mind informs our physical movement and our physical movement informs the mind; each is essential to the other. We come to experience our
individuality by our movement—our corporal exploration of the world around us. “The individual has this innate urge to drive onwards, to feel its own strength, and to make itself known. Movement is assertion, and assertion is one of the primary acts of the mind.” (Steinman, 2) Day to day, we are fueled by our desire to understand our own existence. Each act, each movement, each perception that passes from the proprioceptors to the firing muscle fibers is a response resulting from our desire to know. Existence is a mystery that is forever in the attempt to be solved. Yet, the deepest way, the closest way, that we can come to understanding ourselves is through perception and movement. Movement is perception; the development of the senses and perceptions are not separate from the development of movement. (Steinman, 11)

Bred by our experiences, we begin to create representations of our growing understanding of our relationships. Creating dance is a matter of extending the inner landscape of human beings into the world in ways that are readable. (Kent, 105) Our yearning to understand more about our existence propels our creative process. Choreography represents the human body’s inhabitation and experience of space; it is the intentional shaping of and commentary on our perceptions. As we build dances, there is a transaction between body, imagination, and environment.
CREATING THE WORLD OF “SOURCE”
I can’t sleep. Lying there, my fingers stretch across my restless body to the notepad that I keep at my bedside. *I see water, drenched bodies, wet strands of hair gathered across the face.*

*It is dark, damp, and desolate. The skin is darkened by soot, dirt, or some sort of unclean matter.*

I can’t sleep as my mind won’t stop going, seeing, making, imagining. It is 2:04 a.m. and the night is quiet. I am sitting up now—there is an energy filling my body—hurriedly, I unscramble my visions and etch them all over my notepad. I have found a world— I have found a piece— I have discovered the beginning point of my creative journey.

I still can’t sleep.
Wandering wandering, I go.

Too many questions. There are too many questions. I have a concept for my piece, yes, but I have nothing else, nothing else. For instance, how many dancers do I want, should I incorporate video, where will the performance venue be, what are the costumes, the title, makeup, structure, role of the audience, set-design, movement vocabulary, etc. Slowly, gradually, I must solve this riddle that I have given myself. Each aspect of the world that I wish to create is a puzzle piece, a question that I must ponder and eventually answer. Whether through a sleepless night, an academic lecture, a reading, a car ride, a studio rehearsal, a bike ride, a dream, a memory, or a stroll through campus, I will find the answers to these questions.
CHOREOGRAPHING/DIRECTING THE VIDEODANCE

Over the summer, I pondered and pondered how to approach my thesis concert. I needed a seed, a reason, a stepping point from which to build a journey. A core foundation that could network, cycle, and eventually form into a dance.

It’s water—

Yes, so broad and so elemental, I wanted to build a dance around this element. This source that surrounds me and flows within me—a continuous current, comprised of a powerful spirit, that gives and takes life, marking time and space via its cyclic stream of energy. I decided to choreograph a videodance that would explore the concept of water and later on I would then take this videodance and insert it into an evening length site-specific dance. I chose dancers Emily Herchenroether, Jaclyn Malat, Aly Massof, and myself to perform in the full-length site-specific piece. And in the videodance, only Emily, Jaclyn, and Aly were the dancers since I had to operate as director and be behind the camera.

MEMORIES OF LAKE BYRD

Every summer since I was born (except for this past summer), I have visited my grandparents at their lake house in Florida. It was in Lake Byrd where I nearly drowned, where I learned how to swim, how to dive off the dock, how to ski and knee board, how to fish, and how to breathe under water for the first time (scuba dive). I’ve spent my life on their swimming dock. I even helped my Grampa rebuild it after Hurricane Dennis tore it down. I’ve always been drawn to docks and the bodies of water to which they act as entranceways. The narrow platforms that lead from the land to the water are beautiful as they remind me of my childhood memories. Perhaps my affection for docks drew me to build a videodance that took place on a
CHOREOGRAPHING ON THE RIVER/DOCK

I found an old, narrow dock on the Susquehanna River outside of York, PA that would be perfect for the videodance that I was envisioning. I imagined the dancers doing small movement on the dock that would eventually lead to them walking off the platform into the river. I created these breathing rhythms that would start off frayed and eventually lead into unison. After breathing as if they were the cyclic waveforms themselves, they would go into smaller upper body movement that I would shoot close-up. I would then have their feet walk forward, backward, and forward again, copying the ebb/flow of their breath and of the waves that were underneath the dock. And after the dancers walked into the water, I would film their bodies floating along the current, allowing their ebb/flow of their breath to now be at one with the ebb/flow of the river’s current. I was probably inspired to create these types of movements because of the memories that I have accumulated over time from my experiences at my grandparents’ lake. My body has spent years floating along the current of the lake, becoming accustomed to its rhythm, its breath. Thus, my creative decision to have the dancers float on their backs near the end of the videodance was probably inspired by my desire to have their bodies follow the natural rhythm of the flowing water—making them truly of the water (see Figure 1).
It is my natural impulse to feel the need to walk off a dock, to gain the satisfaction of dunking my body in the water. The waves seem to guide my body into the water. I believe that docks are our entranceways to water. Their linear paths send us subliminal messages, whispering into our ears that we must follow them to the end. They transition us from dry to wet and from wet to dry. Our relationship to docks is somewhat cyclic: we leave them, but will eventually return back to them. Hence, I was inspired to structure my videodance in the form of a cycle, a never-ending sequence.

Emily’s to walk off first.
Then Jaclyn.
And finally Aly.
They float.
They return to the dock.
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...

Upon returning to the dock, I thought that it would be interesting to add buckets onto the dock, as a place for the dancers to wring out their soaking white dresses. I wanted the act of
drying themselves to be highlighted and the buckets seemed to be a perfect prop that could collect their water.

**Finding the Title**

*The endless round, it goes.*

*The endless round, we go.*

*only to come back again.*

*only to come back again.*

*The breathing current of time lures us into the deep boundless pools. We drift.*

*And drift—*

*But will wake up again in order to be reborn. Now, full of motion, life—splashing our new bodies once more.*

*Our matter is soaked to the core, dripping as we walk.*

*The breathing current of time is calling.*

*We are coming near.*

*Unsoaking ourselves as we walk to the edge. We can hear its breath.*

*The endless round, it goes.*

*The endless round, we go.*

*only to come back again.*

*only to come back again.*

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Journal entry (1/29/10)

I chose to title the video “The Endless Round” because I felt that the dancers were in this cyclic pattern between wet and dry, life and death, land and water, stillness and current, etc. They were in the mode of constant replay as they journeyed from the dock to the water and back to the dock again. I wasn’t necessarily trying to symbolize anything specific or attach metaphor to the movement and structure of the piece; rather, I was only attempting to explore the never-ending cycle of this dry/wet concept. I asked myself: “What would happen if a dance never stopped? How can I inform the audience that the dancers will still be dancing even after the
video has stopped playing? Can I hint at the fact that the trio of dancers will forever return to the
dock, no matter where the drifting current of the river takes them?”

They soak themselves. Dry off. Walk to the edge. And soak themselves again. It is the
endless round. I feel that even though I was not trying to suggest any deeper meaning of life,
death, and rebirth, my videodance nevertheless did so anyway. I won’t ignore the parallels
between water, white dresses, and rebirth. I think that such metaphors can help make the dance
all the more powerful. If people see my endless round relating to creation of the human body,
then I embrace such an interpretation. In fact, perhaps unconsciously I meant to allude to the
creation of life. After all, why did I choose to have the dancers immerse their white-clothed
bodies in the water? (I could have chosen red dresses, but instead I chose white.) Why did I
choose to have them repeat this action over and over again? Is it pleasing, or beautiful in my
mind to dunk white dresses in the water? Have I remembered from my childhood the act of
baptism and thought it to be beautiful? Perhaps the images were stored in my mind over the
years, and when I chose to make a dance about water, my past perceptions influenced the
structure, movement, and costumes of the piece. My memories have informed how I see. I
remember my sister’s baptism in the small church of Avon Park, and how beautiful it was when
my Grampa’s gentle wrinkled hands dipped her small body within the metal wash bin,
sermonizing to the church crowd that she was now a member of their community. I am not
religious, but I do find the act of immersion, of plunging the human body into the water, to be
beautiful—that may be why I created “The Endless Round”…. perhaps the creation of this
videodance symbolizes my very own return to the edge of the dock on Lake Byrd…. 
INSTALLATION DESIGN & THE SITE

Located on East King Street in downtown Lancaster was the perfect space to house my site-specific work: Eastern Market. The historic space of Eastern Market was one of five public market houses that once operated in Lancaster in the late 1800s. I chose the space because it was beautiful with its rawness: the paint was chipping off of the brick, the cement floors were cracked, the building was large and cavernous, the ceilings were railed and high, and the large wooden framed windows lined the walls so that the mid-afternoon sun projected rays throughout the space. The site spoke to me, inspired me, and offered so much potential for ways that I could interact with its old/grungy/historic nature. The building was beautiful and unique to me. It seemed mysterious and otherworldly to me because I rarely come across buildings that are like it. I tend to build dances that are otherworldly; thus, the market space seemed a perfect location to interact with and build my dance in. I often perceive “other” worlds to be beautiful. Ever since I was a kid, I have been drawn to fantasy worlds (in games, books, painting, and movies) where I can escape. Perhaps I enjoy and find happiness in seeing unique things that differ from ordinary life.

DIALOGUE WITH THE SITE

As I began working in Eastern Market, I noticed that there was a dialogue going back and forth between the site and the work. The quality of the space informed how I should stylize the world of “Source.” In site-specific dance, there is an inextricable relationship between a choreographer’s work and the site. (Kwon, 12) From the dancers’ makeup and costumes, the installation materials, programs, and choreography, the space conversed with my mind, structuring my imagination. I envisioned dancers that were of the space; I wanted it to seem as if
the space was their origin, their home, their natural habitat. So, since the space was aged, dirty, and darkly lit, my intuition told me to have the dancers clothed in dresses that looked aged and dirty and to have them wear makeup that dirtied their faces. Adding to the dirtiness of the costumes, the market floors were covered in black soot and car oil and thus dirtied the dresses even more; it was as if the space was adding its very own coating and essence into my piece by covering the dancers in its black soot.

I chose to have the programs for the performance reflect the world that I was creating in a way. I wanted the audience members to feel the world that they were in. I genuinely wanted to bring all of their senses into this other world that I was creating. Staying with the theme of water, I soaked the paper in water and crinkled it to make it look aged and worn. I then chose to include the back cardboard cover of the program to emulate the deteriorating walls of the market. The front label that had the title “Source” on it was made with a label maker; I chose a label maker because it gave texture to the word, embossing it, allowing the audience member to see and feel the roughness of the letters.

The roughness and decay of Eastern Market also informed how I should present the videodance. I modified the saturation level and made the video black and white, and I chose to show clips of the videodance on two vintage televisions because they gave the presence and character of being old and warn. I knew that a flat screen plasma television could definitely not be used because it was too clean, too modern, too smooth. I then chose to project the full-length videodance onto the white brick wall of the market. A projection on a wall highlights the texture, size, and quality of the wall; in turn a wall can affect the texture and quality of a projection. The wall of Eastern Market and my videodance had such a reciprocal relationship.
I wanted to incorporate water into my duet with Emily because I felt that it would be interesting to see how water responds to and interacts with bodily movement. I was fascinated in seeing how water could change a simple arm/wrist gesture, how water could interrupt a phrase of movement, how it could change a dancer’s costume/appearance, how it could change the quality of a movement, and how it could attach symbolism and imagery to movement. I was inspired to use transparent glasses to hold the water because I had used glasses of water in a videodance that I had created a year ago. When I took Jeremy Moss’ and Pamela Vail’s Videodance Workshop course last spring, I created a short film titled “Quintet” that took place on partially snow-covered farm land. Shown by the static frame of the camera, a horizontal row of five transparent glasses rested at the feet of a “dancer in white.” The intent of the “dancer in white” was to throw each glass of water on the “dancer in blue.” The videodance ended once all five glasses of water were emptied (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Picture from the videodance “Quintet.” Horizontal row of glasses of water on the ground are seen in the foreground, while the “dancer in white” (Hang Pham) is throwing water on the “dancer in blue” (myself) in the background.
Seeing the linear row of transparent glasses filled with water was beautiful to me. The memories of this rich imagery inspired me to put rows of glasses in the market space. I put twenty glasses on top of three wooden planks, supported by three cinder blocks on each end. I went through many different blueprints of where to situate the planks of wood, trying to make them as close to the main movement phrases as possible (see Figures 3 and 4). The planks were high enough (at our waists) so that we could easily transition to the glasses in the midst of our movement phrases.
Figure 3. Map of installation design drawn in a journal entry on 1/31/10.
Before I inserted the use of the glasses in the piece, I first choreographed the movement. After looking at the movement, I decided that certain arm movements should interact with the glasses and throw the water in the process of executing the movement. I also transitioned between phrases of movement by having Emily and/or me dunk our hands in the water or even throw it at one another. But, why did I interact the way I did with the water? What led me to
such movement choices? Was it the memories from my years of competitive swimming when the movements of my arms/legs/back were always interacting with the water?

There was a section when Emily and I charged down the diagonal, repeating a throwing movement with the right arm. Using the scapula and back muscles, we would initiate the throwing of our right arm, swinging it in front of our body, and catching it with our left hand. Perhaps I was inspired to create this movement because it was similar to the butterfly stroke motion of the arms and the rhythm of the movement made it feel like we were swimming the 25-meter across the space. If this right arm of ours was in the water, then it would splash at the last second—the point at which it would hit the surface of the water. So, as I was throwing my right arm, my intuition told me to grab a glass of water at the beginning of the throw so that the water would splash at the end of the throw/stroke.

**Buckets & Bins (Connecting the Market Site to the Video Site)**

After I created the videodance, I realized that I needed to incorporate the buckets into the installation. I needed to further explore the reason behind the buckets, showing more of what their role was in the context of the piece. So, I gave each dancer a small bucket in the market. Originally, I wanted Aly to begin the piece in a large water tank, her whole body immersed in water; unfortunately, due to logistics and money, it was not possible to have a tank. So, after spending an hour or so in Home Depot, I found large tin wash bins that were made out of the same material as the small buckets that were used in the video (see Figure 5). I wanted these large buckets because I was interested in choreographing movement that was in a large pool of water. I wanted to see the dancers’ bodies soaking wet. I envisioned bodily immersion that was similar to the immersion of them in the Susquehanna River. The large buckets were to refer to a
larger body of water. I placed the smaller buckets in front of their corresponding larger buckets (see Figures 3 and 4). The small buckets were there so we could repeat the act of wringing out our wet dresses that was shown in the video. I wanted to repeat this act of wringing out the dresses because it fascinated me. There is beauty in squeezing the fabric of a wet dress in one’s hand and watching the water drip out of the crinkled fibers. I was also interested in exploring the concept between wet and dry, dry and wet. So, as the dancers got their dresses wet from the glasses of water or buckets, I would have them wring out the water in the buckets. After drying, they would eventually re-immerse themselves into the buckets of water. Similar to the endless round between the dry dock and the river in the video, there was an endless round between the dry market space and the water-filled buckets.

Figure 5. Photo of Eastern Market with the four dancers in the large buckets. Photo taken by Peter Cutler, 2010.
CREATING THE FIRST SEGMENT: ALY

In my imagination, I envisioned a soloist beginning the piece. A solitary, pale body, sunken in stillness, resting in the middle of the vacant market space. Drenched in water, her hair in her face, she is found crumbled, pathetic, and humble in form. Barely any life in her, her posture sinks and sinks. She moves and strays from stillness, but only because she is weak and can no longer hold herself up anymore. The blood has left her veins and she is frail, scant, gaunt, feeble. A lifeless beauty. She must grow back this blood, gain back the pure fluid that once enriched her. Falling falling, she will get up again. She will get up again. I chose to cast Aly Massof as the soloist because she is a strong dancer and is capable of performing dynamically, transferring from one polar energy level to another. Her long limbs would be perfect for the large space of Eastern Market; I wouldn’t have to worry about her being consumed and overshadowed by the large open space.

MOVEMENT CREATION

I remember walking into the first rehearsal with Aly in January having nothing planned, except for one idea: the idea of drawing on the body. I would structure my improvisation around drawing on my body and I had Aly there to “catch” my movement strands. I began drawing on the soft part of my wrist, up the veiny lines of my arm, to my collarbone, and out the end of my other arm. My body reacted to this drawing by folding and collapsing on itself. I was weak and supple; my spine was folding this way and that, making me appear as if I was a soft, malleable metal folding underneath pressure. I expanded the drawing to the floor, the air, my leg, and eventually back to my arms again.
And all this time, Aly was at my side, absorbing the movement into her own body. Together, we found what interested us, what kept the continuity and the flow from one movement to another. I told Aly that my main goal was to stylize the movement into one continuous flow. I wanted her phrasing to be fluid, all one energy, all one quality. Later on, I would add in quicker paced or more intense movement, but for now, I wanted one continuous flow. I wanted her to appear as if there was water streaming throughout her body. *Void of emotion or tension, she appeared as if there was a continuous current guiding her body from one point in the space to another. She would periodically fall, but only because the continuous current was pushing her there: her knees and hips folded as her feeble body succumbed to the gravitational pull of water. Drawing on her body, following the veiny pathways, she extended her beauty, her ethereal form.*

I told her to envision herself “bending the blood in her veins and arteries” so that she could embody the nature of flowing water. I realized from my improvisations that my body memory must have stored the information that water is associated with the principle of circulatory movement of blood within animals. (Armstrong, 278) Perhaps my hindbrain was sending information to my muscles, tendons, and joints to create movement that was similar to the circulatory movement of water. In response to thinking about water during my improvisations, I created long développés, ethereal suspensions, grounded pliés, extending flowy arms, supple wrists, and ebb/flow spinal movements. My previous perceptions of and relationships with water led me to imagine my body’s blood as water, and inspired me to bend/mold/shape this water into movement.

Periodically throughout Aly’s solo, I had her fall. I wanted gravity to overcome her frail/weak body. She was this gaunt creature, water was flowing out of her veins; she was the
embodiment of water itself. In nature, moving water always seeks a lower level, following the pull of gravity. It is earthly laws that cause it to flow and make it follow a meandering course. (Schwenk, 13) In between Aly’s falls, she expanded and traveled her moving body throughout the market space. I told her that she should *wander, roam, and wind* as she traveled. Perhaps my intuition chose to have Aly meander throughout the whole space because I wanted her to embody the meandering course that water endeavors to follow. For instance, a naturally flowing stream winds its course through a valley, never flowing perfectly *straight* ahead (see Figure 6). Her actual path is winding. I envisioned her body as the symbolic form of flowing water. I gave her movements that could explore the large space of the market. I allowed her to improvise her facings and course of direction as she executed the movement. She, like a stream, was drawn downhill and in following this downward pull of gravity she swung alternately from side to side. (Schwenk, 15) I chose to use Bing & Ruth’s song “A Ghost” to accompany Aly’s solo, because the music produced a wonderful wraithlike soundscape of vocals and clarinet that seemed to literally stretch her flowing limbs and meandering form even further. The music allowed her to delve deeper into the movement, allowing her body to feel the music’s breath etch a path in her body.

*Figure 6.* Naturally flowing water, such as a stream, follows a meandering course. (Schwenk, 15)
CREATING THE DUET WITH EMILY

IT BEGAN WITH WEIGHT-SHARING

I started with the concept of weight-sharing with Emily: two moving bodies in space finding various points of contact to transfer and balance weight. Moving as one form, one force. I wanted to include a duet in “Source” that would incorporate a moving partnership—one that flowed throughout the entirety of the space through a series of lifts, balances, and other ways of melding two bodies into one. This was a direct challenge for myself, as partnering is something that I have wanted to explore more as a choreographer because I find it aesthetically pleasing, yet I have little experience in the technique of it. I wanted the weight-sharing to be of an ethereal quality, just as Aly’s beginning solo would be. I knew that I wanted the duet to glide through the space, showing ease in transitions and in the delivery of the movement. I knew that the partnership would mimic much of the delicate imagery and energy that would be established by Aly. The two would be a soft breath of life that would fill the space, charging it with energy.

I chose to cast Emily Herchenroether and myself to be the two dancers who would bring this duet into form. I chose the two of us because I have noticed that we have a strong attentiveness to and familiarity with one another as we practice, improvise, and perform together; we have begun to build a history together. Emily is capable of grasping my movement vocabulary and understanding the fullness of it; she performs each gesture, each phrase, each initiation, each muscle twitch, and each quality of movement to a near exactness of what my body has demonstrated to her. She performs with intention, with a clear focus and awareness, showing up to every possible aspect of my physical and mental movement.

For our first rehearsal together, I wanted to explore interesting and innovative ways of how our bodies could support one another, while at the same time trying to find ease/fluidity in
our interactions. We came up with around five different movements that I could later insert into the whole of our duet. After creating multiple segments and phrases of the duet, I found doorways to where I could insert moments of weight-sharing. Early in the process, I scheduled a rehearsal for the two of us at Eastern Market where we could find ways to interact with the space. My intuition wanted the duet to move throughout the whole space, exploring the corners, walls, and polar ends of the market. During the rehearsal at the market, we explored how we could use the brick walls, ledges, and windowsills to support our weight. Through a series of trials and errors, I eventually found interesting movement that fit the energy, quality, and flow of our duet. Foot scuffs on cement ledges, leading her into a descending spiral, supporting the weight in my left shoulder. Demount the back ledge, sliding off her back, suspending in the air, like a stream flowing downhill. Shoulder lift to windowsill... fall down. Shoulder lift to windowsill... fall down. And shoulder lift to windowsill... fall down.

**Creating Repetitive Wave-like Movement**

As I was improvising in the studio for one of my rehearsals with Emily, I closed my eyes and chose to think about water. As I allowed my impulses to guide me, I noticed the wave-like movements that have been shaped into my body over the years: my spine swims forward, backward, succumbing to the wave-rhythm. Lying in bed at night, after a full day on the beach or the lake, my mind and body remember the oscillating flow of the waves. It is difficult to sleep because the rhythm of the waves won’t leave my body—I am tethered to the water and the waveform keeps moving itself across me. Keeps moving itself across me. Perhaps these memories have influenced the way I move and intuitively respond when I think about water. The reciprocal interactions between my hindbrain and proprioceptors have created a pathway of
response between my perception of water and the way I consciously/unconsciously respond to thinking about it. So, when I was improvising movement to set for my duet with Emily, my memories were actually structuring my improvisations. When I told myself to keep the idea of water in my mind as I moved, my body recollected past memories and perceptions of my relationship with water and thus gave me a structured score of how I could move.

Through my improvisations, I discovered an ebb/flow spinal movement which I chose to have Emily and myself repeat across the diagonal axis of the market space because I felt that it was pleasing to see. This compositional (as well as architectural) theme of repetition moving along the linear axis added a sense of order and clarity to my choreography. Often, we find pleasure in lines, points, and other geometric orderings because they oppose the overwhelming feelings bred by chaos. The human eye finds ease when it is able to jump from point to point, or follow the tangibility of a line or sequence. (Botton, 199) Order attracts us as a defense against feelings of over-complication. Our basic nature is to seek regularity, repetition, simplicity, and predictability. We are drawn towards the simplicity and repetitiveness of patterns because they are easier to understand and relate to than complex unknown patterns.

**Jaclyn Improvisational Score Within the Audience and Duet With Aly**

In site-specific work, I often deal with the question of what the role of the audience should be. Should there be a clear, divisible separation between the audience and the performers? Shall I place a border around my choreography, forbidding outsiders from entering my creation, forbidding them the opportunity to participate?

No.
No, I want to bring the audience as close to my world as possible. I intend to lead them on a journey, to introduce them to a world that is adjacent to theirs—a world that seems and feels so real that perhaps maybe for those 60 minutes it is real. I will allow the audience members to freely walk around the market space during the performance. They should have the liberty of choosing how they want to interact with and perceive the world that I have created. Each person has his/her own inner curiosities that strive to be fed—and they shall be fed—they should be allowed to observe on their own terms.

So, how does one bring an audience member inside the very inner-ness of a dance performance? How can I guide them, carefully revealing an entrance into my world? Aha, I shall plant one of the performers inside of the audience. I shall have my dancer, Jaclyn Malat, be present and immersed within the core of the audience. Her body, close to theirs. In hat and blazer, she will be a non-threatening presence, clinging close to both the performers and the audience. Wearing clothes representing both the “real world” and the world of “Source,” her role shall eat away the audience-performer barrier.

I gave Jaclyn the role of being the fourth woman. She was to enter “Source” last. She would be our shadow, our watcher, our caretaker—methodically replenishing the water that we drank and threw. She would periodically perform certain movements that mimicked our own: as Aly drew, Jaclyn drew; as Emily and I swayed, Jaclyn swayed. I hoped that her slow and careful development as a being of our world could somewhat persuade the audience members that they too were slowly entering our world.

Jaclyn was the last one to exhale the water from her body. I chose to have Aly interact with Jaclyn, bringing Jaclyn the glass of water that would “awaken” her, quenching her thirst in a way. Aly’s duet with Jaclyn was composed of gentle movement, where she would gradually
manipulate Jaclyn’s body, bringing first her arm, then leg, and finally torso into the world. Once Jaclyn was collected, the unspoken bond between the four of us women was solidified and acknowledged as we each returned to the buckets, the source.

**ENDING THE PIECE**

Exhaling water from our mouths, Aly, Emily, Jaclyn, and I entered into the world, implanting our bodies into the space. Our relationship was that each of us journeyed from and to the source, water. We were these creatures, these otherworldly beings. I chose to have us move in unison as soon as all of us reached the buckets. To me, the movement that was done in unison symbolized a sense of connection—as we all simultaneously swung to the right, left, right, and left in our pools of water, we strengthened the bond that held us together. I wanted the ending of the entire performance to reach a peak where the energy/strength/momentum was at its highest. I chose music from Bing and Ruth that emphasized the sense of disorder that was unleashing itself from our bodies. I had built up this tension throughout the performance that could finally free itself as we threw our bodies throughout the space, culminating with a final collapse to the cement floor. My intuition told me to “end” our journey by returning to the source from where we came, symbolizing the cyclic journey that would end by returning to the beginning—to water.
ARCHITECTURAL THEMES USED IN DANCE

Very similar to how dance choreographers structure and order their pieces, architects go through an analogous process of creating tangible, visual forms that represent how they relate to space and how they interpret their existence in this world. Rather than using compositional terms that are specific to dance to describe my choreographic process, I feel that it is more helpful for me to understand my compositional choices by speaking as if I were an architect constructing a building; using terms from architecture offers a fresh perspective and tangible images that are interesting to me. Dances can be thought of as buildings; therefore, I utilize architecture as a way to understand how and why I “build” dances.

There are compositional themes in architecture and dance that shape the experiences within our creations. Dance, like architecture, is made up of nameable parts as well as ephemeral sensations, and these parts work together to affect our creations and how they are perceived. (Lyndon and Moore, x) As I created “Source,” I paid attention to themes such as axes, platforms, borders, openings, and light, which serve as categories and nameable parts that I incorporate into my choreography.

AXES AND PATHS

Axes reach across space to draw together the significant points in a place. They are mental constructs that help us position ourselves and make relationships with things, buildings, bodies, or spaces. Paths are where your feet actually tread—they are the physical constructs of what lead you on your journey, and they are the foundations of movement/play/improvisation/discovery—so that “what happens along the way becomes the important thing.” (Lyndon and Moore, 7) In some of the most interesting places that we create, our axes and paths interweave, with the axis allowing the mind to do the connecting, and the path
allowing the feet to wander, explore, make choices, and put things in sequence. (Lyndon and Moore, 7)

As I designed the installation for “Source” I chose to pay attention to the axes in space. I wanted the linear planks of wood to follow the axes in Emily’s and my movement, providing tangible shapes/outlines for the paths that we were travelling along. (see Figures 3 and 4) I allowed us to periodically stray from these axes and to wander down paths. Our improvised walking structure allowed us to journey down paths and enabled us to explore the market space at a deeper level; we found interesting ledges, windowsills, negative spaces between audience members, audible rhythms from the scuffing of our shoes, and fascinating phrasing patterns.

We also kept a mental picture of the axes that we were traveling along. For instance, as I leaned up against the back wall while Emily was against the sidewall, there was a linear axis that connected my body to hers; I knew that I had to follow the direction of this axis to reach her, but that I was allowed to wander down any sort of path during my journey to her. Relative to the Cartesian coordinate system, I was at the origin (0,0,0) and she was at the point with coordinates (2,3,9); thus I knew my position relative to her position in space by being aware of the x, y, and z axes (see Figure 7). The axes gave me a sense of structure and position/orientation within the large space of the market, but I allowed my feet to wander down the paths, eventually bringing me to coordinate (2,3,9). There were moments in the piece where we would either travel meandering paths or travel straight paths that were aligned to an axis.

At times, I chose to align certain movements to the physical axes in the market space as well as the axes that the wooden boards created. I chose to have our repetitive wave-like movement travel down the diagonal axis of the space. And I chose to have our throwing of water charge down this axis until we reached the back corner of the space. I made this axis
visually tangible by placing my largest plank of wood there. I chose to interact with and pay attention to axes as I created movement with Emily. I felt that, for certain phrases, it was effective to direct my movement phrases down the linear paths created by the axes; moving down the straight paths that were aligned with the straight axes gave my repetitive movements more momentum and power and allowed me to travel throughout the space faster and more efficiently.

Figure 7. Cartesian Coordinate system showing Emily’s and my coordinates in space. A metaphorical representation of our orientation in space and how an axis draws our two points together.

PLATF ORM S, SLOPES, AND STAIRS

Platforms, slopes, and stairs negotiate the vertical dimension. (Lyndon and Moore, 53) They create a transition from one movement to the other—grasping the viewer by the hand, leading them from Position A to Position B. Platforms make a stage, a place “apart” from the rest. Slopes join things gently and are the angle of measure between one form (or platform) and
another. Stairs direct our movements. They are the tangible choreographic “steps” that we take that make us especially aware of our own presence, as we move up or down, or pause for breath. (Lyndon and Moore, 55) Because stairs must fit our feet, they provide a reliable measure of the size of the whole place. Life and dances would be boring if they only existed in a state of flatness, on one plane. We need slopes and the action of climbing to take our eyes further into the pleasure of exploration.

In choreography, different ideas and strands of movement can be joined together via “platforms.” A dance can consist of platforms that offer the viewer a sense of escalating in their experience. One segment of a dance can exist at the bottom of the staircase, so to speak, and through perhaps partnering, a line of unison, a chorus, or a solo, stairs are created that transition and build the current segment into a new segment, onto a new “platform.” Stairs are the movements that either link or branch one form or idea to another. And the slope of those stairs, up or down, can be the intensity of the transition. Slope is the derivative and change in velocity from Platform A to Platform B. It is up to the choreographer to identify these “staircases” and make decisions on how strong/fast the change should be from A to B, because these stairs are essentially how the structure of a dance grows.

As I choreographed “Source,” I broke it up into four different platforms/segments: Aly’s solo, my duet with Emily, Aly and Jaclyn’s duet, and the group section. These platforms were set apart from one another, yet joined via “staircases” and transitional movement. I chose to structure my piece as if it were one giant staircase, having a positive slope, leading upwards into higher energy, more chaos, and all four dancers finally dancing together in a unified form. The slope and structure of my piece grew as I gradually introduced more dancers into the world; Aly was the first, then Emily and I joined, and finally Jaclyn entered. I led the audience through a
series of platforms and ideas, gradually introducing to them different concepts and areas of explorations. The piece grew in intensity from one platform to the next, allowing for the complexity of my world of water to unfold itself in front of them.

**Openings that Frame**

It is the character of a border’s openings that most directly affects the experience that they can afford. Openings and their location determine the pattern of connection between one room and another, between inside and out, between light and dark. (Lyndon and Moore, 100) Windows in a wall, like the eyes of a person or the lens of a camera, allow us to imagine the life within. From inside, openings can frame a view, editing out unwanted/lesser parts, emphasizing the wanted ones. A well-framed view is capable of bringing the world close and the viewer more into the experience of the dance. Choreographers often use structural devices, such as “windows,” to metaphorically (and sometimes literally) frame the views that they wish to bring closer to the viewer’s attention. In a metaphoric sense, a group of dancers can “frame” a soloist by moving in the background in a way that supports and opens a window for the soloist’s role in the foreground to be seen; these background dancers shape and identify the nature of the soloist. In a literal sense (sometimes used in site-specific dance or videodance), a dancer’s body could be seen through a window, thus being framed by the cut/size/material of the window itself. The shapes of windows identify the nature of the spaces behind the wall, their relative size, their need for light or privacy, and their position in a hierarchy of rooms. (Lyndon and Moore, 102)

I used metaphoric windows as I created my duet with Emily. I was assuming/hoping that the majority of the audience would be standing far away in positions facing our corner, so that
they saw Emily’s body blocking mine and would perceive the “window” effect. In the beginning part of our duet, after she slowly evolves her movement from the floor, I chose to have us tightly spaced together as we moved in unison. Gradually, I would stray from unison and move with more energy and at a higher intensity as I stretched and threw my limbs farther than where her limbs were stretching. She was my pillar, my frame, my wall. Her smaller, quieter movement provided shape and outline to my more powerful and louder movement. As she stood still, holding her arms out straight in front of her, I repetitively slid my arms from the back to the front; her body blocked my torso, yet provided a static frame for my energized limbs to be seen. Aurally, her static stance framed and allowed for the loud scuffing and sliding of my shoes on the cement to be heard. Her body emphasized the wanted parts of my body (arms and right leg) to be seen, editing out the lesser parts (torso and rest of the body). Later on in the duet, I had Aly parade through the space speaking a Latin phrase into a megaphone. Her walking movement and Latin text physically as well as aurally framed the movement of the duet. Aly added this layer that was somewhat disturbing, chilling, and powerful. I wanted the intensity of my relationship with Emily to build; thus, Aly’s framing role seemed perfect as it supported and heightened the tension between Emily and me.

The installation design itself created windows as well. The wood and rows of glasses sometimes obstructed the audiences’ full view of the dancers. The windows provided by the planks of wood helped lend shape to the focal point (the dancers). The wood helped shape the environment in which the phrases were performed; they gave more context and character to the raw movement, framing the dancers’ bodies with glasses of water. No matter where a viewer would stand, there would be some kind of “frame,” but it would vary depending on the perspective of the viewer.
**LIGHT**

Space and form are understood in light. “Light can clarify form, or it can extend and enhance mysterious distances.” (Lyndon and Moore, 179) It can move and change continuously the spots on which it guides our attention. Light can glisten, dapple, slide across a surface, or even flicker. In a way, we can’t sense space without light, and we can’t understand light without shadow and shade (shadow is the ghost of an object, while shade is the absence of light). (Chambers, 179) Shade is gentler than shadow: it is without figure. It is the absence of direct sunlight rather than the trace of its physical obstruction.

Light can bathe choreography, just caress it lightly, or make it thrive and play. Light defines the space in which our bodies move. We can alter the mood of a piece by choosing the level of intensity or shade in color. We can choose to obstruct and tuck away movement in shade or we can highlight a form through shadow.

I chose to light the inside of the market space with four portable stage lights held on four separate tripods. I felt that four lights (one in each corner) in addition to the overhead security light from the ceiling provided just enough light for the dancers to be seen, but a low enough level of intensity to define the space with an eerie/dark/somber mood. I wanted a dark atmosphere for the piece because I felt that the old dirty space, the grungy costumes, and the disheveled appearance of the dancers lent themselves to the sparseness of the harsh white shadow-forming light. The two evening performances were much different than the matinee performance due to the very contrasting levels of light between the two. The nighttime performances had a mysteriously beautiful — eery and stark mood, whereas the matinee was much brighter due to the many windows in the space, offering lightness in the mood and atmosphere of the piece.
I was somewhat limited in lighting choices for my piece in the market. I was neither able to start in blackness nor end in pure blackness due to the one security light that always had to be on. However, when I translated a segment of “Source” to the stage, I was able to better manipulate the way light supported my choreography. For instance, I was allowed to add a fade from blackness in the beginning, to slowly reveal Aly’s solo shape. And I was able to put a pool of light onto my closely spaced duet section with Emily, removing Aly’s body from sight so that more attention was on the duet. The pool of light also allowed my body to submerge into darkness as I walked upstage, away from Emily. And moments later, I slowly crept back into the pool of white to spit water onto her in order to begin our duet together.
WATER METAPHORS/SYMBOLISM/PHILOSOPHIES SEEN IN “SOURCE”

Water maintains a powerful symbolism within human existence. The unique property of water (and other liquids) is to take the shape of that which surrounds it but never to possess a specific shape by itself. Water is incapable of "transcending" its own mode of being and of manifesting itself in forms. (Eliade, 131) Water is said to be formless, taking the shape of any container that holds it: “the formless unbounded element, is never simply static and neutral but always a dynamic tendency, a movement either towards form or away from and against form.” (Armstrong, 278) As earth symbolizes the embodiment of form with its maintenance of solid structures and shapes, water symbolizes the dissolution of form into a mass of possibilities. The ability of water to lack any one true form by taking possession of different forms has inspired various types of water symbolism to arise. The symbolism of dissolution is found in religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. In these religious complexes, in both ceremonies and writings, water functions to disintegrate, abolish symbolic forms, wash away sins, purify, and regenerate. This ability to abolish forms relates to birth, death and regeneration.

The aspects of water relating to birth, death and regression have given it an important part in baptism, one of the major rituals of the Christian religion. "Immersion in water signifies regression to the preformed, reincorporation into the undifferentiated mode of pre-existence; immersion is equivalent to a dissolution of forms. This is why a symbolism of water implies both death and rebirth." (Eliade, 130) Contact with water always brings about regeneration "because dissolution is followed by a new birth [and]...because immersion fertilizes and multiplies the potential of life." (Eliade, 131) Many audience members told me that they saw baptism imagery in the piece. Even as I filmed the videodance on the Susquenhanna River, local residents who
were strolling by the waterside asked us if we were performing some sort of baptism or religious ritual. I did not intend to imply religious symbolism in my choreography, but I do believe that my memories and perceptions of baptism helped shape my choreographic choices. Baptism is believed to purify a person, making him clean, and unifying him with Christ. Perhaps the dirty, unclean space of the market led me to create a world where my dancers transferred from unclean to clean. In fact, I was actually inspired to have Emily and me dip our two fingers in our ten glasses of water because I was interested in the Christian traditions of holy water and baptism. I found it interesting how holy water is believed to have the power to repel evil. I found the image of people dipping their hands in the water and gesturing the symbol of the cross to be beautiful. This use of holy water and making a sign of the cross when entering a church reflects a renewal of baptism, a cleansing, and a protection from evil.

As well as being associated with religion, water is also associated with the womb where individual life comes from. In a mother’s womb, the fetus is in a protective envelope of water; after being born, the infant leaves the spherical space of water and enters into a relationship with the directional forces of the earth. The more the child “yields to these forces the more his body becomes solidified, which is essential to standing upright and learning to walk.” (Schwenk, 24) Water is often linked with the origin of life itself. "The waters symbolize the universal sum of virtualities; they are [...] spring and origin, the reservoir of all possibilities of existence; they precede every form and support every creation." (Eliade, 130) I chose to incorporate this belief that “water is the origin of life” towards the end of my creative journey with “Source.” I began to realize that the four large and four small tin buckets were the origin of my piece, much like water is the origin of life. For instance, I began the piece with Aly’s body immersed in the water-filled buckets. The buckets were the primary source of water that we would use in the
piece. They were where we would drench our bodies and where we would come to rest. Towards the end of my creative process, I realized that they had become this metaphor, this home, this resting place, this reservoir, this womb, this origin, this source. Water is essential to life—we need it to survive.

After realizing that the buckets symbolized and supported our creation, my intuition told me that I had to “end” the piece with all four dancers returning to rest in the buckets. I hoped to hint at the fact that there was in fact no beginning/ending to our journey; we were to “end” where we “began,” making it seem as if there truly was no linear voyage but rather a cyclic one. The cycle through the solid, liquid and gaseous phases is a well-known circulatory process of water, contributing to its connections with cycles and circulation systems. Water is not naturally linear—the natural forces of gravity and pressure mold it into a spherical droplet. It is essentially the element of circulatory systems—thus, my piece could not be linear either. I had to suggest some sort of endless cycle. I would have preferred to end the piece in movement (to suggest that there was no ending to our cyclic journey), but instead I had to end in stillness because the logistics of ending in movement were difficult without being able to fade the lights to pure blackness. So, I chose to have Aly end the piece the way she began: her body leaning over with her head in the smaller bucket, turning up the dial of the radio static with her left hand. The radio static sound that kept going implied that there wasn’t really an ending point.

**How I Approached the Theme of Water: Feedback from the Audience**

After receiving feedback on my piece, many people asked why there was one continuous dark mood throughout the entire piece. “Why was there no lightness, or a sense of life-giving joy that emerged in the piece?” For me, the piece did not lend itself to being nurturing, playful, or happy. The world that I was creating emerged from my relationship with the site and my
experiences with water. The product of my creative process developed into a somber, dark, and somewhat disturbing piece. For me, it would have seemed unnatural and foreign to introduce a shift, a smile, or a lightness into the piece. The decaying surroundings did not prompt memories or images of brightness. While I acknowledge that water, as a “source,” has many dualities of light and dark, life giving and life taking, my piece was not a world in which the entire range was explicitly illustrated/expressed.

Audience members also expressed to me that they noticed a somewhat disturbing relationship between the four women and the water. The women would throw the water, beat it with their hands, spit it out, and propel it around the space. Their interactions and movement with the water was not gentle or warm. Some audience members even thought that the women were drowning, represented by the cold/dark relationship and mood that the women shared with the water. I did not intend or structure my choreography with the water to make it seem as if there was a mutual abusive relationship between the women and the water. Yet, perhaps my movement vocabulary was influenced by the coldness and harshness of the space that we experienced during our winter rehearsals. During our Sunday rehearsals from January through March, the market space did not lend itself to be an atmosphere of warmth and support. The cold market space was devoid of any heating system and the water in our buckets was never warm. The dancers and I often dreaded our rehearsals because the cold weather and water made it uncomfortable and difficult to rehearse in. Thus, movement that arose from my shivering body was not light, warm, or loving because I was not comfortable in the water. I was cold. My muscles were tense. And the dancers were always expressing their discomfort in the space. The dim winter sun also made the space incredibly dark and somber—it probably influenced the dark relationship that was choreographed and experienced between the dancers and the space.
CONCLUSION

Attracted to my surroundings (past and present), I probe with fascination and curiosity. Attempting to understand the meaning of my existence, my orientation within this world, I created “Source,” representing my experience with water and the decaying space of Eastern Market. As I spoke to the many complex elements of my exploration in “Source,” I uncovered insight into how I perceive. My past memories have shaped the ways the cells of my body interact with the matter of this world. The memories that have been stored inside of me (both conscious and unconscious) inform my creative decisions—they inform me of my past perceptions of experiences, shaping the ways in which my muscles and mind wish to represent my imagined worlds. My imagination feeds my improvisations and intuitive decisions, which then feed my choreography. And my memories feed my imagination by prompting images and other sensations that have been stored inside my mind and body. The dialogue between perception, memory, imagination, and creation informs us how we wish to represent our experiences of space. I have come to understand more about who I am as an individual by understanding how I perceive the world around me.

By creating “Source,” I have gained more of an understanding of why I interact with the world the way I do. I am discovering the inspirations and influences behind my imagination, realizing that the accumulation of my experiences with space shape the way I evolve artistically. In this project, I started with the concept of water. And with this one concept, this one seed, I gradually expanded into exploring more concepts, eventually leading me into creating an entirely new world—
In my world, there are four women.

Four women who share a bond.

Four women who share a source,

a breath, a force.

In my world, there is somber accompanied with darkness, shadow, and decay.

There are four women.

Four women and a source.
LITERATURE CITED:


