

CREATING AND CONVEYING A KINESTHETIC EXPERIENCE OF PLACE

by

FAITH H. MORRISON

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Student: Faith H. Morrison

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This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts degree in the Department of Dance by:

Steven Chatfield	Chairperson
Shannon Mockli	Member
Brad Garner	Member

and

Scott L. Pratt	Dean of the Graduate School
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Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Faith H. Morrison

Master of Fine Arts

Department of Dance

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Title: Creating and Conveying a Kinesthetic Experience of Place

This research uses dance and film to investigate the creation and conveyance of a kinesthetic experience of place. The choreographer, dancers, and videographer participating in the study aimed to create a kinesthetic experience of place by engaging the senses in a sensory experience of place and exploring the different feeling states of place. The study utilized choreographic methodologies of site-specific dance and screendance to facilitate a creative process rehearsed, performed, and filmed in the Oregon Dunes National Recreation area at Eel Creek. The footage from this choreographic process was edited into a screendance intended to convey a kinesthetic experience of place to viewers. The pilot study, *At Eel Creek*, and the final screendance, *ensō*, can be viewed through supplemental files included with this document. The evaluation of the study has resulted in key discoveries into the components necessary for the creation and conveyance of a kinesthetic experience of place.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Faith H. Morrison

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
University of Montana, Missoula
Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Fine Arts, Dance, 2015, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, Dance, 2010, University of Montana
Bachelor of Arts, Applied Mathematics, 2010, University of Montana

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Site-Specific Dance
Screendance
Improvisation

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Dance Instructor, Summer Enrichment Program, Eugene, Oregon, 2013-2014

Professional Dancer, Headwaters Dance Company, Missoula, Montana, 2011-2012

Dance Instructor and Performer, Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre, Missoula, Montana, 2011-2012

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, Dance, University of Oregon, 2012-2015

Official Selection, Eugene Film Society Annual Screening and Social, Eugene, Oregon, 2014

Gold Level Presidential Leadership Scholarship, Davidson Honors College, University of Montana, 2005-2010

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Experimenting with the boundaries of dance outside of the proscenium setting has always been of interest to me. Ever since I was a child, I have been attending the annual *Dancers on Location* concert at The University of Montana. This concert features student and faculty site-specific choreography at various locations around The University of Montana campus. As a child, I remember watching dancers fill the trees in the grassy area in front of the library, hang from rafters on the footbridge, and stomp up and down a stairwell on the side of the social studies building. All of these dances allowed me as a viewer to participate in an immersive experience of place.

Once I entered the dance program as an undergraduate at The University of Montana, I began to perform and choreograph for the annual *Dancers on Location* Concert. This experience provided me with a different perspective on the power of site-specific dance. In the fall of 2005, I performed in *Requiem*, choreographed by Ann C. Johnson (performed at The University of Montana in the *Fall 2005 Dancers on Location* concert), which was a dance created as an homage to the devastations caused by hurricane Katrina. Although the concert occurred in Montana in chilly mid-October, this dance took place entirely within the Clark Fork River. As performers, we entered the dance upstream of the audience, and floated downriver before performing the dance in front of the audience gathered on either side of the riverbank. The dance finished with us floating downstream and out of site. Performing in this dance had a profound impact on me as a performer. I felt more connected to all the elements in this dance than I ever had

previously in my performance career. Most importantly, it provided me with a strong connection to the environment through my engagement in a sensory experience of place.

The intimate connection to land I felt while performing in this dance, is a phenomenon discussed in Camille LeFevre's 1996 article "Site-Specific Dance: Dance as Big as All Outdoors. Creators of Site-Specific Dance Works Consider Mother Nature a Collaborator." This article draws a connection between ancient rituals and ceremonies with current site-specific dance through the investigation of body, movement, and place. The article discusses how site-specific dance fulfills a human desire for interaction between people, performance, and place. In *Site Dance: Choreographers and the Lure of Alternative Spaces* by Melanie Kloetzel and Carolyn Pavlik in 2009, Meredith Monk describes her motivation for creating site-specific dance as stemming from a desire to create an immersive and transformative experience expanding notions of time and space. She talks of her desire to create work that blurs the boundaries between performers and the audience. Eiko and Koma are other site-specific artists in *Site Dance: Choreographers and the Lure of Alternative Spaces* that are recognized for their work that explores the essence of place and ruminates on the soul of place. They are noted for exploring and communicating the universality and voice of place through their choreography.

In line with these choreographers, I find inspiration in creating site-specific dance that experiences place. Growing up in Missoula, Montana I have developed a love and appreciation for the outdoors. Living at the base of a mountain within a valley intersected by two rivers, I have spent my life recreating outside in the environment. I value the natural environment and my connections to place. I am interested in creating dance that

intimately connects people to place by engaging in sensory experiences of place and exploring different feeling states of place.

My interest in screendance was initiated after viewing *Reines d'un Jour* by Pascal Magnin in 2013. Although this work is primarily focused on narrative and character development, this screendance is intriguing in the way the choreography explores and interacts with the environment. The intimate filming of partnering work between dancers and the surrounding environment transports the viewer to the site. This work is an excellent example of site-specific screendance that utilizes the environment and explores a sense of place through the investigation of site history. It provides an example of how to film site-specific dance in a way that maintains the intention of the dance, while retaining the integrity of the site. This work opened my mind to the possibility of using film to allow an audience to experience a site-specific dance occurring in a remote location. It challenged me to consider creating screendance that allows viewers to experience place.

Throughout my research of site-specific dance and screendance, I have been inspired by artists who utilize choreographic methods exploring the relationship between presence, self, and site. Victoria Hunter discusses an approach to the choreographic process for site-specific dance that focuses on sensing site and being present in the moment in her 2005 article, "Embodying the Site: The Here and Now in Site-Specific Dance Performance". This article is divided into the different stages involved in the creation and presentation of site-specific work. She categorizes these stages in a linear model of "Experiencing the Site", "Expressing the Site", "Embodying the Site", and "Receiving the Site" (Hunter 2005, 367). I am particularly interested in Hunter's

examination of dance embodiment of site and the embodiment of the “*genius loci*, or ‘spirit of place’” (Hunter 2005, 369).

Nigel Stewart applies yet another approach to the creative process when developing site-specific work that is discussed in his 2010 article, “Dancing the Face of Place: Environmental Dance and Eco-Phenomenology.” In this article, Stewart explores the human body’s relationship to landscape and the environment. Stewart uses eco-phenomenology to explore two improvisation exercises created by dance artist Jennifer Monson while working on her dance *Water Log*. The description and analysis of these two site-specific improvisations are exercises I have incorporated into the creative process throughout this study.

Making Video Dance: A Step-by-Step Guide to Creating Dance for the Screen, by Katrina McPherson in 2006, is a practical guide on the process of making screendance. This book provides a clear linear structure for creating screendance, and considers place throughout each of its chapters. In this study, I utilize the structure provided by McPherson as a guiding framework for the organization of my project. In particular, I focus on her approach to “Developing the Work” as discussed in Chapter 3. Her suggestions about the use of improvisation on the shoot, as well as the simultaneous evolution of camera and movement choreography, influenced the structure of my methods for this project.

This study utilizes choreographic methodologies of site-specific dance and screendance to create and convey a kinesthetic experience of place. The participants in the study included myself, as facilitator, choreographer and dancer. The study also included a videographer, Robert Uehlin, along with three additional dancers, Robin

Ewing, Cecily Wechter, and Rosie Yerke. The study was conducted in multiple filming shoots over the course of a month at the Oregon Dunes National Recreation area surrounding Eel Creek. The goal of the study was to use dance and film to engage in a sensory experience of place, and to explore different feeling states of place. I facilitated a creative process for the study, inspired by Victoria Hunter and Nigel Stewart, that began with improvisational exercises exploring human connection to place. These exercises engaged the dancers and the videographer in a sensory experience of place, and allowed them to explore different feeling states of place. After completing multiple filming shoots I worked with the videographer, utilizing screendance editing structures provided by Katrina McPherson, to create a film intended to convey a kinesthetic experience of place to viewers.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to use dance and film to investigate the creation and conveyance of a kinesthetic experience of place. The choreographer, dancers, and videographer participating in the study aimed to create a kinesthetic experience of place by engaging the senses in a sensory experience of place, and exploring the different feeling states of place. The footage from this choreographic process was edited into a screendance intended to convey a kinesthetic experience of place to viewers.

Delimitations

This study was created, rehearsed, performed, and filmed in the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area near Eel Creek. The study was limited to the recreation area

surrounding Eel Creek expanding from the campground to the coast, including geography of sand dunes, forest, and costal beach. The choreographic process and filming was limited to two multi-day shoots spread over the course of a month, with editing sessions scheduled between shoots and after the final shoot.

In order to internalize, analyze, and reflect on the creation of a kinesthetic experience of place, I served as both a choreographer and a dancer in this project. I worked collaboratively with a videographer who filmed and assisted with post-production editing. The final screendance was created utilizing editing tools available in the program Final Cut Pro X. The final project was limited to 15 minutes, and was screened with the pilot study in a public showing at the University of Oregon Dance Department on February 20th 2015. The final screening of the project was accompanied by a facilitated question and answer discussion with the audience.

Definition of Terms

Site-Specific Dance

The term *site-specific* is studied in-depth in *Site Dance: Choreographers and the Lure of Alternative Spaces*, by Melanie Kloetzel and Carolyn Pavlik in 2009. In an interview with Stephan Koplowitz by Kloetzel and Pavlik, Koplowitz defines site-specific art as “Work that is wholly inspired by a specific site and cannot be replicated anywhere else without losing its essence and core meaning” (Kloetzel and Pavlik 2009, 75). In an interview with Heidi Duckler, she defines site-specific work as stated in the following passage,

Site-specific work implies that the content of the work is connected to a particular place. To me, that also means a work in a theatre could be site-

specific if the content of the piece is related to that specific place. Alternatively, I think that a piece that is created somewhere else and then plopped down in a field is not necessarily a site-specific work. (Kloetzel and Pavlik 2009, 84)

Sally Jacques shares a related definition of site-specific art that she states in an interview with Kloetzel and Pavlik, “Site-Specific work is an integration of the environment, its elements, and the emotional language suggested by the space” (Kloetzel and Pavlik 2009, 199). All of these definitions illuminate site-specific art as work that is intimately linked to site, and cannot be performed separate from the site in which it is created. In this study, I will use the term *site-specific dance* to refer to dance that is created in a particular site, utilizes the environment and elements of a site in the choreography, and is fundamentally connected to the site. I am interested in creating site-specific dance that is intimately connected to place and cannot be performed anywhere besides its site of origin.

Screendance

In this study I will use the term screendance as defined by Douglas Rosenberg in his 2012 book *Screendance Inscribing the Ephemeral Image*. Rosenberg states,

I have chosen the term “screendance” as the most accurate way to describe the passage of “dance,” via its mediated image, to any and all screens without articulating materiality. That is to say, screendance speaks of the *end point* or the *point of reception* by the viewer and not of the material form of the production in the way that “videodance” refers to the actual production media or method of inscription. (Rosenberg 2012, 3)

As defined by Rosenberg, I will use the term screendance to refer to the category of dance that is created for viewing on a screen.

Place

In order to define the term *place* I think it is first important to define the term *space*. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of *space* is, “a boundless three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “space” [accessed April 22, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/space>]). Therefore *space* is an infinite area in which people, places, and things exist. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of *place* is, “a specific area or region of the world” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “place” [accessed April 22, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/place>]). In this study, I will use the term *place* to designate a definite portion of *space*, defining a specific area within the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area surrounding Eel Creek. The differentiation of *place* and *space* is discussed in Mary Elizabeth Anderson’s 2014 book, *Meeting Places: Locating Desert Consciousness in Performance*. Place-based artist Jane Quon states,

Scholars of place differentiate ‘place’ from ‘space’ in a way that endows ‘place’ with a value that is withheld from ‘space’. ‘Space’ is transformed into ‘place’ by the human investment of meaning upon a geographical tract. ‘Place’ is bounded; ‘space’ is amorphous, featureless, unshaped. ‘Place’ is identified in accordance with characteristics said to inhere within its boundaries. ‘Space’ is devoid of identifying marks and characteristics. (Anderson 2014, 12)

As defined in *Meeting Places: Locating Desert Consciousness in Performance*, I will use the term *place* not only to designate a definite portion of *space*, but also to define the human investment of meaning upon a definite portion of *space*.

Kinesthetic Experience of Place

To define the term *kinesthetic experience of place* I have looked into the different ways site-specific artists approach the making of their work. In “Part 2. Environmental Dialogues: Sensing Site” of *Site Dance: Choreographers and the Lure of Alternative Spaces* (Kloetzel and Pavlik 2009), various site-specific artists are noted for employing sensual and kinesthetic interactions of place into their creative process. “They want us to see, hear, smell, and touch--in other words tune into the site on a sensual level. When making site work, Bieringa, Ramsted, Stein, and Hardenbergh find ways to interact with public places that activate all of their senses” (Kloetzel and Pavlik 2009, 121). In this study, I will use the term *kinesthetic experience of place* as defining an experience in which humans use movement (of their bodies or of a camera) to engage in a sensory experience of place, and to explore different feeling states of a place. In order to understand an exploration of the different feeling states of a place, it is important to first define the terms *feeling* and *emotion*. As defined by Antonio Damasio in Antoine Bechara and Nasir Naqvi’s 2004 article *Listening to Your Heart: Interoceptive Awareness as a Gateway to Feeling*,

Damasio distinguishes emotions from feelings. Emotions are changes in body and brain states triggered by a dedicated brain system that responds to the content of one's perceptions, actual or recalled. Body responses range from changes in heart rate or smooth muscle contraction to changes perceptible to an external observer (such as those to posture or facial expression). The signals generated by these body responses produce brain changes that are perceptible mostly to the individual and provide the essential ingredients for what is ultimately perceived as a feeling. Thus emotions are what an outside observer can see; feelings are what the individual subjectively experiences. (Bechara and Naqvi 2004, 102)

In this study, we will explore the feeling states of a place through movement explorations and kinesthetic empathetic reactions to these experiences.

Significance of Study

This study contributes to the fields of site-specific dance and screendance, by utilizing dance and film to create and convey a kinesthetic experience of place. As screendance remains a developing field within the academy, the majority of research I have encountered in this area has been focused on developing choreographic methods and aesthetic considerations for creating work. In regard to place, I have encountered screendance literature discussing the importance of choosing a filming location that enhances narrative or creates an environment for a dance. However, I have not encountered screendance research that primarily focuses on place, or that uses dance and film to experience place.

This study explores place through the mediums of dance and film, and considers the conveyance of this experience to viewers. I hope this research will contribute to the developing field of screendance by offering a creative process that explores an intimate connection to place. This study is unique in its focus of creating screendance that allows choreographer, videographer, dancers, and viewers to participate in a kinesthetic experience of place. Creating and conveying a kinesthetic experience of place is important because it intimately connects humans to place. This study provides choreographic tools for deeply connecting humans to place, and allows viewers to experience this connection through an innovative approach to creating screendance.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED WORK

As this study explores a collaboration of dance and film that creates and conveys a kinesthetic experience of place, I have reviewed literature in the areas of site-specific dance and screendance. I have examined each field and looked at specific scholars who have influenced my project. My review of literature supports an understanding of my process, the development of my project, the placement of my work within the fields of site-specific dance and screendance, and furthermore clarifies my contribution to these fields.

Review of Site-Specific Dance

Site Dance: Choreographers and the Lure of Alternative Spaces by Melanie Kloetzel and Carolyn Pavlik in 2009, aims to both recognize and define the genre of site-specific dance. It explores various site-specific works in the past four decades, as well as the artists behind the creation of these works. The book is divided into four sections, “Part 1. Excavating Place: Memory and Spectacle”, “Part 2. Environmental Dialogues: Sensing Site”, “Part 3. Revering Beauty: The Essence of Place”, and “Part 4. Civic Interventions: Accessing Community”, each with a distinct site-specific focus. Between the four sections, the book is formatted into fourteen chapters with each chapter focused on one or two site-specific choreographers. Every chapter includes an interview with a featured site-specific artist(s), and is followed by a personal passage by the artist(s). The interviews by Kloetzel and Pavlik provide a method for illuminating each artist’s motivation and process for creating site-specific work. Ultimately, the interviews in the

book provide a structure for looking at how site-specific dance came into being, and its current place in society.

Overall, this book defines four categories of site-specific dance, and the difference between site-adaptive work versus site-specific work. This definition is critical for the definition of site-specific work in my study. It separates site-adaptive work as work that is inspired by a certain site but can be performed in other similar sites, from site-specific work that is defined by Stephan Koplowitz as, “Work that is wholly inspired by a specific site and cannot be replicated anywhere else without losing its essence and core meaning” (Kloetzel and Pavlik 2009, 75). However, it is noted that site-adaptive work can become site-specific under particular circumstances. For instance, Heidi Deckler states, “Sometimes I make work that is re-sited or site-adaptive. But I’ve discovered that site-adaptive work can become site-specific again if the content of the new site is mined” (Kloetzel and Pavlik 2009, 85). Ultimately, site-specific work is defined as work that takes inspiration from a unique site and is fully connected to that particular site.

This book is helpful in illuminating the range of inspirations and motivations of site-specific artists. For example, Meredith Monk explains her motivation for creating site-specific work in the following personal passage,

Looking back it seems that site-specific work was inevitable in my development as an artist. Site work gave me the ability to create an immersive experience. A proscenium implies a separation between the performance and the audience. Taking people out of the theater and including them in the same space as the performers blurs boundaries and transforms experience, expanding notions of time and space. (Kloetzel and Pavlik 2009, 40)

The inspiration Monk found in creating site-specific work that created an immersive experience and transformed experiences of time and space, is an inspiration I share in creating site-specific work. Throughout this study, I explored the creation and conveyance of a kinesthetic experience of place. I experimented using movement and film to trigger an immersive experience of place for choreographer, dancers, videographer, and viewers.

Another review of contemporary site-specific dance is seen in Camille LeFevre's 1996 article "Site-Specific Dance: Dance as Big as All Outdoors. Creators of Site-Specific Dance Works Consider Mother Nature a Collaborator." This article draws a connection between ancient rituals and ceremonies with current site-specific dance through the investigation of body, movement, and place. LeFevre compares the devotion to place experienced in ancient Native American ceremonies side by side with contemporary site-specific choreography to discover similarities between these events. The article contains background research and personal interviews with several contemporary site-specific artists that illuminate each artist's intimate connection to place when creating site-specific work. The description of each artist's relationship to place clarifies the different ways place can be integrated and transcribed through the body. In an interview with Joanna Haigood, LeFevre notes, "In the best site work, the depth and integrity of this process are manifested through the choreography, itself, as it echoes architectural detail, site use, or aspects of terrain, or evokes what Haigood calls 'place memory'" (LeFevre 1996, 68). The article concludes that site-specific dance will never achieve the same level of full communal unity and deep spiritual connection to land that was felt in ancient ceremony and rituals; but that site-specific dance does fulfill a human

desire for interaction between people, performance, and place. This article was important to my study as I considered how to facilitate experiences enhancing an intimate connection between choreographer, videographer, dancers, and the environment.

In order to understand site-specific dance in the 21st century, it is important to understand the pioneers of this genre of dance. Meridith Lee Wilson's 2006 Master's thesis, "Artistic Landscapes: Dancing Beyond the Stage, An Investigation of 1960s Site-Specific Dance Through the Choreography of Anna Halprin, Trisha Brown and Twyla Tharp," explores the work of pioneer site-specific dance artists as a source of inspiration for her current site-specific work. The purpose of this thesis is to look at the contributions made by three site-specific choreographers of the 1960s, Anna Halprin, Trisha Brown, and Twyla Tharp, and use this investigation as inspiration for creating current site-specific work. Wilson illuminates Halprin as "One of the first choreographers to begin to reject the world of modern dance in search of an even more authentic and organic place for dance—both within the body and without" (Wilson 2006, 10). Brown is discussed as an artist who is constantly breaking boundaries and reinventing herself as a dancer. She is noted for having created pieces that altered the perspective of the audience, and gave the dancers a new insight to the world through the creative process. Tharp is introduced as an artist constantly exploring time, space, and the merging of life and art in her work. For the movement component of her thesis, Wilson took the inspiration she found from these three artists to create three different site-specific dances. Throughout my study, I took inspiration from the work of Anna Halprin in order to find authentic and organic movement of the body within a place. I aimed to find organic movement within the body by facilitating and participating in a kinesthetic experience of place.

Review of Screendance

Envisioning Dance on Film and Video edited by Judy Mitoma, Dale Ann Stieber, and Elizabeth Zimmer in 2002, provides a detailed reference guide to the history of collaboration between dance and film. The collection of fifty essays presented in this book traces the ever-changing relationship between dance and film, primary focusing on work created in the United States with occasional references to international dance film and video. This book broadened my perspective to the vast-ranging ways in which dance and film can be used in collaboration.

Chapter 8 in this book, “From Méliés to Streaming Video: A Century of Moving Dance Images” by Virginia Brooks, defines three categories of dance film as described by Allegra Fuller Snyder in her 1965 article “Three Kinds of Dance Films: A Welcome Clarification.”

In her 1965 *Dance Magazine* article and later in a report for the National Endowment for the Arts, Allegra Fuller Snyder classified films of dance into three groups: simple recordings of choreography; documentary films of performance; and “choreocinema,” a term coined by John Martin, in which the choreographer and the cinematographer join efforts to produce a new artistic entity. (Mitoma, Stieber and Zimmer 2002, 57)

Snyder’s definition of choreocinema is critical for the definition and categorization of screendance in my project. The collaborations between dance and film delineated in this chapter as choreocinema, cinedance, or videodance, define categories of dance film that classify the work I created. The three categories of dance film defined by Snyder are further emphasized in Chapter 1, “Archives and Architecture”, in *Screendance Inscribing the Ephemeral Image* by Douglas Rosenberg. In his book, Rosenberg presents three categories within the field he defines as screendance. These categories are autonomous works of art, documentaries, and dance documentations (classified as films taken to

preserve stage choreography or document a rehearsal). Rosenberg's three categories align almost exactly with Snyder's categorization, but are arranged under different labels. The difference in the labeling between the category Snyder calls choreocinema and Rosenberg calls autonomous works of art, is that Snyder emphasizes a shared collaboration between dance and film in this category whereas Rosenberg does not define the relationship of dance and film in this category. Because my study utilized the mediums of dance and film in conscious and creative collaboration, the final screendance is most closely linked with Snyder's categorical definition of choreocinema.

Envisioning Dance on Film and Video also offers insights into many different techniques and approaches to filming dance. In Chapter 3, "The Kinesthetics of Avant-Garde Dance Film: Deren and Harris" by Amy Greenfield, Maya Deren's *A Study in Choreography for the Camera* (1945) and Hilary Harris's *Nine Variations on A Dance Theme* (1966) are compared as two films that experiment with the principles of cinematic motion in relation to dance. Watching Hilary Harris's *Nine Variations on A Dance Theme* (1966) on the accompanying DVD to this book, it is clear that the purpose of this work was to experiment filming a solo dancer perform the same phrase nine times using a different filming approach to each variation. Harris experiments with different filming and editing techniques for each repetition of the phrase, playing with distance and movement of the camera in relation to the dancer. This work provides an example of how different filming techniques can affect the way movement is conveyed onscreen. In the eighth variation of filming, Harris explores an extreme close-up camera technique that almost seems to be capturing the inner sensation of the dancer in the film. This variation of filming stood out to me because it allowed me to experience kinesthetic

empathy with the dancer in the film. Through the extreme close-ups and synchronized movement of camera and dancer, I was able to feel the movement in the film. This approach to filming emphasizing intimacy and capturing the inner sensation of movement was a technique the videographer and I experimented with throughout my study.

Another approach to filming dance that focuses on the ‘dance’ of the camera is addressed in *Envisioning Dance on Film and Video* in Chapter 40, “Dancing with the Camera: The Dance Cinematographer” by Evann E. Siebens, and Chapter 43, “Breaking the Box: Dancing the Camera with Anna Halprin” by Andy Abrahams Wilson. In both of these chapters, emphasis is placed on the importance of the movement of the videographer in relation to the dancers. Each chapter illuminates the way in which the videographer must have a visceral experience while filming in order to ‘dance’ with the camera. Siebens describes this movement in the following way, “Essentially, I have transposed the experience of kinesthetically moving through space into dancing with my camera” (Mitoma, Stieber and Zimmer 2002, 223). Wilson describes his movement with the camera in the following passage,

When the camera is in synch with the dance, and the filmer with the dancer, energy breaks through the containers of body, stage, camera, screen. We experience a transcendence, or flow, when the boundaries of subject and object, experience and consciousness, disappear. While Anna was using movement to connect inner and outer worlds, I was “dancing the camera” to create the same bridge. (Mitoma, Stieber and Zimmer 2002, 234)

This approach of ‘dancing’ with the camera was utilized throughout my study as a means of capturing the engagement of the dancers in a kinesthetic experience of place, and conveying this experience to viewers of the film.

The final approach to filming I will review is discussed in Elizabeth Sexe's 2009 master's thesis, "See the Falling Tree: Addressing Filming of Site-Specific Dance." The purpose of this thesis is to examine how film can be used to capture and encapsulate the ephemeral nature of dance. It explores ways in which the two-dimensional time-based realm of film can be used to document the three dimensionality and sense of place incorporated in site-specific dance. This thesis includes three case studies performed by Sexe that analyze the various uses of film for site-specific performance. The first study looks at Anna Halprin's work *Witnessing Phenomenological Collaboration*, which incorporates the use of the camera as a witness to the work. The second study looks at Marylee Hardenbergh's *The One River Mississippi Project*, a community-based educational dance that included the community, the process, and the performance of the work in the final film. The third study looks at Douglas Rosenberg's *Five Films About Place*, in which the filming of the work focuses on the lens sight, and how place is shaped through lens perspective. Overall, Sexe concludes that each of these studies utilized film in a way that preserved the sense of place within the dance. This work was important to my study as the videographer and I considered how to film dance while aiming to preserve and capture an experience of place. It was critical for our process of documenting and editing the final screendance in a manner that conveyed a kinesthetic experience of place to viewers.

Example Works

Because this study includes elements of site-specific dance and film, I have reviewed examples of screendance works in which site-specific dance is preserved and

enhanced through the filming of the work. The following works present examples of screendance in which the filming site is utilized or enhanced through the collaboration of dance and film in the work.

Reines d'un Jour by Pascal Magnin in 1996 is a film primarily focused on narrative and character development, but is also notable due to its use and exploration of place. The purpose of this work was to create a site-specific screendance that was based off of a myth from the area of St. Luc, France through an exploration of movement and environment. Magnin decided to create the dance in the area the myth was based in order to explore the history of the place. Including the multiple elements of people, animals, sounds, festivals, and landscapes, the choreography explores the interactions and relationships between these elements in the film. The filming of the dance accentuates the emotional feeling of the movement, and the sense of place for the viewer. The intimate filming of partnering work between dancers, as well as partner work between dancers and the surrounding environment, transport the viewer to the site. The dance was filmed and edited from multiple perspectives, which emphasizes the three dimensionality of the work within the confines of the two-dimensional medium of film. The movement in the piece is representative of the surrounding landscape, and seems to be inspired by the mountain and countryside setting. Many of the pedestrian movements utilized in the choreography echo the movement of locals in the area. Overall, this work is an excellent example of site-specific screendance that utilizes the environment, and explores a sense of place through the investigation of site history. It provides an excellent example of how to film site-specific dance in a way that preserves the intention of the movement, while maintaining the integrity of the site.

Another screendance that incorporates place into the movement and thematic development is *Boy*, by Rosemary Lee. The purpose of *Boy* was to use dance and film to explore the playful and imaginative story of a young boy on the coast of Norfolk. This film uses both first person and third person perspectives of the camera in order to convey two characters, a boy and his imaginary friend, using only one dancer. This film is another example of screendance work that is based around narrative and character development, but still utilizes the site in which it is filmed. The dancer in *Boy* explores the elements of the filming site while digging in the sand, splashing in the water, and waving clothing in the wind. The dancer utilizes the geography of the site while running along the dune crests, rolling down the hills, and jumping in the surf. All of these explorations of site add to a full-bodied experience of movement and place in the film. While observing the dancer interact with the site, viewers of the film are transported to the place of the dancer on the dunes. This work provides an example of how to use film to capture and convey the experience of a dancer in a place to viewers of the film.

Horses Never Lie, by Kathi Prosser and Caroline Richardson presents another example of dance and film that utilizes place, but explores place on a deeper visceral level. The way the dancer in this film digs into the environment creates a sensual experience for viewers of the film. The purpose of *Horses Never Lie* was to create a screendance work based around the theme of metamorphosis. As the dancer in the film moves through stages of birth, growth, and change, the environment changes from various textured sites. The movement in the work stays true to the theme of the film, while exploring elements in the environment. Although primarily focused on narrative and character development, the site in this film is utilized and adds to the feeling of the

work. This film provides an example of choreography that utilizes site in a sensual and visceral way. Moments when the dancer paws through the dust in the corral, and squirms through the gelatinous liquid on a black tarp, further enhance the tactile sensation of the film. These visceral moments allow viewers of the film to feel the site, and therefore relate with the dancer's movement in the site. Overall, the incorporation of site into the movement enhances the feeling of the dance. This approach to a sensual and visceral exploration of place is something I focused on throughout my project.

Husk, by Eiko and Koma is a screendance that utilizes an artificial environment and incorporates the body as part of the environment. This work provides an example of collaboration between film, dance, and environment that allows viewers to feel the body as an element of place. The purpose of the work was to experiment with the use of a camera to investigate movement. Previous to this work, Eiko and Koma had collaborated with videographers when making media works, but had not experimented with the camera themselves. In *Husk*, Koma takes on the role of videographer to capture Eiko's movement. I am inspired by Koma's approach to filming in this work due to the low angle and movement of the camera employed. The movement of the camera is slow, in accordance with the movement of the dancer, which allows viewers of the film to experience the work from the dancer's perspective. The low angle and slow movement of the camera in *Husk* accentuates the union of the dancer with the landscape of leaves capturing the intimate relationship between the dancer and the landscape. This screendance is an excellent example of how to film dance in a way that intimately connects dancers to the surrounding environment. It provides an example of a synergistic relationship between camera movement and dancer movement that is clearly conveyed to

a viewer of the work. The filming of this work allows viewers to feel the dance and the environment Eiko is experiencing. Ultimately, it allows viewers to feel the movement as part of the place.

Site-Specific and Screendance Choreographic Methods

Victoria Hunter's 2005 article, "Embodying the Site: The Here and Now in Site-Specific Dance Performance" discusses an approach to the choreographic process for site-specific dance that focuses on sensing site and being present in the moment. This article was written as a response to Doreen Massey's presentation of "Making Space" at the 2005 RESCEN Research Associate Artists seminar in London. The concept of the 'here and now' as presented by Massey is applied to an analysis of Hunter's creative process for her site-specific work *Beneath*, developed in 2004 as part of her PhD exploration into the relationship between site and the creative process in the making of site-specific dance. The article is divided into the different stages involved in the creation and presentation of site-specific work. Hunter categorizes these stages in a linear model of "Experiencing the Site", "Expressing the Site", "Embodying the Site", and "Receiving the Site" (Hunter 2005, 367). Throughout the article, connections are drawn between Massey's concept of the 'here and now' in relation to Hunter's concept of dance embodiment of site and the embodiment of the "*genius loci*, or 'spirit of place'" (Hunter 2005, 369). In conclusion, this article identifies a common theme in both Massey's concept of the 'here and now' and Hunter's PhD research into the creative process for site-specific dance, which is articulated by Hunter as "an awareness of 'presence' throughout the various stages of the creative process" (Hunter 2005, 380). The

awareness of ‘being in the moment’ in a constant series of ‘here and nows’ is particularly important when creating site-specific dance because of the inherent improvisational nature of the work. Choreographers, performers, and viewers of site-specific work have to constantly adapt to the unpredictable elements involved in site-specific dance environments such as weather, passersby, and public events.

Nigel Stewart applies yet another approach to the creative process when developing site-specific work that is discussed in his 2010 article “Dancing the Face of Place: Environmental Dance and Eco-Phenomenology.” In this article, Stewart explores the human body’s relationship to landscape and environment. Environmental dance is investigated as a way of deepening appreciation for the natural world, and generating new knowledge of the environment. Stewart uses eco-phenomenology to explore two improvisation exercises created by dance artist Jennifer Monson while working on her dance *Water Log*. This dance was developed as part of her landscape and environment research project created in collaboration with Stewart entitled *Re-enchantment and Reclamation*. Environmental dance is analyzed in order to understand how it can “disclose values of nature *within* nature itself by exploring human kinesthetic consciousness of non-human nature” (Stewart 2010, 33). Through personal experience in environmental dance, Stewart concludes that participation in environmental dance both increases one’s value of nature, and allows one to experience the way nature values humans. This article was valuable to my creative process due to the description and analysis it provides of two site-specific choreographic improvisation exercises created by Jennifer Monson.

Mary Elizabeth Anderson's 2014 book, *Meeting Places: Locating Desert Consciousness in Performance*, reflects on her participation in a site-specific creative process that included a series of art-laboratories facilitated by choreographer and dancer Tess de Quincey for her creation of *Dictionary of Atmospheres*. Between 1999-2005, De Quincey and a group of international artists conducted a series of art-laboratories in the desert near Alice Springs, Australia. These site-specific explorations culminated in a performance of *Dictionary of Atmospheres* in the 2005 Alice Desert Festival. Throughout her book, Anderson articulates her experience and participation in this site-specific creative process and performance. She describes the creative process in detail, and reflects on how the final performance at the Alice Desert Festival defined her experience of place. In describing the creative process, Anderson notes "mechanisms" that De Quincey provided the dancers for individual or group performances. Anderson recalls, "One such mechanism is called an "invitation", in which participants attempt to identify with a certain element in the ecological environment" (Anderson 2014, 15). She describes this mechanism as powerful from the perspective of the performers as they were instructed to intensely concentrate on an element while performing. Anderson notes how De Quincey instructed them to "empathize on a cellular level with the chosen element" (Anderson 2014, 15). The consideration of the elements into the creative process is an idea I have incorporated into the choreographic methodologies for my study. I am interested in the creative process De Quincey facilitated that attempted to "get participants to feel *in* and *of* a place" (Anderson 2014, 87). The exercises she developed for creating an intimate relationship and kinesthetic empathy with the environment have influenced the methods in my study.

Making Video Dance: A Step-by-Step Guide to Creating Dance for the Screen, by Katrina McPherson is a practical guide for the process of making screendance for choreographers, videographers, dancers, and students. It provides helpful tips to beginners in the field, as well as detailed information and aesthetic considerations for seasoned video dance practitioners. The book is well organized, and provides a clear linear structure for creating video dance works. Each section presents first hand information from McPherson's personal experiences making screendance, as well as information from interviews with leading professionals in the field. This book provided a structured for creating screendance works that was critical to the creation of the final screendance in my study. I utilized the structure provided by McPherson as a guiding framework for the organization of my project. In particular, I focused on her approach to "Developing the Work" as discussed in Chapter 3. Her suggestions about the use of improvisation on the shoot, and the simultaneous evolution of camera and movement choreography influenced the structure of my methods for this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

In order to experiment with my initial research ideas, I conducted a pilot study in the summer of 2013 before beginning my thesis study in the summer of 2014. It was helpful to complete a pilot study before beginning my thesis study because the pilot study allowed time to experiment with research ideas I was interested in pursuing. Many of the methods I used throughout the pilot study were refined and eventually utilized in the final study. However, some of the ideas I experimented with in the pilot I decided to exclude from the final study. The location, movement, and filming experimentation performed in the pilot, as well as my evaluation of the pilot, informed my development of the final study. In this chapter, I will describe the development and process for the pilot study, the evaluation of the pilot study, as well as the development and process for the final study.

The Pilot Study

I started to explore my choreographic research in a pilot study conducted over three consecutive days in September 2013 in the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area at Eel Creek. The pilot included myself as choreographer and dancer, videographer Robert Uehlin, and three additional dancers, Cecilia Berghäll, Nick Herman, and Rosie Yerke. My intention for the pilot was to work with structured improvisations to experiment with different sites, movement ideas, and dance/camera relationships. I was inspired by movement research exploring heightened sensitivity and awareness of place, trans temporal perception (events separated in time but occurring in the same place), and the emotional language or feeling of place. I wanted to explore human relationships to the

natural world, and ways in which humans are connected to the natural environment. The costumes for this study included nude undergarments, which were intended to enhance a visual similarity between the dancers' bodies and the sand.

Entering into the pilot study, I was already familiar with the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area at Eel Creek having camped there two times in the past. However, the place was completely new to the videographer and the rest of the dancers involved in the project. When we arrived at Eel Creek, the first day of the study was sunny and warm. To begin the pilot, I facilitated the dancers and myself in a series of structured improvisations intended to orient the dancers to place, and to develop a budding connection between the dancers and the place. I facilitated improvisations exploring heightening the senses individually and collectively, improvisations exploring place with childlike curiosity and wonder, and improvisations based on reacting to immediate impulses and desires. Based on the dancers' responses to these initial improvisations, I set group movement and choreography that we filmed the first evening. The movement we filmed included variations of jumping over dune crests and rolling down dune faces. We explored these ideas in both solo and group settings, filming all variations.

Our second day at Eel Creek was cloudy in the morning and rainy the rest of the day. This day began with my facilitation of improvisations focused on using the body to echo movement and patterns in the environment. We filmed group improvisations and choreography based on our observations of rolling layers in the environment perceived in rain clouds, ocean waves, and dune formations. We filmed solo and group improvisations based on our bodily reactions to the movement of the wind, water, and sand. Later in the

day, we explored improvisations based on the emotional language and feeling of place. We filmed these improvisations at several sites around the Eel Creek recreation area, while attempting to utilize sites with diverse geography.

The last day of the pilot was sunny and brisk. We spent this day exploring our human relationship to the natural environment and our connection to place. I facilitated discussions with the dancers based on their relationship to place, and how their relationship to place had changed over the course of our time at Eel Creek. We discussed moments they felt the most connected to place, and ways in which the structured improvisations had influenced their connection to place. Based on these discussions, I set group improvisational scores exploring human connection to place. We experimented using movement to unearth our bodies in the sand, leave traces in the sand, and re-earth our bodies into the sand. In addition, we explored the idea of trans temporal perception by filming movement events occurring in the same place but separated by time.

The editing for the pilot occurred October through December 2013. Robert and I jointly edited the film using Final Cut Pro X. Throughout the editing process, we experimented with a variety of different editing structures. We created several different versions of the film, but decided to focus our editing on a structure that provided a kaleidoscopic collage of our experiences at Eel Creek. Utilizing the footage from the pilot study, we created a 6.5minute screendance entitled *At Eel Creek*, which can be viewed through one of the supplemental files included with this thesis.

Evaluation of the Pilot Study

Overall, the pilot study was extremely helpful for clarifying and distilling my research ideas. It gave me the freedom to explore many different ideas, and it provided time to reflect on ideas that resonated with me as a dancer, choreographer, and film editor. The pilot gave me an opportunity to investigate the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area at Eel Creek, which I decided was a fitting place to conduct my research. Eel creek was well suited for my research due to the fact that it provided several sites with diverse geography connected by a two mile hiking trail. The varied landscape in this place included a vast expanse of sand dunes, patches of moss-coated forests, and a deserted stretch of rugged ocean shoreline. I was drawn to this place because of the diverse set of elements, textures, visual stimulation, and tactile sensations it provided. I was fascinated by the drastic changes in weather and climate that occurred in this place. And lastly, I was attracted to the remoteness and powerful energy I sensed in this place. Eel creek gave me the impression of being immersed in the natural world with total separation from the developed world.

The costumes I used in the pilot were an element of the project I decided to change for the final study. Costuming the dancers in nude undergarments proved challenging, because it was impossible to find nude colored clothing that matched the dancers' individual skin tone. In fact, I found the nude undergarments distracting when watching the footage from this shoot. In addition, these costumes were too cold for our second day filming in the rain. We ended up having to wear additional clothing in order to stay warm while dancing. Due to these costuming issues in the pilot, I decided to create more covered costumes for the final project. I designed these costumes using sand

tones of beige, copper, and gold. In order to avoid cold weather during filming sessions, I decided to schedule filming for the final project earlier in the summer when warmer weather was predicted.

The pilot study provided a wonderful platform for me to test structured improvisations in my creative process that experimented with different sites, movement ideas, and dance/camera relationships. Throughout the creative process I was able to sense what ideas resonated with me as a dancer and choreographer. Ultimately, the ideas I was most drawn to, as a dancer and choreographer, were those that explored heightened sensitivity and awareness of place. Facilitating and participating in improvisations that explored heightening the senses individually and collectively, allowed me to find a deeper connection to place. In addition to heightening my sensitivity to place, these improvisations also increased my awareness of place.

Participating in improvisations that heightened sensitivity and awareness of place, I began to notice the different elements that were the foundation of Eel Creek. Water, air, sand, and plant life, stood out as key elements that composed the place. I became intrigued by how to feel the movement of these elements through the movement of my body. I was interested in how movement of the elements influenced the movement of my body, and how movement of the elements could be reflected through the movement of my body. For example, when focusing my attention on the wind this element greatly influenced my movement. During one improvisation, I experimented with allowing the movement patterns of the wind to initiate my movement based on my skin sensory perception of this element. I discovered that the wind could both initiate my movement from the outside through skin sensory perception, or be reflected in my movement from

the inside through the internalization of its movement patterns. My engagement with the foundational elements of the place further enhanced my connection to the overall place.

As the pilot study developed, I became less interested in explorations into trans temporal perception (events separated in time but occurring in the same place). Early in the pilot I realized this was a complicated concept to explore in three days. I decided it was an idea I needed to dedicate an entire project to exploring its complexities. As the pilot continued, I also became less interested in exploring human relationship to the natural environment by capturing the dancers being unearthed from the sand, leaving traces in the sand, and being re-earthed into the sand. After setting up various time-lapse shots to explore this idea, burying the dancers in the sand and letting the wind uncover their bodies, I realized all of these shots were overly staged for my aesthetic. I was unable to find an organic and natural way to capture this idea. Therefore, I decided to postpone my research into trans temporal perception and the un-earthing or re-earthing of bodies in the sand for future choreographic explorations.

As a viewer and film editor, the pilot study provided an opportunity to reflect on my experiences at Eel Creek through my viewing of the footage. Having the opportunity to view footage after I returned home from the pilot, allowed time to evaluate and process the experiences I had on-site that were translated through the footage. As a viewer, I was drawn to the footage that conveyed our lived experiences of place. I was interested in the footage that allowed me to sense and feel the place through my kinesthetic empathy with the dancers. Examples this footage included close up shots of feet digging into wet sand, or dancers luxuriously rolling down soft sand slopes. This footage was significant

because of its affect as a conduit between place, dancer, and viewer, using movement as a medium to experience place.

Through the process of editing *At Eel Creek*, I was further able to reflect on my lived experience as a dancer and choreographer in the creative process. It was through this reflection that I discovered what was meaningful to me in the creative process, and furthermore, what I thought would be meaningful to include in our editing of a screendance. Beyond the importance of heightened sensitivity and awareness of place, I realized the importance of our explorations into the different feeling states of place. As a dancer, these explorations required me to listen to place on a deeper level and attempt to objectively tune into the feeling state of place. I was forced to listen to place on a deeper level during these improvisations because of the rapidly changing nature of the place. For example, there were a series of feeling state improvisations I performed on the beach at different times throughout the same day in which a shift in feeling state occurred. Throughout my improvisation in the morning, I sensed a feeling of anticipation, uncertainty, and unrest. When I performed the same feeling state improvisation at the same location on the beach that evening, I sensed a feeling of loneliness, isolation, and tranquility. Through my improvisations on-site, I became aware that the feeling state of place could change rapidly at any one site due to weather, time of day, or activity in place. Using improvisation to tune into the different feeling states of place allowed me to become more present and attentive in my dancing.

In the beginning of the editing process, Robert and I experimented with different structures for editing the screendance. We started by organizing the footage by site, grouping footage filmed at the same site together into distinct sections of the film. Using

this editing structure, we created a screendance that moved through each site at Eel Creek as a separate section of the film. After viewing the first draft of the screendance, we decided this method of editing was not conducive to our intent. We did not like the way this structure made each site appear as an entirely new place. It was hard to draw the connection between different sites when they were presented in categorized sections. In order to connect each site as part of a larger place, we experimented with creating a kaleidoscopic collage of our experiences from different sites. This editing structure worked much better for us because of the natural link it created between different sites with diverse geography around Eel Creek. It provided a more realistic view of our time at Eel Creek, reflecting the rapidly changing weather and feel of place that we experienced. Within this editing structure, we decided to collage our experiences filmed at different locations around Eel Creek exploring heightened sensitivity and awareness of place, trans temporal perception, and the emotional language or feeling of place. Overall, a kaleidoscopic editing structure conveyed a more realistic view of our lived experiences at Eel Creek, and conveyed our embodied feel of the overall place.

The Study

The study was conducted over the course of a month with two multi-day filming shoots September 2nd - 4th, 2014 and September 15th - 17th, 2014 in the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area at Eel Creek. Editing for the final screendance was conducted over a three-month period from September-November, 2014. The study consisted of myself as choreographer and dancer, videographer Robert Uehlin, and three additional dancers. After working with the group of dancers in the pilot, I had intended to work with

the same group in the final project. However, due to scheduling conflicts for two of the dancers, Cecilia Berghäll and Nick Herman, they were unable to participate in the final project. I therefore recruited two new dancers, Robin Ewing and Cecily Wechter, for the study.

My intention for the study was to use dance and film as mediums to create and convey a kinesthetic experience of place. I was interested in creating a kinesthetic experience of place by engaging the senses in a sensory experience of place, and exploring different feeling states of place. My intention for the editing of the final screendance was to convey a kinesthetic experience of place to viewers. The costumes for the study included tan tank tops and sheer sarongs. I designed the sarongs using beige, copper, and gold fabric, which was intended to create a visual similarity between our bodies and the surrounding environment. I wanted to design costumes using minimal clothing in order to increase the exposure of our skin to the environment.

The structure of the study can be viewed as an interwoven combination of three elements, each with distinct methodology. The three elements of the study include: (1) Choreographer and Dancers Explore a Kinesthetic Experience of Place, (2) Videographer Explores and Captures the Kinesthetic Experience of Place, and (3) Choreographer and Videographer use Post-Production Editing to Convey the Kinesthetic Experience of Place to Viewers. Although distinguishing between three elements in the study, all of the elements are overlapping and intertwined throughout time and intent.

Element (1) Choreographer and Dancers Use Movement to Explore a Kinesthetic Experience of Place

The first element of the study focused on using movement to explore a kinesthetic experience of place through improvisational exercises and set choreographic material based on concepts of arriving in place, engaging the senses in a sensory experience of place, and exploring the different feeling states of place. I decided to pre-plan the set of improvisational exercises we performed on the first day of our first shoot at Eel Creek. However, I did not pre-plan the events for the rest of the first shoot or for the second shoot. I decided to plan the events for the second and third day of the first shoot after I reflected on my experiences with the improvisations on the first day. I remained open to the development and direction of the process based on our lived experiences in the place. I wanted to allow the present moment and the place to influence my decisions about how to facilitate the creative process for the study. Although I set structures for facilitating the study that were decided before the first shoot, I did not enter the study with a set idea of how the final screendance would materialize. Instead, I entered the first shoot neutral in mind and body in order to allow the present moment and the place to determine the form of the final project. I was open to the development of the creative process and the manifestation of final screendance based on our lived experiences at Eel Creek.

I decided to plan the events for the second shoot after returning home from the first shoot and spending time editing the footage. The content of the second shoot was influenced by my experience watching and editing the footage from the first shoot. After viewing footage from the first shoot, Robert and I began to shape the final screendance. Therefore, we had a clearer idea of how we wanted to sculpt the final project during the

second shoot. Although I participated in the majority of the second shoot partial to an idea of how we wanted to form the final screendance, I still entered the second shoot neutral in mind and body in order to allow the present moment and the place to influence my experience. Throughout the second shoot, further ideas emerged that we included in the final screendance.

First Shoot

September 2nd - 4th, 2014

The weather remained constant for the entire first shoot. All three days at Eel Creek were sunny, windy, and brisk. When we began the study at Eel Creek, Robert, Rosie, and I were familiar with the place from our experiences there the previous summer for the pilot study. However, the place was entirely new to Robin and Cecily. The first set of improvisational exercises I facilitated began as soon as we arrived at Eel creek. In order to arrive in place, we began the creative process by utilizing Victoria Hunter's 2005 practice of phenomenological approaches geared towards revealing the true essence and spirit of site. Inspired by Victoria Hunter's approach to the creative process, I facilitated a phenomenological approach to entering the space that explored the '*genius loci*' or 'spirit of place' (Hunter 2005, 369). I decided to use this exercise in order to practice an awareness of 'being in the moment' in a constant series of 'here and nows', and practice a heightened awareness of 'being in place'. We began by positioning ourselves in stillness at various locations in the place in order to arrive and become present in place. After experiencing five sites in stillness, I facilitated the dancers in an improvisation that explored acting on immediate impulses and desires. Throughout this improvisation I cued

the dancers to approach the place with childlike curiosity, and to engage in an improvisation based on their moment-to-moment impulses and desires within the place.

In order to engage in a sensory experience of place, I facilitated an improvisation inspired by the work of site-specific artists Olive Bieringa and Otto Ramstad, as discussed in *Site Dance: Choreographers and the Lure of Alternative Spaces* by Melanie Kloetzel and Carolyn Pavlik in 2009. In this book, Bieringa and Ramstad are noted as artists who create work through their sensual and kinesthetic interactions with place. They experiment with what they perceive in a site through their physical and kinesthetic senses. The improvisation we explored experimented with focusing on each sense individually, and then focusing on all of our senses in combination to heighten awareness of our experience of place.

Two additional improvisation exercises I facilitated were inspired by the work of Jennifer Monson, as discussed by Nigel Stewart in his 2010 article, “Dancing the Face of Place: Environmental Dance and Eco-Phenomenology.” The first exercise created by Monson transforms a studio-based Authentic Movement exercise intended for two humans, and reinvents this exercise for a natural setting between a human and the surrounding environment. Nigel describes the studio-based Authentic Movement exercise that the improvisation is based on as follows,

One dancer witnesses another dancer (usually with closed eyes) moving freely to impulses that arise from within her or his body. The Witness observes not just the Mover but the Witness’ own feelings as they arise in response to how the Mover is moving. The roles are then reversed, and then usually notes are made and a discussion ensues. (Stewart 2010, 6)

Nigel further describes this Authentic Movement exercise reinvented for a human and the environment when he states, “instead of witnessing the dance of another human being,

the Witness witnesses the dance of the environment itself” (Stewart 2010, 6).

This exercise requires a human to act as a witness to the movements and feelings of place, and then reflect on what feelings arose in themselves during this process. At Eel Creek, we performed improvisations inspired by Monson’s Authentic Movement exercise reinvented for a human and the environment. We assumed roles both as witnesses to the environment, and then again as movers with the environment as our witness. I facilitated these improvisations for the entire group on our first shoot, and then directed each dancer to perform them individually in separate sites on our second shoot at Eel Creek. I facilitated discussions after each improvisation in order to reflect on the different feeling states of place we experienced.

The second improvisation we performed that was inspired by Jenifer Monson was a movement improvisation based on responding to environmental stimulus. In this exercise, I encouraged the dancers to notice how the movement of the environment affected the movement of their body, and how the movement of the environment could be reflected through the movement of their body. Throughout this improvisation, we experimented with how to tune into the natural movement of the environment in order to move *with* and *in* the environment as interconnected beings. This exercise was used to heighten our awareness of the environment, and to attune our movement to the natural movement of environmental elements.

All of the improvisation exercises described above were performed on the first day of our first shoot at Eel Creek. After completing each improvisational exercise, I lead group discussions based on individual kinesthetic experience of place. I participated in journaling at the end of each exercise to reflect on my kinesthetic experience of place,

and determine what elements of the improvisations heightened my awareness of place. Based on my reflections, I decided which improvisations to repeat with the dancers while experimenting with Robert on different filming techniques. I planned the events for the second and third day of the first shoot based on my reflections from facilitating and participating in these initial improvisational exercises.

On the second and third day of the first shoot, we repeated group improvisations from the first day based on sensory experiences of place and environmental stimuli, as well as filming set choreographic material. I created set choreography that was based on my sensory experiences of place, and my experiences of different feelings states of place. I created the choreography as a kaleidoscopic collection of sensory experiences and feeling states from various sites within Eel Creek. I taught this choreography to the dancers, and we filmed the choreography in solo and group unison shots. We filmed the choreography at different geographic locations around Eel Creek with the intention of cutting between footage from different sites through our post-production editing. We wanted to cut between different geographic sites around Eel Creek in order to connect these locations as interconnected parts of a larger place.

Second Shoot

Sep 15th - 17th, 2014

The weather for the second shoot was different everyday. It was cold, cloudy, and rainy the first day. It got warm, sunny, and calm the second day. Then it became mild, grey, and foggy the third day. As soon as we arrived at Eel Creek for the second shoot, I facilitated the dancers in an abbreviated version of the improvisations we performed at

the beginning of our first shoot. These improvisations were intended to give the dancers time to reconnect and re-familiarize themselves with the place. We began with Victoria Hunter's approach to practicing an awareness of 'being in the moment' and 'being in place'. We then explored sensory improvisations focusing on each sense individually, then in combination, in order to heighten our awareness of place. After completing these improvisations, I facilitated discussions with the dancers based on individual kinesthetic experience of place.

In addition to repeating improvisations from the first shoot, we performed a new improvisation based on exploring sensory experiences in the sand. Throughout this improvisation we explored our changing relationship to the sand, and various ways the sand could support or hinder our movement. After our first shoot at Eel Creek, I became aware of how much the sand affected our movement. The texture and consistency of the sand changed daily, thus affecting our day-to-day movement in the place and relationship to the environment. In order to capture our changing relationship to the sand, we filmed our sand improvisations and set choreographic material exploring these ideas at several locations around Eel Creek.

For the remainder of the first day, I facilitated the dancers in creating movement manipulations of a choreography motif that was developed in the first shoot. This motif became apparent to me through my viewing of the footage from the first shoot. The movement manipulation I asked the dancers to create required them to use the same circular spatial pathway and sand trace pattern from the motif, but translate these ideas into different parts of their body. Once each dancer had set a personal movement motif manipulation, we filmed each dancer performing their movement from various angles in

solo shoots. In addition to filming each dancer's motif manipulation, we also filmed each dancer performing the original motif, utilizing various camera angles, with the intention of cutting between motif footage in the beginning and ending sections of the final screendance.

On the second day, I wanted to focus on movement and filming that captured the different feeling states of place. I decided to structure improvisations based on this idea in a new way for the second shoot. Instead of solely asking the dancers to tune into the feeling state of place, I asked the dancers to reflect on how the feeling state of place affected their personal feeling state. I wanted to allow the dancers to explore a feeling state generated from the place, but personal to them. In order to capture their genuine reaction to feeling states of place, I allowed them to choose any site at Eel Creek to perform these improvisations. The dancers were first directed to roam Eel Creek and land at a site that interested them. Once they reached their chosen site, I gave them a set of improvisational exercises to perform by themselves. Using the information they gathered from these improvisations, I asked the dancers to choose what element and feeling state was most prominent for them. I then directed them to create a short movement phrase that reflected movement of their chosen element and feeling state. After they created their phrase in solidarity, I met each dancer at their site to assist with shaping and developing their movement composition. After working with each dancer, Robert filmed each dancer multiple times at their chosen site.

The third day of the second shoot was left unplanned in order to re-film any of our previous shots that were unsatisfactory. We spent this day re-filming many of the shots we experimented with throughout the first and second shoot. First, we re-visited shots

that explored our contrasting sensory experiences of the sand. We also re-filmed shots exploring our impulses and desires to take flight over the dune crests, and tumble down the dune faces. We spent time capturing extreme close-up shots of our bodies interacting with elements of the environment. Lastly, we filmed shots that we thought could be used as ending footage in the final screendance. This footage included wide shots of the environment with dancers embedded in the land in stillness. We experimented with this idea at several locations around Eel Creek.

Element (2) Videographer Explores and Captures a Kinesthetic Experience of Place

The second element of the project focused on using film to explore and capture a kinesthetic experience of place. I decided to include film as an element of the project and screendance as an element of my research, because of the rich medium it provides. I thought screendance was an appropriate form of expression for my research due to its potential to offer intimacy and kinesthetic empathy. Screendance allows viewers to enter an experience with a dancer on a close and intimate level. I wanted to use film as a medium to guide viewers through a kinesthetic experience of place and enhance this experience through the use of camera angles, framing, movement, and relationship to the dancers.

My intention for the project was to use film as a medium to experience place, as well as using film as a medium to capture the kinesthetic experience of place of the dancers. Therefore the camera was intended to interact solely with the environment, as well as in relationship with the dancers. Robert and I had discussions about how to use film to experience place, and also how to use film to capture the dancers' experience of

place. Every day we spent at Eel Creek, Robert and I took time to explore and plan shots of the environment without dancers present. We planned close shots capturing the textures of the environment, and wide shots capturing the expansiveness of the place. We discussed ways to enhance the movement of the environment through the choreography of the camera. We thought that environmental shots were crucial to include in the final screendance in order to depict a comprehensive experience of place. Robert offered many suggestions regarding the filming of the environment based on his camera expertise.

Robert participated in many of the movement improvisations described in Element (1) with the intention of exploring a kinesthetic experience of place through film, and capturing the dancers' kinesthetic experience of place on film. Robert participated in the discussions I had with the dancers at the end of each improvisation. His experience improvising with the camera and his feedback regarding the camera's perspective influenced my decisions regarding improvisations to repeat or set as choreography. Every time we repeated a movement improvisation, Robert revised the movement of the camera. Throughout all of our filmed improvisations, the development of the camera choreography was based off of a structure provided by Katrina McPherson in her 2006 book, *Making Video Dance*. In Chapter 3, "Developing the Work" McPherson discusses an approach to filming in which the choreography of the movement and the choreography of the camera evolve simultaneously through the utilization of improvisation. This approach values improvisation as a method for experimenting with ways the dancers and the camera can interact. It also allows for freedom and spontaneity to be part of the process. Utilizing this approach, Robert improvised with the camera

during our improvisations in order to use different angles, speeds, distances, and perspectives of the camera that captured a kinesthetic experience of place.

While filming set choreography in the project, Robert and I took time to plan the choreography of the camera in each shot. Robert attended all the dancer rehearsals on-site, watching the development of the movement and listening to the intention behind the movement material. Before filming set choreographic material, Robert and I would discuss the sensory experience or feeling state we wished to convey throughout every moment in the choreography. Robert would then rehearse his movement of the camera with the movement of the dancers, adjusting the camera's angle, distance, and perspective as needed. Robert filmed each shot multiple times fine-tuning the choreography of the camera with every take.

Element (3) Choreographer and Videographer Use Post-Production Editing to Convey a Kinesthetic Experience of Place to Viewers

The final element of the project included editing a screendance that conveyed a kinesthetic experience of place to viewers of the film. All post-production editing was conducted using the program Final Cut Pro X. Robert and I jointly edited the final screendance. We created a first draft of the project after the first shoot, and edited subsequent drafts of the project after completing the second shoot. The first draft was created September 4th - 15th, 2014. During this time period, I presented the first draft of the screendance to each of my committee members individually. The feedback I received from each committee member, as well as my experience watching and editing the footage from the first shoot, greatly influenced my planning for the second shoot.

The majority of our editing occurred after the final shoot when all of the footage was collected and we were able to reflect on the project as a whole. Our style and structure for editing the film was based off of a structure discussed by Katrina McPherson in Chapter 9, “Choreography of the Edit” in her 2006 book *Making Video Dance*. Final decisions regarding the timeline, transitions, flow, pace, effects, narrative, and sound, were determined after the final shoot. We waited until after the final shoot to make decisions regarding the choreography of the edit, as these decisions were informed by our kinesthetic experience of place. Overall, the choreography of the edit utilized the information gathered from our experience of place to devise an appropriate way to convey this experience to viewers.

Throughout the editing process, Robert and I experimented with a variety of different editing structures. We choose to edit the final screendance using an editing structure based on an energetic ride. The structure we created included two climaxes, a small climax part way through the film and a larger climax near the end of the film. Adhering to our set energetic ride, we storyboarded each section of the screendance. We organized sections of set choreography and improvisations based on where they fit best within our set editing structure. The editing within each section, determining cuts and time allotments for each shot, adhered to our set energetic ride and choreographic arch. In the final edit, we created a 12.5minute screendance entitled *ensō*, which can be viewed through one of the supplemental files included with this thesis.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION

Throughout this chapter, I will evaluate the final study. My participation in the pilot study and my evaluation of the pilot study, helped shape the development of the final study. My evaluation of the final study reflects on each element of the project, from the creative process at Eel Creek through the creation of the final screendance *ensō*, and has allowed me to gain deeper insight into my research. The evaluation of the study has resulted in key discoveries in my research as discussed in the conclusion of this document.

Evaluation of the Study

I was glad the study was extended into two filming shoots because of the extra time it provided the group at Eel Creek. Scheduling two shoots also allowed for more reflection time between shoots. If I repeated the project again, I would schedule even more filming shoots (ideally three or four) in order to explore my research ideas in greater depth, and allow for more time between shoots to reflect and edit the footage. Returning to Eel Creek for the study allowed me to connect deeper with the place, and repeated visits to Eel Creek enhanced my awareness of the diversity of the place. Every time we returned to Eel Creek it looked, smelled, felt, tasted, and sounded different. Although we repeated some of the initial improvisations we performed in the pilot study, the rapidly changing nature of the place allowed our investigations to feel new every time we revisited Eel Creek.

The costumes for the study were successful in creating a visual similarity between our bodies and the surrounding environment. The sand toned colors of the clothing connected us with the surrounding elements at Eel Creek, and were visually aesthetic in the footage. The dancers were visually connected to each other through identical tank tops, but retained individuality through different colored sarongs. As a dancer, I enjoyed the comfort and minimal feeling of the costumes, as well as the way they moved with the wind. I was glad the costumes left the majority of my skin exposed to the elements, as this provided me with more information during sensory improvisations. Engaging with the site through direct contact of my skin allowed me to sense and feel the place on an intimate level.

The dancers and videographer I worked with in the study were incredible. Initially, I was concerned about using two new dancers in the study because they did not receive the background knowledge of the pilot study. However, the new dancers in the study dove right into the movement research, and were invested from the first day we arrived at Eel Creek. Each member of the group was deeply engaged in the project and inspired me daily. They endured many uncomfortable weather conditions at Eel Creek, but returned each day with renewed energy.

Element (1) Choreographer and Dancers Use Movement to Explore a Kinesthetic

Experience of Place

I was satisfied with the method I used for planning the filming shoots. It was helpful to have the first day of improvisational exercises planned, but I was glad I did not plan the second and third day of the first shoot until after arriving at Eel Creek. Every

time we arrived at Eel Creek the weather conditions were unexpected. Because of the unpredictable nature of Eel Creek, it was important to allow the development of the process to be determined by our experiences in the place. I often made adjustments to the process due to weather, temperature, feedback from the dancers and videographer, and reflections of my personal experiences. The reflections of my experiences in the first shoot, as well as my experience watching and editing the footage between shoots, greatly influenced my planning of the second shoot. After spending three days at Eel Creek for the first shoot, I realized we needed to accomplish more in the second shoot in order to finish the project. Feeling this time constraint, I was forced to pre-plan most of the second shoot. Although I pre-planned most of the second shoot, I still left time available for adjustments and alterations as needed. My experience watching and editing the footage between shoots also influenced my approach to the second shoot.

Although I entered the first shoot neutral in mind and body to allow the present moment and the place to determine the form of the final project, in the second shoot I was more partial to the shape of the final project. After viewing footage from the first shoot, Robert and I began to create the final screendance and we had a clearer idea of how we wanted to sculpt the final project during the second shoot. Although I tried to enter the second shoot neutral in mind and body for our initial improvisations, I had a clearer vision of how the final project would develop during this shoot.

First Shoot

September 2nd - 4th, 2014

The first shoot at Eel Creek provided an opportunity to begin my choreographic

research for the study. It gave me a platform to dig deeper into the ideas I experimented with in the pilot study, and it allowed time for exploration into new choreographic research. The series of improvisational exercises I facilitated when we arrived for the first shoot were a good introduction to the project. These improvisations allowed the dancers to become reacquainted or newly acquainted with the place.

The first improvisation we performed in the study was inspired by Victoria Hunter's 2005 phenomenological approach to entering the space. This improvisation provided me with an opportunity to arrive in place and become present in the moment. By positioning ourselves in stillness in five locations in the place, I became further aware of the small details of the place. The longer I sat observing, the more details I noticed in the environment. After experiencing five sites in stillness, I enjoyed participating in the improvisation exploring my immediate impulses and desires. I was shocked by how quick my desire to jump over the dune crests and roll down the dune faces re-emerged. I noticed that this impulse was present in the other dancers' improvisations as well. After experiencing and observing this shared desire, I decided to set up solo and group shots to capture our shared impulses of jumping, rolling, and falling. Robert and I experimented with various filming techniques that enhanced the airborne nature of jumping, the high impact moments of falling, and the rapid nature of rolling down the dunes.

The improvisation we performed based on sensory experiences of place was informative to me as both a dancer and choreographer. The practice of focusing on each sense individually and then in combination, heighten my awareness of place. This improvisation allowed me to connect with the place on a sensual and intimate level. Following this improvisation, I facilitated a discussion with the dancers based on their

kinesthetic experience of place. We discussed moments in the improvisation that allowed us to connect deeper with the place. It was interesting for me to reflect on the varied responses from the dancers regarding what sense was most prominent for them in the place, and what sense was easiest to invest in through the improvisation.

For myself, I felt most connected to place through my sense of touch. Focusing on my sense of touch allowed me to immerse my body in the environment, and merge the boundary between my body and the sand. The sense I found most difficult to focus on through the improvisation was my sense of smell. The wind was blowing so hard throughout the entire improvisation it was hard for me to decipher individual smells. In my past experiences at Eel Creek, I have experienced a strong sense of smell. My sense of smell has been stimulated by the saltiness in the air, or the smell of wet sand after a rainstorm passing through. However, in this particular improvisation the violent wind stifled my sense of smell while overwhelming my sense of touch. Due to my overwhelming sense of touch throughout the improvisation, I decided to set up several shots of group improvisations exploring sense of touch at various sites around Eel Creek. We performed these improvisations in sites that were exposed to violent wind, in addition to experimenting with sites that were protected from the wind. Robert and I experimented with various filming techniques in each location based on the intensity of the wind in each site.

The final improvisations we performed, inspired by the work of Jennifer Monson as detailed in Nigel Stewart's 2010 article "Dancing the Face of Place: Environmental Dance and Eco-Phenomenology", were an excellent way for me to reconnect to the movement and feeling states of place. These improvisations focused my attention on the

present moment, and allowed me to connect the movement of my body with the movement of the environment. There were many times throughout this improvisation when I felt like I was dancing a duet *with* the environment, versus dancing a solo *on* the environment. For this set of improvisations, the volatile nature of the wind greatly influenced my experience. The movement of the wind was so strong and unruly during this improvisation that my movement tended towards an engagement with this element. I found myself drawn to using the wind as a movement initiator, supporter, or resistor. Tuning into these different relationships with the wind opened interesting avenues of movement. Robert and I set up several shots of group wind improvisations in order to capture these experiences with the wind. Robert began by improvising with the camera as we improvised movement, and with each subsequent shot he revised the movement of the camera in relation to the movement of the dancers. Robert played with using the wind to initiate, support, or resist the movement of the camera, as well as experimenting with different ways to relate the movement of the camera with the movement of the dancers.

After experimenting with improvisation on the first day, I decided to experiment with set choreographic material on the second day. I was interested in experimenting with improvisation and set choreographic material in order to compare these different approaches as a choreographer, dancer, and viewer. I was curious how the different approaches would affect my relationship to place, and how it would affect the group's relationship to place. The choreographic material I taught the dancers was based on a collage of sensory experiences and feelings states of place. The choreography reflected a kaleidoscope of my collected experiences at various sites around Eel Creek.

The way I taught the choreography to the dancers mirrored the way I created the

choreographic material. In addition to visual demonstrations, I used imagery, tactile feedback, sensory and feeling state cues, as primary methods for teaching the movement. I encouraged the dancers to internalize the movement through recollections of their lived experiences at Eel Creek. Although I was interested in using the choreographic material to find visual group unity, I was more interested in using the material to find a ‘felt’ or ‘lived’ group experience. I wanted the group to share in a kaleidoscopic experience of sensory experiences and feeling states in the same moment in time. I wanted the choreography to allow the group to participate in a shared kinesthetic experience of place.

After teaching the choreography to the dancers, I realized the movement provided a natural link between the varied sites within Eel Creek. It encompassed the sensory experiences and feeling states from different locations around Eel Creek with diverse geography. Movement inspired by a gust of wind on the dune crest was set side by side with movement exploring the smell of the ocean beach mist. Discovering that the choreography provided a movement connection between various sites at Eel Creek, Robert and I decided to film the choreography at sites with diverse geography. We filmed the choreographic material in group and solo shots, with the intention of cutting between footage from different sites through our post-production editing. We thought this approach to filming would draw a visual and cinematic connection between various sites around Eel Creek. We wanted to connect sites with diverse geography as interconnected parts of a larger place.

Overall, the choreographic material provided a stepping-stone in my process of creating a kinesthetic experience of place. As a dancer, the choreography gave me a movement connection between the various sensory experiences and feeling states around

Eel Creek. I enjoyed performing the choreography in various locations because each location informed the way I performed the movement. I learned something about my experience with the choreography by performing it in each new site. For example, when filming group choreography on the beach I was able to indulge in the movements based on the smell of salty mist and the rolling pattern of the waves. When filming on a dune crest I could access more loft in my movements that were inspired by gusts of wind. When we filmed in a flat sand area I became more aware of the trace pattern my movements left in the sand. The choreography allowed me to engage in a kinesthetic experience of place that was created from my lived experiences in place in real time.

As a choreographer, I thought the choreographic material provided a partial kinesthetic experience of place for the dancers. I sensed the dancers connection to place deepening with each filming of the choreography, however there were still moments in the choreography when they seemed disconnected. When I first taught the choreography to the dancers it seemed like they were able to connect with parts of the movement that were based on sensory experiences or feeling states they had personally experienced, but it was harder for them to internalize movements that included sensory experiences or feeling states they had not personally experienced. With each repetition of the choreography in various locations around Eel Creek, I noticed the dancers becoming further invested in the movement. Every time the dancers were able to connect movement in the choreography with a lived experience of place, I observed a deeper connection to place forming.

It was interesting for me as a dancer to note the difference in performing the choreography as a group, versus as an individual. Performing the choreography in a

group I was hyper aware of my shared experience of place. It was hard for me to internalize the movement when I was focusing on maintaining unison with the other dancers. Performing the choreography as a solo was much easier for me. In a solo setting, I was able to tune into the place in the present moment and internalized my experience with the movement. As a choreographer, I observed similar patterns in the other dancers. When we filmed the dancers in solo shots, I directed each dancer to perform the original choreography but allow the place and the present moment to influence the way they executed the movement. Allowing the dancers freedom to explore the choreography based on their individual experience of the place changed the way they performed the movement. When the dancers were given the opportunity to explore the choreography, their movement appeared more genuine and connected to place.

Reflecting on the first shoot as a whole, I was glad to have spent time working with both improvisation and set choreographic material. Working with improvisation was important in order to heighten the dancers' awareness of place, and enhance their presence in the moment. Improvisation allowed for self-discovery in the dancers' experience of place. On a practical level, improvisation was easier to implement on-site. Practicing improvisations and setting improvisational structures was time efficient while filming, whereas setting choreographic material during the shoot was more time intensive. It took more time than I expected for the dancers to learn the choreography and practice the movement as a unified group before filming set material. It was difficult and exhausting for the dancers to learn, practice, and perform the choreography all in the same day. If I could go back and reschedule the first shoot I would have spaced out the time the group spent learning, practicing and performing the set choreography over the

course of three days, rather than trying to fit it all into one day.

Second Shoot

Sep 15th - 17th, 2014

The second shoot at Eel Creek provided essential time for revisiting my research and deepening my investigation of a kinesthetic experience of place. This shoot allowed me to reinvestigate my ideas from the first shoot, and provided time for research into new areas of exploration. My thoughts on facilitating and participating in a kinesthetic experience of place were greatly influenced during this shoot. Although I felt more of a time constraint because of the pressure to finish the project by the end of the shoot, I still took time to work with both improvisation and set choreographic material.

I was glad that I facilitated a set of improvisation exercises as soon as we arrived at Eel Creek because these exercises allowed the group to reconnect with the place in the present moment. When we arrived for the second shoot it was a cold, cloudy, and rainy day. Eel Creek looked and felt much different than when we left it weeks before. Throughout our initial improvisations, I was intrigued by our improvisation exploring different sensory experiences of the sand. I was curious about how the sand could support or hinder my movement. There were moments when I felt complete indulgence in the sand, as well as moments when I felt unstable or frustrated by my lack of balance in the sand. I realized that when I released my weight into the sand, the sand was there to accept me and support me. However, when I tried to pull away from the sand or move quickly through the sand, I become unstable and unbalanced. During the first shoot I realized that dancing in the sand was a struggle for all the dancers, including myself. I had to release

preconceived notions about what I thought my movement should feel like in the sand, comparing this to what I thought the same movement would feel like on solid ground. It took time for my body to attune itself to the sand. Even after attuning my sense of balance and stability to the sandy environment, I still had moments of instability that caught me off guard.

The contrast I felt between moments in the sand when I was supported, versus moments in the sand when I was unstable, was an experience I wanted to capture on film. There was something about this contrast that resonated with me on a physical and emotional level. On a physical level, I had a different relationship to the sand depending on whether I released my weight into the sand, or whether I pulled back my weight back from the sand. When I released my weight into the sand, the sand supported my body. However, when I pulled my weight away from the sand, my body became unstable. On an emotional level, my relationship to the sand was affected by my attitude towards the sand. When I surrendered myself into the sand, the sand was there to comfort and support me. Whereas when I tried to dance on the sand, the sand hindered my movement. It was important for me to dance with a constant consideration of the sand in order to find stability in the environment.

Robert and I discussed different filming approaches we wanted to experiment with in order to capture these contrasting experiences with the sand. We experimented with both wide shots and close shots, still camera and moving camera techniques in order to convey these experiences on film. These physical and emotional experiences in the sand proved difficult to capture on film, and this was an idea we returned to on the third day of the second shoot to explore further.

The rest of the first day of the second shoot was spent creating and filming movement manipulations of a choreography motif. After watching the footage from the first shoot, I keep noticing the power of a circular movement we performed on the sand at the end of our set group choreography. This circular movement became a central theme in our editing of the first draft of the screendance, and it was a motif I wanted to return to in the second shoot. In order to develop this motif, I facilitated the dancers in creating individual movement manipulations of the motif. I asked them to use the same circular pathway of the body and trace pattern in the sand, but translate these idea into different parts of their body. This was a great exercise with the dancers. It was a nice way to get them more involved in the creation of the movement, and allowed for individual variation on a central theme. The footage we got from these motif variations was incorporated in the final screendance. We decided to film each motif variation in solo shots in the same location, which made it easy for us to cut between footage of different dancers performing motif manipulations in the final screendance. This footage added a layer of choreographic development to the piece using movement motif manipulations.

On the second day, I decided to revisit investigations from the first shoot exploring feeling states of place. In the first shoot, I facilitated improvisations for the dancers based on tuning into the feeling state of place at a particular moment in time. I asked the dancers to reflect on the feeling of the place in the most objective manner possible. In this investigation, I wanted them to tune into how the place felt without letting their subjective feelings bias their exploration. I asked them to attune their body, feelings, and movement to the feeling state of the place. However, in the second shoot I wanted to approach this exploration in a new way. In this shoot, I asked the dancers to

first tune into the feeling state of the place, and then asked them to reflect on how the feeling state of the place affected their personal feeling state. Using movement improvisation, they were asked to reflect on the influence the feeling state of place had on their personal feelings.

I decided to approach this idea in a new way in the second shoot because I wanted to make the feeling state movement improvisations more personal to the dancers. I wanted the dancers to explore a feeling state generated from the place, but individual to their body. The new structure for this improvisation was successful. It allowed the dancers to become further invested in their feeling state improvisation and creation of movement. I was glad I let the dancers choose a site at Eel Creek to perform these improvisations because their choice in site reflected their individuality. Each dancer appeared to be in their element at their chosen site. It was helpful to have the dancers perform the initial feeling state improvisations alone at their site before experiencing the site with other people. All the dancers commented on how this experience allowed them to connect deeper with the place, and explore movement in the site without any inhibitions. The movement material that was developed from these improvisations felt genuine and honest. As a viewer, this movement had deeper resonance because of the high level of commitment I observed in the dancers as they performed their movement. Observing the dancers feel the movement on a deeper level, allowed me as an observer to empathetically feel the movement on a deeper level.

As a dancer, I preferred the new structure to the feeling state improvisations that we explored in the second shoot. I found it difficult in the first shoot to tune into the feeling state of place without allowing my personal feeling state to affect this exploration.

The place had such a strong affect on my feeling state it was hard to ignore my personal feelings when trying to tune into the feeling state of place. However, in the second shoot it felt more natural for me to tune into the feeling state of place, and then reflect on how that transformed my personal feeling state. This improvisation required two levels of exploration. The first level of exploration required me to be neutral, open, and receptive in order to tune into the feeling state of place. I had to attune my body to the feel and movement of the environment, without being overly passive or directive. The second level of exploration required me to engage myself from a place of receptivity. This necessitated both a listening to the place and myself, and then a reaction to my discoveries.

The structure of the feeling state improvisation in the second shoot felt more honest than it had in the first shoot. In the second shoot I was able to express my subjective feelings in more depth, whereas in the first shoot I was only able to express objective feelings of a place. The filming techniques Robert and I implemented for these improvisations were revised in the second shoot. Robert and I spent time with each dancer in the second shoot before filming their feeling state movement. It was important for us to understand each dancer's reasoning for choosing their specific site, as well as how they arrived at their embodied feeling state. After discussing filming techniques to use with each dancer, Robert filmed the dancers alone in their chosen site.

As a dancer, I enjoyed filming by myself at my chosen site. Filming without an audience changed my performance of the movement. I felt more comfortable taking risks and indulging in the movement when I did not have an audience watching the filming. When Robert filmed me alone, I felt like I was sharing in an experience with the camera,

versus feeling like I was performing for the camera. As a choreographer, I noted similar reactions in the other dancers. All the other dancers voiced their appreciation of being able to work and film by themselves in their chosen site. They noted the difference in spending time by themselves in their chosen site and how this experience allowed them to connect to the site on a deeper level.

The third day of the second shoot was spent re-filming footage that was unsatisfactory. I was glad to have left this day open for finishing up the last shots we needed for the final screendance. It was nice to have time to re-visit shots exploring contrasting sensory experiences of the sand, extreme close-ups of the body, jumping and rolling, as well as ending shots for the final project. Overall, the second shoot provided time to further investigate ideas from the first shoot, and allowed more individual exploration into improvisations and movement creations. I was glad to have dedicated time for each dancer's personal investigation into the research ideas. It was nice to see their individuality shine through in the improvisations and movement material generated in the second shoot. As a choreographer and dancer, I felt more successful in facilitating and participating in a kinesthetic experience of place throughout the second shoot.

Element (2) Videographer Explores and Captures a Kinesthetic Experience of Place

Using film to capture a kinesthetic experience of place proved to be a difficult and complicated endeavor. Robert and I experimented with various camera angles, framing, movement, and relationship to the dancers throughout the entire project, in order to investigate using film to explore and capture a kinesthetic experience of place. This investigation of the camera was approached in two ways. Robert was both trying to

explore a kinesthetic experience of place using film, and also capture the kinesthetic experience of place of the dancers on film.

Robert's exploration into using film as a medium to experience place was partially explored throughout this project. Although there were sessions during both shoots when Robert and I dedicated time to exploring the environment using film, these times were limited. Overall, I wish we had dedicated more time and further investigations into exploring a kinesthetic experience of place using film. We enjoyed all the footage Robert took of the environment, and ended up using most of this footage in our final screendance. After viewing and editing this footage, we realized how valuable the footage of the environment was to the project. It became important to us to create an environment in the film that was representative of the environment we experienced at Eel Creek. In retrospect, I wish we had dedicated more time to capturing the environment in each site at different times throughout the day. I think we could have pushed our explorations of different filming techniques of the environment even further. I am curious what it would have been like to experiment with a camera lens that could go underwater or be buried in the sand. I wonder what kind of footage we could have taken if the camera was able to dig deeper into the environment. If we had spent more time at Eel Creek, I would have liked to dedicate more time to exploring extreme close-ups and extreme wide shots of the environment.

Regarding Robert's filming of the dancers, I think we made progress in capturing a kinesthetic experience of place on film throughout the duration of the project. We were the most successful with this approach when we designated a set intention for the dancers and the camera in a given shot. This was hard during some of our initial improvisations,

but became clearer each time we repeated an improvisation and revised the movement of the dancers and the camera. Clarifying the intent of the dancers and the camera during the filming of improvisations was helpful for capturing a kinesthetic experience of place on film. When Robert understood moments in the improvisation that were powerful for the dancers, he had a clearer idea about what to capture on film.

In our filming of set choreographic material, I found it essential to understand the intent of each moment in the choreography in order to plan the filming of the movement. It was helpful to have Robert attend our initial movement rehearsals, because his knowledge of the development and intent of the movement was crucial to the way he planned his filming. During our movement rehearsal, Robert rehearsed his movement of the camera side by side with the dancers. It became important for him to feel the choreography in his own body, in order to accurately capture this movement on film. Moments of the choreography that resonate with me in the footage, are moments when I sense the camera attuned to the movement and feeling of the dancers. The discussions Robert and I had about the feeling of each moment in the choreography, greatly influenced the way he filmed the movement. It was through clarity of intent and purpose, that we were able to attune the movement and feeling of the dancers with the camera.

Our approach to filming solo choreography inspired by feeling states of place was similar to our approach to filming set group choreography. Robert and I spent time working with each dancer before filming, in order to understand the feeling and intent of their movement. I asked each dancer to specify the feeling state they were focusing on, the reason they were drawn to their chosen site, and the element that was most apparent to them in their site. We used this information to devise an appropriate way to film each

dancer. I relied on Robert's filming expertise in these situations to make final decisions regarding individual filming techniques for each dancer. Overall, the filming of these solos was successful. It was helpful to spend extra time planning the filming of these solos because this allowed the intent of the movement to be conveyed clearer in the footage. The footage we got of solo choreography exploring the feeling state of place was successful in conveying individual kinesthetic experience of place.

In addition to the footage of solo choreography exploring feeling states of place, the other footage that was successful in conveying a kinesthetic experience of place were the extreme close-up shots that captured our bodies interacting with the environment. These moments in the footage utilized the potential of film to enhance intimacy, and create kinesthetic empathy. As a viewer, the extreme close-up shots that captured our bodies interacting with the environment allowed me to enter an experience with the dancers that would not be possible in a proscenium setting. These shots allowed me to see the fine details of the body against the environment. There is one shot in particular that stands out to me which is an extreme close-up shot of a foot digging into the sand. This shot is rich with texture, contrasting grainy sand with human flesh. It focuses my attention to the interaction between skin and sand. It allows me to see extreme detail, and feel the movement of the foot. I appreciate the intensity of this shot and the way it directs attention to every bone, muscle, and tendon required to dig into the sand. This shot is successful in highlighting a micro aspect within a vast environment.

Overall, I appreciated the mix of improvisation and set choreography that Robert and I experimented with throughout the project. Although I preferred setting a clear intention for the camera, some of Robert's initial improvisations with the camera were

helpful in discovering new ways to film and relate with the dancers. I appreciated the freedom and experimentation that accompanied the improvisation of the camera. As a viewer, I preferred the footage we captured that had set choreography of the camera. These shots allowed me to experience a greater kinesthetic empathy with the dancers. In the end, I think setting a clear intent for the camera captured a more accurate kinesthetic experience of place of the dancers.

Element (3) Choreographer and Videographer Use Post-Production Editing to Convey a Kinesthetic Experience of Place to Viewers

The process of viewing the footage from the study and editing a screendance that conveyed a kinesthetic experience of place, allowed me to reflect on the project from a new perspective. Robert and I jointly edited a first draft of the project after the first shoot, and edited subsequent drafts of the project after completing the second shoot. I presented the first draft of the screendance to all of my committee members individually, which provided a means of outside feedback during my process. The feedback I received from each committee member, as well as my experience watching and editing the footage from the first shoot, greatly influenced my planning for the second shoot. Many of my thoughts about the project shifted after reflecting on my research from the perspective of the viewer.

When I saw the footage from the first shoot, one of the first observations I had was the striking visual similarity between all the dancers. I did not cast the group based on a particular look, but it became apparent in the footage that all the dancers appeared similar to one another. We all shared similar hair color, skin tone, and body physique.

After noticing our similarities on film, Robert and I decided to use these similarities to our advantage in our editing. A few sections in the final screendance include jump cuts between solos of different dancers performing the same choreography. The way we cut between each dancer emphasizes the similarities amongst the group. We decided to cut between different dancers within these sections in order to connect our individual experiences as a shared human experience of place.

Our edit of the first draft included sections of set choreographic material and sensory-based improvisations. Watching the footage of the set choreographic material, I noticed a circular movement pattern that we performed on the sand that became a movement motif in the first draft. This circular movement was visually representative of the dancers' anchoring into a shifting and windy place. The movement was difficult to perform when we were at Eel Creek due to the violent strength of the wind, but it was a movement that required a physical settling of the weight and mental calming of the mind in order to complete. The act of attaining tranquility in the midst of violent conditions was something I experienced as a dancer at Eel Creek. This experience was also apparent to me as a viewer of the footage. After highlighting the circular motif in the beginning of our first draft, it was an aspect of the project I decided to investigate further in the second shoot. In our final edit of the screendance this motif was utilized for the beginning and ending sections of the film.

Viewing the footage of our improvisations, there was a limited amount of improvisation footage we were able to include in the first draft. Most of the footage from the improvisations was hard to connect with as a viewer. The dancers in the footage appeared to be in their own world, the camera in another, and as a viewer I felt excluded

from these experiences. However, there was some footage from our repeated sensory-based improvisations that I found intriguing as a viewer. This was footage in which Robert and I had specifically clarified the intent of the dancers and the camera.

Discovering that this was the only footage from the improvisations I enjoyed as a viewer, Robert and I revised and clarified all of our filming of improvisations in the second shoot.

After presenting the first draft of the screendance to my committee members, I received feedback that I implemented into my planning and facilitation of the second shoot. Feedback from the first draft was also implemented into our editing of subsequent drafts of the film. Some of the comments I received on the first draft were focused on enhancing the contrast in sensory experiences of place. This feedback greatly influenced my facilitation and Robert's filming of the improvisations in the second shoot. I realized that throughout all of the sensory-based improvisations, I was experiencing a range of contrasting sensations between my body and the sand. In order to capture and convey these contrasting experiences in the final screendance, Robert and I decided to create a section of quick jump cuts between contrasting sensory experiences. We edited footage of low impact indulgent steps side by side with footage of high impact harsh steps in order to enhance the contrast between these different sensory experiences in the sand.

After viewing the footage from the first shoot, I realized the importance of extreme close-up shots that conveyed the feeling of the dancers' bodies interacting with the environment. Our footage from the first shoot did not include many extreme close-up shots, but I decided to dedicate time filming in the second shoot to capture more extreme close-ups. These extreme close-up shots allowed me as a viewer to feel the movement of the dancers on a deeper level. They enhanced intimacy and kinesthetic empathy with the

dancers. My committee also emphasized the importance of these shots, and encouraged me to capture more extreme close-ups in the second shoot using different parts of the body interacting with the environment.

Footage of our improvisations based on feeling states of place was hard to connect with as a viewer. Watching this footage I was unable to sense the dancers' feeling or experience of place. I believe part of this disconnect as a viewer stemmed from the dancers' experience in the improvisation. This exercise was challenging for myself and the other dancers in the first shoot. It was hard to solely tune into the feeling state of place without allowing my personal feeling state influence this experience. I was glad that I altered this improvisation for the second shoot to allow for exploration into the way feeling state of place affected ones personal feeling state. The footage we got from the feeling state improvisations and solo choreography in the second shoot was much easier to relate with as an outside viewer. The movement that was generated from the feeling state improvisations in the second shoot felt more genuine for the dancers, and this honesty in the movement was tangible through the footage. As a viewer, I realized that it was easier relate and empathize with honest feelings and movements of the dancers.

The majority of our editing occurred after the final shoot when all of the footage was collected and we are able to reflect on the project as a whole. I was glad that we based our editing structure for the film on ideas discussed by Katrina McPherson in Chapter 9, "Choreography of the Edit" in her 2006 book *Making Video Dance*. This chapter provided an initial structure for us to get started. It was important to wait to make final decisions regarding the timeline, transitions, flow, pace, effects, narrative, and sound, until after the final shoot. These decisions were informed by our lived kinesthetic

experience of place. We had to allow our editing structure to shift and mold according to the information gathered from our lived experiences of the place. It was difficult to devise an appropriate way to convey this experience to viewers.

The most difficult aspect of editing the screendance was figuring out how to combine the footage from the first and second shoot. After visiting Eel Creek for the first shoot, I realized that our kinesthetic experience in the place was going to be different when we returned for the second shoot. Depending on the weather and conditions my experience was different every time I returned to Eel Creek. After editing the footage from the first shoot, I was unsure if I wanted to plan the second shoot to capture footage that would fit into a screendance conveying our kinesthetic experience from the first shoot, or if I wanted to go in fresh to the second shoot and capture a new kinesthetic experience of place. Due to the time constraint for the project, I decided to combine these two options. If I had planned three or four shoots for the project, it would have been nice to go back fresh to Eel Creek for each shoot and see how all the footage came together in the end. However, because we only had two shoots to capture footage, I decided to organize part of the trip capturing footage that would fit into the first draft we had working, and then spend the rest of the shoot experimenting with our lived kinesthetic experience of place in the second shoot.

It was important for Robert and I to experiment with a variety of different structures throughout the editing process. Each structure conveyed a slightly different experience of place. We played with using different sites or improvisations as categorical sections of the film. However, this did not convey the experience we wanted since each site changed rapidly throughout our time at Eel Creek, and when we separated sites they

did not feel connected as parts of an overall place. In the end, we choose to edit the final screendance using an editing structure based on an energetic ride. The structure we created included two climaxes, a small climax part way through the film and a larger climax near the end of the film. We then organized sections of set choreography and improvisations based on where they fit best within our set editing structure. The sound score we created for the film was also based on our set energetic ride. We edited the music to support the energetic ride of the visuals. Overall, I was satisfied with the editing structure we created and I think the sound score we edited enhanced the energetic ride of the film. In the end, we created a 12.5minute screendance entitled *ensō*, which can be viewed through the attached link <https://vimeo.com/115768334> (Morrison and Uehlin 2014) or through the supplemental file included with this thesis.

Final Showing

My thesis research was presented in a public showing *Ensō: A Kinesthetic Place* in the Dance Department at the University of Oregon on February 20th, 2015 (See Appendix A). This showing included a screening of my pilot study *At Eel Creek*, and my thesis study *ensō*, followed by a question and answer session with the audience (See Appendix B). The question and answer session was facilitated by my advisor Steven Chatfield, and followed a Liz Lerman critical response structure for discussion. Steven facilitated a conversation between the audience and myself, along with the videographer and dancers. The discussion followed the first four steps in the Liz Lerman critical response process, Step One: Statements of Meaning, Step Two: Artist Asks Questions, Step Three: Responders Ask Neutral Questions, and Step Four: Permissioned Opinions.

My thesis showing was informative to me on many levels. Firstly, it allowed me to experience my research in a new context. In the showing, I projected my screendance works as a large image against a cyc with the audience seated in close proximity to the screen. I decided to place the audience close to the screen in order to emphasize an intimate relationship to the image. The showing included a full sound system in a theatre style setting, which allowed for an immersive audio and visual experience for the audience. Viewing my pilot study and thesis study in this theatre setting provided me with a new perspective on my work. The intensity of the image and sound in this setting allowed me to enter the work as a viewer, and sense the work on a deeper level. Watching the screendances in a theatre setting provided a powerful and large-scale experience of the work. Observing the environment as a large image put my body in perspective with the place, which was reflective of the large-scale perspective of place I experienced at Eel Creek. The theatre setting for the showing was conducive to my intent with the film, which was to convey a kinesthetic experience of place to viewers.

The question and answer session that followed the screenings provided me with helpful feedback from the audience. I was particularly interested in audience feedback that expressed meaningful sensory experiences or feelings people had while watching sections of the screendances. I was interested in comments from the audience regarding moments when they shared empathetically with the dancers' sensory experiences or feeling states. In general, the feedback I received from the audience regarding moments in the screendances when they were able to relate empathetically with the dancers, reflected moments in the works when the camera had an intimate relationship to the dancers. For example, a few audience members commented on a shot in *ensō* when the

camera is closely following the cracked heels of a dancer sliding his feet along the lichen and moss-covered ground. The camera is in extremely close proximity to the dancer for this shot, and moves with the dancer's heels while picking up the scratchy audio of dry skin rubbing across lichen.

Another shot that caught the attention of the audience was a section in *At Eel Creek* when the camera is zoomed in on a wet sandy hand lying against the beach. The camera remains zoomed in for this shot as it captures the movement of four arms rotating side by side next to the water line. Within this shot details on the dancers' arms, such as the rising of goosebumps and the intensity of the hair standing on end, are enhanced due to the intimate relationship of the camera and the dancers. Both of these shots were mentioned in the feedback session as moments when the audience could relate empathetically with the dancers' sensory experiences and feelings.

In addition to shots where the camera has an intimate relationship to the dancers, the audience also responded to shots in the screendances when the movement of the camera allowed them to feel the movement of the dancers. For example, there were many positive comments about the shots in *ensō* when the dancers start running and flying over the crest of the dunes. In these shots the videographer runs next to the dancers with the camera, enhancing the fast and unstable nature of this movement. As the dancers fly over the edge the videographer catches the shot from underneath the dancers, enhancing the airtime of their jump, and then lets the camera fall to the sand as the dancers land and roll down the dune face. The impact of the dancers' landing is felt through the simultaneous fall and crash of the camera frame hitting the sand.

Another section of the film that received positive feedback from the audience

regarding the movement of the camera was the section of group unison choreography in *ensō*. People noted the dancing of the camera during this section, and commented on how the movement of the camera allowed them to feel the movement of the dancers. Overall, the shots that were noted in the feedback session for having movement of the camera that enhanced movement of the dancers were shots in which Robert performed or internalized the movement of the dancers. The more Robert understood the intent behind the movement of the dancers and felt the choreography in his own body, the more accurate he was in capturing the experience of the dancers on film. Sections of the screendances that were rehearsed and filmed with a clear intention behind the filming of the dancers' movement were sections that allowed the audience to internalize the movement and feelings of the dancers.

The discussion at the showing also raised interesting questions regarding the choices Robert and I made for editing the two screendances. I was struck by a section of the discussion when members of the audience were wondering why the dancers' faces were not featured in either screendance. Although there are select shots in the screendances that include the dancers' faces, the majority of the shots in these works feature dancers with their eyes closed or hair obscuring their face. I was surprised by the frustration this caused some of the audience members to feel when they could not see the dancers' faces.

I was also interested in comments I received from the audience regarding the time of each shot and the number of cuts in each section. It was helpful to hear that certain audience members were distracted and taken out of their viewing experience when there were fast cuts between shots that did not allow time to process the sensory experience or

feeling of the shot. This was an important piece of feedback for me in the discussion, and it allowed me to reflect on the technicalities of editing screendances. For example, I received feedback on a section in *ensō* where there is a series of fast editing cuts that jump between shots in diverse geographic locations. In this section there are cuts that move back and forth between shots on the sand dunes, in the forest, and on the beach. A few people commented on how this series of fast cuts was numbing to them, and that they were not able to sense or feel anything in this section because of the overwhelmingly quick changing of images and sounds between cuts. After hearing this feedback I realized the powerful effect of the visual rhythm of cuts, and how the visual rhythm of cuts can overwhelm the experience of a screendance if overused. It made me consider how my editing choices affect a viewer's experience of a screendance, and how the technicalities of editing in a screendance need to correspond with the intent of the work. After receiving this feedback, I realized the necessity of using shots for this section that were long enough to convey sensory experiences or feelings to viewers.

After reflecting on the responses from the feedback session, I have a clearer idea of what movement, filming, and editing techniques were successful or unsuccessful in conveying a kinesthetic experience of place. Although it was helpful for me to reflect on my experiences as a viewer throughout my project, I was inherently biased in the way I looked at my work. I tried to be objective when viewing drafts of my project, but I knew that my view of the work was always influenced by my experiences in the place and my knowledge of the editing of the film. Throughout the showing, I enjoyed receiving feedback from viewers who did not know anything about my project and were not familiar with the place where it was filmed. The feedback session in the showing was

helpful for me as a means to reflect on my intent to create and convey a kinesthetic experience of place. It provided feedback about my project and process that I will be able to apply to similar research in the future.

Overall, I feel that I was successful in conveying a kinesthetic experience of place to viewers of the film. Audience members noted many sections of the screendances in which they had meaningful sensory experiences or feelings while watching the work, and sections in which they shared empathetically with the dancers' sensory experiences or feeling states. The majority of the audience responses to sensory experiences or feelings states they experienced at specific moments in the screendances corresponded to the sensory experiences or feelings states that were intended to be conveyed in those specific moments. However, there were some responses from the audience that expressed meaningful sensory experiences or feelings they experienced at specific moments in the screendances that did not correspond to the sensory experiences or feelings states that were intended to be conveyed in those specific moments. It was these comments that made me reconsider my original intention of conveying a kinesthetic experience of place. Initially, I intended to convey the kinesthetic experience of place of the dancers to viewers of the work. I wanted the audience to sense and feel the same experiences as the dancers. However, after participating in the creative process for this project I realized how unique and individual kinesthetic experience of place was for each dancer. Therefore, I was not surprised to discover that some of the audience members expressed sensory experiences and feeling states that were individual to them after viewing the screendances. Although I was not successful in conveying the kinesthetic experience of place of the dancers to every viewer of *ensō*, I think I was successful in conveying an

individual kinesthetic experience of place to viewers of *ensō* at my thesis showing.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

My reflection and evaluation of the study raised important questions in my research. A few of these questions were related to my creation of a kinesthetic experience of place. I questioned the explorations I used to facilitate and participate in a kinesthetic experience of place, and how I wanted to use these elements in both shoots. I questioned my lived kinesthetic experience of place, and how this experience could be both individual and shared between members in the group. I questioned how to explore place from an objective versus subjective perspective. My evaluation also raised questions related to my conveyance of a kinesthetic experience. I questioned how to convey kinesthetic experiences from two different time periods in the same film. I questioned how to convey the individual and shared kinesthetic experiences of four dancers and one videographer in the same film. Through my Self-Reflection, Critical Evaluation, Further Research, and Final Thoughts, I have come to conclusions regarding the questions raised in my evaluation.

Self-Reflection

My intention in this project was to use dance and film as mediums to create and convey a kinesthetic experience of place. I aimed to create a kinesthetic experience of place by engaging the senses in a sensory experience of place, and exploring the different feeling states of place. I feel that I achieved my artistic goals in facilitating and participating in a kinesthetic experience of place. Through explorations of sensory experiences of place and feeling states of place, I felt a deeper connection to place. It was

through these explorations that I discovered a third component essential to my exploration into a kinesthetic experience of place. This component included an exploration into my spiritual connection to place. Exploring my spiritual connection to place included tuning into an awareness of my position in place, space, and time on a larger scale. Becoming aware of the scale of my body in relation to the rest of the place, the earth, and the entire universe. Tuning into my awareness of the time I spent in place, and how this scaled into the entire timeline of the place. Exploring my spiritual connection also included an awareness of my innate human connection to the place. Noticing the similarities and differences between myself as human, in contrast with the natural environment and other living species in the place. Becoming aware of my deep connection and grounded sensibility in place.

In order to convey a kinesthetic experience of place, I intended to create a screendance that communicated a kinesthetic experience of place to viewers. My pursuit to convey a kinesthetic experience of place on film was more challenging than I had anticipated. Initially, I intended to convey a kinesthetic experience of place that was universal to all viewers of the film. I thought I would be able to convey a kinesthetic experience of place that encompassed all of the dancers' individual experiences of place, and assemble them into a universal experience of place for viewers. After experimenting with various editing structures, I found that I was able to include elements of each dancer's kinesthetic experience of place, but primarily I had to rely on my lived individual kinesthetic experiences of place. I was more successful in conveying my individual experiences of place, rather than trying to portray other people's kinesthetic experience of place. Initially I thought all the dancers would have similar experiences of

place, but after spending time at Eel Creek I found that each dancer had a unique kinesthetic experience of place. Therefore, when I was editing a film that conveyed a kinesthetic experience of place I had to rely primarily on my personal experiences. My kinesthetic sensory experiences of place, my internal experiences of the feeling states of place, and my spiritual experiences of place were the lived experiences I tried to convey through the editing of the final screendance. Overall, I believe I was successful in conveying my kinesthetic experience of place through the final screendance *ensō*.

Critical Evaluation

If I repeated this project again in the future, there are several aspects of the research and methodologies I would revise. Firstly, I would plan for at least four multi-day shoots spread over multiple months. While participating in this project, I realized the importance of long time periods on-site in order to create a deep connection to place. I think it would have been better to schedule more shoots, each for a longer period of time, to allow the group more time to experience the place in each shoot. Filming the study in only two shoots was a challenge. In the first shoot we were able to experiment throughout the creative process and dig into the research ideas, but in the second shoot I felt rushed to capture the footage we needed to finish the screendance. If I had scheduled additional filming shoots, I think we could have focused more time on the process rather than spending the second shoot trying to capture the rest of the footage we needed to complete the project. Additionally, the rushed energy I had in the second shoot was not conducive to my practice of listening and becoming present in place.

Another aspect of the project I would reconsider for future research was the way I considered individual kinesthetic experience of place, versus group kinesthetic experience of place. Throughout the project I became acutely aware of my individual versus shared kinesthetic experience of place. Initially, I thought all members in the group would encounter a similar kinesthetic experience of place, and that it would be easy to participate in a shared kinesthetic experience of place. However after completing the project, I found that each dancer's kinesthetic experience of place was unique. In fact, some of the most challenging moments in the creative process were when the entire group tried to participate in a shared kinesthetic experience of place simultaneously. I had better success as a facilitator and a dancer when I focused on cultivating individual kinesthetic experiences of place, rather than forcing a shared kinesthetic experience of place. In addition to clarifying individual versus shared kinesthetic experiences of place in the creative process, it was also essential for me to clarify how these experiences were intended to be conveyed in a final screendance. I would clarify both these aspects of the process and the editing before participating in similar research in the future.

The final element of the project I would revise before repeating this research in the future, is considering how to convey the kinesthetic experiences from multiple filming shoots in the same screendance. Initially, I assumed that my kinesthetic experience of place would be similar each time I returned to Eel Creek. However, after returning to Eel Creek multiple times I realized that my experiences in the place were different with each visit. Participating in only two filming shoots, Robert and I debated whether to base the final screendance on the experiences we captured in the first shoot, or to include experiences from both shoots. Given more time, I would have liked to include

our experiences from both shoots. However, due to our time constraint with two shoots we decided to base the screendance primarily on our experiences from the first shoot. If I repeated this project again in the future, I would be interested in contrasting the experiences from multiple shoots in the same work.

Further Research

At the conclusion of this project, I am interested in how my movement research could develop further. I am curious about employing this research to a variety of different places with diverse geography. What would it be like to create and convey a kinesthetic experience of place in an urban environment? Or while traveling through various places on a train? What would it be like to perform this research in a different natural environment? How would this change the movement and filming of a kinesthetic experience of place? It would be interesting to perform this movement research in a place that is familiar, such as one's home, and compare this experience to the research performed in a place that is unfamiliar. This project has provided me the choreographic tools necessary to continue my research exploring the creation and conveyance of a kinesthetic experience of place in new locations in the future.

Final Thoughts

In conclusion, this project provided me a platform to explore the creation and conveyance of a kinesthetic experience of place. Throughout the creative process, I utilized two kinds of explorations for creating a kinesthetic experience of place that assisted my discovery of a third exploration necessary to the process. I believe the

creation of a kinesthetic experience of place requires explorations into sensory experiences of place, explorations into different feeling states of place, and explorations into one's spiritual connection to place. Throughout the editing process, I discovered ways in which to convey a kinesthetic experience of place to viewers through screendance. I believe the conveyance of this experience must be structured based on the conveyance of one's lived experiences of place.

This project provides an example of how to use dance and film to create and convey a kinesthetic experience of place. It presents methodologies for facilitating and creating a kinesthetic experience of place in the creative process, as well as providing methodologies for conveying a kinesthetic experience of place through the editing and creation of a screendance. Incorporating the elements of movement and film, this research can be employed by choreographers, dancers, and filmmakers in the future. I hope this research opens new possibilities in the realms of site-specific work and screendance, and fosters the development of a deeper connection between movement, film, and place.

APPENDIX A

ENSO: A KINESTHETIC PLACE POSTER



APPENDIX B

ENSO: A KINESTHETIX PLACE PROGRAM

Dance Department Upcoming Events 2014-2015

- Quarterly:** March 11, 7pm DDT - FREE.
Open Showing: March 12, 5:30pm GRX 353/354 - FREE.
Grad Loft: March 13, 8pm DDT - \$3 student/senior,
\$5 general admission.
UORDC At Home Concert: April 17 & 18, 8pm DDT -
\$5 student/senior, \$10 general admission.
Department Placement Class: May 9, 10am GRX 353/354
Spring Student Dance Concert: May 7-9, 8pm DDT -
\$5 student/senior, \$10 general admission.
Quarterly: June 3, 7pm DDT - FREE.
Open Showing: June 4, 5:30pm GRX 353/354 - FREE.
Spring Loft: June 5, 8pm DDT - \$3 student/senior,
\$5 general admission.

UO Department of Dance Faculty and Staff

Full-Time Faculty:

Steven Chatfield, Christian Cherry,
Jenifer Craig, Brad Garner, Rita J. Honka,
Habib Iddrisu, Walter Kennedy, Shannon Mockli

Part-Time Faculty:

Sarah Ebert, Florabelle Moses,
Jean Nelson, Sarah Nemecek

Musicians:

Glenn Bonney, Michael O'Brien,
John Polese, Gus Russell, Brian West

Office Coordinator:


Marian Moser

Emeritus Faculty:

Bruno Madrid, Susan Zadoff

Graduate Teaching Fellows:

Hannah Andersen, Bryant Henderson, Faith Morrison,
Sasha Rawlinson, Katie Scherman, Jessica Zoller



Enso: A Kinesthetic Place

*A screening and discussion on kinesthetic experience of place
MFA Movement Research by Faith Morrison
with Videography by Robert Uehlin*

*February 20th, 2015, 8pm
Gerlinger Annex 353, UO Dance Department*



Faith Morrison:
University of Oregon Dance Department
MFA Movement Research Showing
Featuring Videography by Robert Uehlin

Ensō: A Kinesthetic Place is a premiere of screendance works featuring movement research by MFA candidate Faith Morrison that investigates the creation and communication of a kinesthetic experience of place. Faith's research considers the potential for dance and film to engage in a sensory experience of place, explore feeling states of place, and convey these experiences through the medium of screendance. The two screendances, *At Eel Creek* and *Ensō*, were filmed in the Oregon Dunes National Recreation area at Eel Creek. The works were created in collaboration with filmmaker Robert Uehlin, and the dancers.

Special thanks to my UO Dance Department thesis committee, Steven Chatfield, Brad Garner, and Shannon Mockli for their continual feedback, guidance, and support. Thank you to Jenifer Craig for her help organizing this showing in the dance department. Thank you to Christian Cherry for his help setting up the sound system.

Thank you to Robert Uehlin for his committed spirit through long hours of filming, watching, and editing footage. Thank you to the dancers for enduring harsh weather conditions at Eel Creek, but returning each day with renewed energy! Lastly, thank you to Ben Fitch-Fleischmann for his cooking on our filming shoots, and his endless support throughout all my dance endeavors.

Production Staff

Stage Manager: Bryn Hlava
Assistant Stage Manager: Timorei Andraos
Light Board Operator: Eduardo Anguiano
Sound Operator: Carina Gonzalez
House Managers: Brooke Thomas, Jessica Zoller
Ushers: Sasha Rawlinson, Katie Scherman
Music Director: Christian Cherry
Publicity Coordinator: Shannon Mockli
Poster and Program Images: Robert Uehlin
Poster and Program Design: Faith Morrison
Display: Bryant Henderson

PROGRAM

At Eel Creek

Choreographer: Faith Morrison
in collaboration with the dancers

Videographer: Robert Uehlin

Film Editors: Faith Morrison and Robert Uehlin

Dancers: Cecilia Berghäll, Nick Herman,
Faith Morrison, and Rosie Yerke

Music: "Panoramic" by Atticus Ross

The Pilot Study was filmed over three days in the Oregon Dunes National Recreation area at Eel Creek in September, 2013.

Ensō

Choreographer: Faith Morrison
in collaboration with the dancers

Videographer: Robert Uehlin

Film Editors: Faith Morrison and Robert Uehlin

Dancers: Robin Ewing, Faith Morrison,
Cecily Wechter, and Rosie Yerke

Music: "Side A" by Andris Balins, "Silzand" and "Neziba"
by Marco Raaphorst, "Noveller" by Redgrave,
"HHHHH" by Kohfra T and Ghofra Z

Sound score edited by Faith Morrison and Robert Uehlin

The Study was filmed over six days in the Oregon Dunes National Recreation area at Eel Creek in September, 2014.

*Please stay for the Q&A session after the screendance showings with the choreographer, videographer, and dancers.
Q&A Facilitator: Steven Chatfield*

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