the Smith College Department of Dance presents

sketches of being

MFA Thesis Dance Concert
February 17, 18, 19 2022 | 8 PM
Theatre 14
Mendenhall Center for the Performing Arts
122 Green Street, Northampton, MA
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the land on which Smith College resides is unceded Nonotuck land, and was transformed through unethical labor. We’d also like to acknowledge our neighboring Indigenous nations: the Nipmuc and the Wampanoag to the East, the Mohegan and Pequot to the South, the Mohican to the West, and the Abenaki to the North.

We urge you to make a donation to the Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness, an organization committed to preserving Native American cultural traditions, assisting Native American residents with basic needs and educational expenses, and advancing public knowledge about Native Americans in Massachusetts. Visit their website at www.mcnaa.org

DIRECTOR’S NOTE

Tonight’s concert reflects the creative and technical work of many people. The choreographers have worked for months with the performers, designers, advisors, and production staff to make work that touches, provokes, and inspires. I want to acknowledge the graduate students and crew for their resiliency in responding to the challenges of making performances and teaching during the pandemic. We honor their contributions to our community during a time of tremendous social and political upheaval. The thesis projects presented in sketches of being are a testimony to the power of design thinking and creative collaboration.

We have five graduating MFA students in dance this year. Miguel Alejandro Castillo had the pandemic disrupt his plans when the shift in concert dates conflicted with his dancers’ availability—thus making it impossible for his piece to be performed as part of this concert. Instead, his inspired thesis performance was presented for a select audience and recorded on February 3.
Choreography
Erin Kouwe

Music
La Marabina by Sacri Couri
Air Loom by Claude Speeed
I’m So Tired; While My Guitar Gently Weeps by The Beatles
Working for the Weekend by Loverboy
Chochin by Meitei
Or Was I by k.d. lang

Dramturgy
Mike Mikos

Lighting Design
Kathy Couch

Costume Design
Emily Justice Dunn

Projections
David Wiggall and NASA

Performers
Ella Ammann-Bianciardi    Chloe London
Becca Soifer     Erin Kouwe

Thank you Chris, Alan, Emily, Kathy, David, Amy, and Matthew for your energy, mentorship, and artistry. Your work is central to bringing this piece to life. Thanks for embracing every idea with warmth and enthusiasm – I am so grateful. Thank you Lester Tomé for your steady trust and diligent insight and Barbie Diewald for dreaming into this work and beyond with me. Becca, Chloe, and Ella, thank you for the creativity, delight, and determination you bring to every rehearsal. It has been a privilege to work with you all and I’m grateful for the care with which you hold this work. Chrissy, Laura, Miguel, and Sarah, thank you for the insight and support that has shaped this process and more to come. Thank you Raquel, for bold edits, poetics, and the clarity with which you have always seen this project and me.
“To launch oneself into a process of becoming...can expand our definition of will as domination into a notion of will as a willingness to submit to an experience, the outcome of which is unknown.” - Ann Cooper Albright

I have so much gratitude for everyone who has worked with me on this project: to Shey, Sheena, Quinn and Shira, who approached the process with effervescent authenticity and playful determination; to Finley, whose creative curiosity and collaborative spirit inspired an amazing soundscape; to Mary Beth, who helped craft a whole world and the characters that dwell inside it; to David, who patiently offered me the tools to try my hand at video design; to Emily and Tilly, with whom I shared the joy of wacky experimentation and play; to Kathy, who calmly and graciously performed her magic; to Meredith, who has given me invaluable and generous feedback on both writing and directing; and to my mom Carm and sister Angie, who have offered continuous unconditional love and support throughout this whole wild grad school ride.
This piece was built as a collaboration with the performers on stage, as well as our offstage communities, mentors, companions, and inspirators—all influential in our everyday becoming.

A special thank you to Sam Rosenstone for your love, support, and inspiration on this confusingly beautiful journey of being an artist. This piece is for you.

And endless gratitude to my fellow MFA graduate students: for adopting me into your cohort, for befriending me through confusing periods of COVID isolation, and for teaching me more and more every day.
Choreography
Sarah Konner and Austin Selden
in collaboration with
Lance Schnorenberg

Music
Matthew Daher

Lighting Design
Kathy Couch

Costume Design
Emily Justice Dunn

Performers
Sarah Konner
Austin Selden
Lance Schnorenberg

I want to offer a huge warm thanks to Chris, Alan, Emily, Kathy, Amy, David, Matthew, and Aubrey for saying yes to ideas with enthusiasm, open-mindedness, and curiosity to help make this piece possible. It has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to work with you all and I so appreciate the creativity and energy you put towards this work. Thanks to the Smith College Dance department for both nurturing and pushing me-- graduate school is a very special time. Thanks to Jake Meginsky and Wendy Woodson for generous ongoing creative support, feedback, and mentorship. Your thoughts, suggestions, and encouragement helped me find clarity and confidence in my choice-making. Thanks to Chrissy, Erin, Miguel, Laura, Chloe and Alex for becoming family. And to Austin and Lance, I so appreciate you for going on this ride with me through the business of the demands of this program. A meaningful collaboration based in a long history and trust is unusual and continues to be a source of inspiration for me for living. Thanks for being such good friends and kind collaborative creators.

end of concert
This project was an expedition searching for enchantment, searching for that fleeting moment where we are briefly suspended in time and our bodies become part of space. Enchantment is ephemeral and almost impossible to stage. In the attempt to capture the impossible, we came together and wondered. I feel deep gratitude for the individual voices that gathered for this project and I am enchanted by our collective singing.

To be able to perceive celestial bodies, astronomers use averted vision, a way of seeing not by looking directly at an object, but by looking a little off to the side. By focusing on the dark space near the object, the object appears more clearly. In tonight’s performance, we invite you to allow your attention to be drawn wherever you find it most magnetized. We hope that in this journey, you’ll find some wonder of your own.
It has truly been a gift to work with the Smith Dance Department and Theater Department to make this show possible. We thank the dance faculty—Angie Hauser, Lester Tomé, Rodger Blum, and Jake Meginsky for supporting our ideas and creativity in countless ways. We extend an especially large thank you to Chris Aiken, our graduate advisor, for going above and beyond to make this concert possible under constantly shifting and very challenging circumstances. Thank you, Chris, for your constant dexterity and improvisation throughout the challenges presented by COVID. We are grateful for your devotion to us and our creative visions!

We thank Emily Dunn and Tilly Adams for their kind and enthusiastic collaboration in costume design and construction; to Alan Schneider, Amy Putnam, and David Wiggall for their endless support on sets, sound, and production; to Kathy Couch for boosting our artistry with your own; to Shelley Latham for supporting us and this concert with publicity materials; to Matthew Adelson, Aubrey Daviau, Alex Davis, and the whole Five College Dance production team; and to our amazing crew members! Each piece in this performance was brought to life by the time and talents of these individuals, who generously produced not one but two MFA productions this month with great care and enthusiasm.

These works would not be what they are without the support of our thesis committees and certainly not without the brilliant dancers and collaborators who have devoted so much of the past months to our processes. We are truly grateful for your time and spirited contributions. And lastly, thank you to Alex Davis and Chloe London, the first year MFA candidates, for your love, friendship, and support throughout our rehearsal and production processes.

Chrissy Martin is an interdisciplinary performance artist and movement educator with roots in contemporary dance forms, postmodern experimental music, and physical theater. Chrissy blends contemporary dance and language/voice to rigorously examine her intersecting queer and neurodivergent identities. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in music with a focus on social praxis from New College of Florida in 2010, and is currently pursuing her Master’s in choreography and performance at Smith College. She has performed with Sarasota Contemporary Dance, Muscle Memory Dance Theatre, Danielle Georgiou Dance Group, Dead White Zombies, Megan Rhyme Dance, BodyCompass Dance Projects, and Ayako Kato/Art Union Humanscape. Somatic practices such as Pilates, Gyrotonic Expansion System, Body Mind Centering and Laban/Bartenieff Fundamentals inform Chrissy’s integrated movement style, and she is a certified Pilates and Gyrotonic® instructor. Martin is an avid member of the global contact improvisation community and has studied with Nancy Stark Smith, KJ Holmes,
Nita Little, Scott Wells and Kirstie Simpson. She has been a facilitator and leader of the Chicago Contact Improvisation Jam.

**Erin Kouwe** is a creator, dance artist, and educator. Erin is a recipient of the Tennessee Arts Commission’s Individual Artist Fellowship for her choreographic work, which has been presented by Nashville Ballet, Tennessee Women’s Theater Project, Going Dutch Festival, and others. Erin is the founder of Seen, a project designed to disorient performance and foster creative exchange and conversation around dance. She has performed with New Dialect, Visceral Dance Chicago, and Luna Negra Dance Theater, and in works by choreographers like Jeanine Durning, Banning Bouldin, Bryan Arias, Gustavo Ramirez Sansano, Ohad Naharin, Yin Yue, Joy Davis, Idan Sherabi, Monica Cervantes, Julia Rhoads, and others. She holds a B.A. in Dance from Point Park University.

**Sarah Konner** is a dance artist, improviser and movement educator based in Brooklyn, NY. Sarah creates dance-theater work with her collaborator Austin Selden, and others, that has been shown at performance venues, universities, and museums across the country. Besides her own work, Sarah has had the pleasure of collaborating with Jeanine Durning, Alex Davis, ChavasseDance&Performance, Anneke Hansen, Shura Baryshnikov, Megan Kendzior, Alex|Xan: The Median Movement, and Headlong Dance Theater. Sarah teaches, practices and performs improvisation in New York, across the US, and internationally. She has been practicing and teaching Contact Improvisation for ten years, co-organized CI Ground Research from 2012-2019, teaches and performs with SetGO Ensemble, and leads a yearly all-women’s CI Lab retreat. Sarah is an MFA candidate in Dance at Smith College, holds a BFA in Dance and a BS in Environmental Science from the University of Michigan, and is certified in Yoga, Pilates, and Body-Mind Centering®. www.SarahandAustinDance.com

**Laura Osterhaus Rosenstone** is a movement artist and educator, born and raised in the Midwest. Across all modes of creating, she strives to connect with and listen to people. While pursuing her bachelor’s degree in dance and fashion studies at the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities, Laura had the opportunity to perform the work of choreographers Nora Chipaumire, Gregory Dolbashian, Maurya Kerr, and Garth Fagan among others. As a member of Zenon Dance Company in Minneapolis 2016-2019, Laura performed the work of choreographers Danny Buraczeski, Michelle Boulé, Kyle Abraham, Colleen Thomas, Sam Kim and others throughout Minnesota and across the country. Laura is delighted to be a member of creative trio, Kelvin Wailey, in addition to her on-screen and live performance roles alongside musical artists for John Mark Creative. As the founding artistic director of Slo Dance Company, she collaborates with an evolving group of artists to build performance work seeded in slowness, focusing on embracing the rich process of intimate relationship-building and developing collective awareness through listening that challenges our perception of time.
Miguel Alejandro Castillo is a queer, interdisciplinary artist born and raised in Caracas, Venezuela. A choreographer, director, performer and educator he engages with the creative process as a practice in community building, as a means to elaborate the potentials of our physicality and as an opportunity to draw attention to our shared humanity. Castillo has worked as the assistant choreographer and dancer for Bernstein’s MASS, presented at the Walt Disney Concert Hall and at Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center. He was the rehearsal director for Glass-Handel, an immersive, multimedia opera installation. He is currently the movement director for Prisoner of The State, a new opera by David Lang commissioned by the New York Philharmonic. This summer he is headed to New Mexico to assist in the direction of Tristan and Isolda at the Santa Fe Opera. Castillo holds a bachelor’s in dance and theater from Middlebury College, where he received the Andrea Olsen Prize for Interdisciplinary Work in Dance and is a proud United World College alumnus. He is currently pursuing an MFA in choreography and performance at Smith College.

UPCOMING DANCE EVENTS

April 7, 8, 9 at 8 PM in Hallie Flanagan Studio Theatre

Senior Dance Concert
Works by graduating dance majors Sophia Josephine Botran, Nicky Consales, Helen Lombard Danielson, Qingyang (Abigail) Gu, Sheena Nomura, and Becca Soifer.

April 25 & May 3 at 1 PM – Outside, start at Crew House

Breaking Dormancy
Presentation of the Movement, Ecology, and Performance class taught by Chris Aiken and Angie Hauser

Thursday, April 28 - 2:45-4PM - Scott Dance Studio

The Moving Body in Devised Theater and Performance
Presentation of the class taught by Miguel Alejandro Castillo

April 28 at 8 PM in Scott Dance Studio

Spring Grad Event
First Year MFA candidates Alexander Davis and Chloe London invite you to their culminating event of the Spring semester.

For a complete list of Performing Arts events (Dance, Music, Theatre, Film/Media) please visit our website: www.smith.edu/smitharts
PRODUCTION

Faculty Advisor .............................................................................. Chris Aiken
FCD Director .................................................................................. Alexandra Ripp
FCD Production Manager ............................................................. Matthew Adelson
FCD Assistant Production Manager ............................................. Aubrey Daviau
Concert Administrator ................................................................. Martha Potyrala
Technical Director ......................................................................... Amy Putnam
Technical Director for Dance ....................................................... Alan Schneider
Lighting, Sound Supervisor and Video Engineer.......................... David Wiggall
Assistant Lighting and Sound Supervisor................................. Amber Tanudjaja
Costume Shop Supervisor ............................................................. Emily Dunn
Assistant Costume Shop Supervisor ............................................. Tilly Adams
Theatre Production Manager ......................................................... Nikki Beck
Publicity Manager ....................................................................... Shelley Latham
Box Office Supervisor .................................................................. Kelsey Conti
Photography .................................................................................. Derek Fowles
Production Office Assistant ......................................................... Em Lawrence
Stage Manager ................................................................................ Alexander Davis
Assistant Stage Manager ............................................................... Em Lawrence
Light Board Operator .................................................................... Caroline Gan
Sound and Projections Operator ................................................... Hannah Jaffe
Fly Crew .......................................................................................... Mara Kelley
Stage Crew .......................................................... Scarlett Qu, Abigail Gu, Sami Aiyathurai, Xiaoman Xu,
Sophia Botran, Leah Cockra, Teagan Benavidez
Dance Floor Crew ......Matthew Adelson, Chris Aiken, Ella Ammann-Bianciardi,
Abby Botta, Miguel Alejandro Castillo, Aubrey Daviau,
Alexander Davis, Sarah Konner, Erin Kouwe, Chloe London,
Amy Putnam, Laura Osterhaus Rosenstone
Costume Shop Crew ........Fiamma Cochran, Aimee Dupont, Teva Skovronek
Electricians ..................................................................................... Miriam Boardman, Tamarin Camp,
Natalie Churchill, Eva Shannon Dabek, Emily Kish,
Cara Krupnikoff-Salkin, Reina Makimura,
Alex McLaughlin, George Pharris, Teva Skovronek
Lead Fabricator ............................................................................... Wells Wells
Shop Crew .......................................................... Leap Kasten, Olivia Cavanagh, Liv Dunbar,
Rosa Lao-Brooks, Alex McLaughlin
Publicity Interns ................................................................. Kayla Blackwell, Dan Dao
Production Interns .......................................................... Eva Shannon-Dabek, Madison VanDeurzen
Box Office Managers ................................................................. Clarissa Po, Madison VanDeurzen
Box Office Assistants ............................................................ Allison Adams, Elie Berman, Sarah Branch,
Nubia Celis-Etienne, Ashley Jackman, Diana Rodriguez, Maren Scharf
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