

DUALITY, SYMBOLISM, AND TIME:  
A CONVERGENT PRACTICE IN BUTOH AND SURREALIST EXPRESSION

by  
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## THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: Duality, Symbolism, and Time: A Convergent Practice in Butoh and Surrealist Expression

Butoh and Surrealism share some common features, three of which are: duality, symbolism and the manipulation of time. This project is an examination of the intersection of these elements and the development of a movement practice using these three, shared focusing lenses of Butoh and Surrealism, culminating in a performance.

The methodology of this study sought to generate movement through improvisation and studio exercises based upon a melded Butoh/Surrealist universe developed through applied research in the convergent elements of duality, symbolism and the manipulation of time. The elements that I distilled ultimately informed movement choices shaping a movement offering; a generated example of what could happen when this choreographic process is applied.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

When we experience ourselves through another cultural lens, we are enriched. When we interpret another culture through our own lens, we bring the difference the other can bring – sometimes the same things insiders see, but more often aspects that bridge the known with the strange. And it is the strangeness of the unknown (how it can rearrange our perceptual field) that calls us to travel across the bridge of difference (Sondra Fraleigh).

As I distilled my interests in dance, I continued returning to a movement form that I was introduced to in 2008 while a student at the American Dance Festival - that movement form is Butoh. My acquaintance with the form came by way of Dairakudakan; a Tokyo based Butoh Company formed in 1972 under the direction of Maro Akaji. After practicing, being a part of the creation of a new work (*Secrets of Mankind*), and performing with Dairakudakan, I began to draw parallels between my experiences immersing myself in Butoh and what I knew about Surrealism. Surrealism, “psychic automatism in a pure state” (Breton 26), being an art movement codified by French poet André Breton in his “Surrealist Manifesto” in 1924 in France. Dr. Laura Myer, a wonderfully vibrant and knowledgeable Modern Art Scholar during my undergraduate studies, introduced me to Surrealism. Exposure to artists such as: André Masson, Henri Matisse, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, Leonora Carrington, Joan Miró, Dorothea Tanning, Claude Cahun, Méret Oppenheim, Frida Kahlo, Max Ernst, and many more influenced my creative and performance aesthetic. What I noticed around 2008 in drawing parallels between the two systems was a similar usage of language and an intersection of recurring and similar themes: dreams, consciousness, time, recovering childhood memories,

duality, sensuality, time, post-war values, androgyny, rejection of systems of power, and symbolism.

In 2009, I sought to further expose myself to more Butoh training and was introduced by my friend and dance partner Ethan Dunn, to Mexican Butoh and Ritual artist, Diego Piñón. Piñón's mentorship and teachings have been a consistent thread in my training since 2009.

Butoh, earlier called *ankoku butô* (dance of darkness), developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s in Japan, one of the most turbulent in postwar Japan, through the work of Kazuo Ohno and Tatsumi Hijikata (Fraleigh 13). It developed out of an obsession with "progress" and a refuge in "nostalgia" (Sas 24). It is a system of movement that seeks to explore the physical range of the body; it is often chaotic and grotesque, improvisational and idiosyncratic. Butoh's navigation between the tensions of postwar chaos (physical destruction), tradition and innovation, between Japanese tradition and Western influence is perhaps Butoh's defining feature. Similarly in a navigation of tensions between tradition and innovation, postmodern dance was being formed in the United States. On the forefront of that movement were dancers and choreographers such as: Yvonne Rainer, creator of the famous "No Manifesto" in 1965 and Anna Halprin who is credited for establishing the *San Francisco Dancers' Workshop* and developing a systematic way of moving using kinesthetic awareness. While the postmodern dance movement in America shared some of the same questions as Butoh, Butoh came up with entirely different answers, thus contrasting American postmodern dance in a very intriguing way.

Butoh arose from dancers; early pioneers (Kazuo Ohno and Tatsumi Hijikata whom shared in an over twenty year dance partnership) who were trained in modern

dance, so it can be described as Butoh “dance” (Barbe 4). Though Butoh differs in the technique and treatment of virtuosity, Butoh, unlike many other forms of dance, does not borrow from a codified, pre-existing movement vocabulary. Butoh expands the concept of dance; expanding the notion of dance was an approach taken by many of the pioneers during late twentieth century. The Butoh mover can sometimes be recognized by white body paint that covers the flesh (rice powder), extreme facial expressions (eyes rolled back into the head), and the extreme slowness of movement. The movement performed or “offered” by the dancer can be both rigid and unpredictable, tender and illuminating, demonstrating through movement the dualities that are always present in the human body likened to a kind of yin and yang. A duality often expressed is that of masculine and feminine, both qualities present, being equally expressed.

The first example of a Butoh piece presented, *Kinjiki (Forbidden Colours)*, was in Japan in 1959 by Tatsumi Hijikata. The piece is described by Nario Goda to have:

...combined the barbarous act of strangling a chicken with the treatment of anti-social and supposedly taboo topics of homosexuality. It made those of us that watched it to the end shudder, but once the shudder passed through our bodies, it resulted in a refreshing sense of release. Hijikata’s debut work...expanded the range of dance; through it he forced us to experience not only the excellence of his style but also the abyss of existence, and by this means developed a theory of the body for all future dance (Klein 17).

The pairing of Kazuo Ohno and Tatsumi Hijikata resulted in what is described below by Christal Whelan in her 2006 lecture, *Butoh: Theatre of The Soul*:

To Hijikata’s dark and powerful charisma, butoh’s co-founder – Ohno Kazuo – provided a stark contrast. He brought to the dance qualities of illumination and tenderness. Through twenty years of collaboration, the two men formed what might be thought of as a yin and yang that constitute the totality of butoh (Whelan 2006).

Around the time of Butoh's inception, a concurrent avant-garde was already well developed throughout Europe and in Japan in Surrealism. I found Butoh to be aligned with Surrealism, the prewar (WWII) art movement, which consisted of artists struggling to explore a "terrain of rupture" within the body and within subjectivity (Sas 26). The art movement most closely linked to the French poet André Breton and his eponymous manifesto published in 1924, "Manifesto of Surrealism." Breton, the chief progenitor of the artistic movement prepared the stage for the inclusion of other voices to proceed, declared the emergence of a new (reactionary) movement through his manifesto, suggesting that rational thought was repressive to the powers of creativity and imagination and thus inimical to artistic expression. Breton felt that contact with the hidden part of the mind, through dreams, could produce a "poetic truth." The figurative avant-garde (Surrealism) that offered the imagery of destruction, demonstration of the purposelessness of or ruins of, modernity, also sought to expose the notion that time is not linear. Instead it is always folding and unfolding and in a sense, Surrealists had a sentimental attachment to the *nostalgia of the future*. There was an emphasis, through imagery (those found and those created) and through literature, which was placed on the interpenetration of images and meaning, temporality of phenomena, and an excavation of phenomena—to go forward and simultaneously to arrive in the past. Surrealism, as carried out by artists, thinkers and researchers in pursuit of a sense of expression of the subconscious mind, was searching for the definition of a new aesthetic, new humankind, and a new social order.

Surrealism as defined by Breton in his "Manifesto of Surrealism," is "psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of

the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern” (26). Breton declares the criteria that form Surrealist images, stating their range, though sharing in virtue:

For me, their greatest virtue, I must confess, is the one that is arbitrary to the highest degree, the one that takes the longest time to translate into practical language, either because it contains an immense amount of seeming contradiction or because one of its terms is strangely concealed; or because, presenting itself as something sensational, it seems to end weakly (because it suddenly closes the angle of its compass), or because it derives from itself a ridiculous *formal* justification, or because it is of hallucinatory kind, or because it very naturally gives to the abstract the mask of the concrete, or the opposite, or because it implies the negation of some elementary physical property, or because it provokes laughter (Breton 24).

Another important text, *Les Champs Magnétiques (The Magnetic Fields)* is a book by André Breton and Philippe Soupault often cited as being the first work of literary Surrealism. Published in 1920, the authors used a Surrealist automatic writing technique. The book is considered Surrealist, rather than Dadaist (the related movement that predates Surrealism in its inception), because it attempts to create something new rather than react to an existing work. *Les Champs Magnétiques* is characterized by rich textured language that often seems to border on the nonsensical. This is considered a normal result of “automatic writing” and is considerably more logical than the output from other Surrealist techniques, such as “exquisite corpse”<sup>1</sup> (a method whereby each of a group of collaborators, in sequence, adds words or images to a composition). A typical paragraph in (an English-language version of) *Les Champs Magnétiques* is:

It was the end of sorrow lies. The rail stations were dead, flowing like bees stung from honeysuckle. The people hung back and watched the ocean,

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<sup>1</sup> See APPENDIX A for an example of Exquisite Corpse.

animals flew in and out of focus. The time had come. Yet king dogs never grow old – they stay young and fit, and someday they might come to the beach and have a few drinks, a few laughs, and get on with it. But not now. The time had come; we all knew it. But who would go first? (Breton and Soupault 13).

Akin to Surrealism, Butoh evolved as a reaction to the upheaval of a political and social movement. The birth of Butoh arose out of a reaction to the political climate of the early 1940's while pushing against the infiltration of Western culture into Japanese society, essentially pushing against Western modernization. The movement form that was born in Japan; post World War II, embodies both the social and political implications that were manifested during that specific shift in political and social climate, i.e., the implications of the atomic bomb dropped in Hiroshima in 1945. Butoh cannot always be defined in specific terms of a consistent style and most Butoh practitioners fiercely resist any summation of their work into a set of distinct methods and techniques, rather they view it as a practice.

When I consider these two systems, Butoh and Surrealism, I am able to draw many connections between the two. I see a kind of universality in Butoh and Surrealism. I can identify with some of the universal concepts exposed in both systems, such as, harnessing a desire to push against conformity, and though I cannot liken my experience as a Western mover to that of someone from Japan or an artist from France in 1924, I do understand exploring ideas, without movement vocabularies, to transcend beyond the recognizable human experience with the (my) body being the medium. I have a desire to distill, in the body, a curiosity for opening channels to be a vehicle for the unconscious, giving my body permission to express duality (based on the experiences that I have been exposed to), exploring exaggerated time, and finding new kinds of symbolism. The



connections between Butoh and Surrealism happen physically for me while I am engaged in an improvisational practice; where I am allowing my body to think, with movement as the primary medium. When I move, I find pleasure in expressing vulnerability, offering my most exaggerated bodily capacity for expression. While improvising through movement, (similar to Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's "Thinking In Movement" from 1981), I notice that my tendencies are to surprise myself with slowness, inserting stillness, juxtaposed by rigid and tensed bodily shifts. I explore the use of my eyes, as windows (allowing myself to explore my internal happenings), as expressive appendages (body parts moving in concert and separate from other body parts), and as receptors that gather information from the outside and immediate environment and converse with my brain and body to then generate more movement. Each of these bodily connections mentioned that I have had experiences with in my own bodily container, offer elements that I find present in the "systems" of Butoh and Surrealism. The specific similarities being: the treatment of the body (metamorphosis, isolation of body parts, conceptualization of the eyes, scale), displacement of volume, use of passivity, eroticism, symbolism, manipulation of time, duality, and the nonlinear emphasis.

While Butoh and Surrealism both encompass multiple goals and contradictory methods, they share an anti-philosophical, anti-conceptual search for a terrifying limit-moment, a breakdown of symbolic systems – the movement of approach to actuality and the body, which they conceive in paradoxical and unexpected ways (Sas 31).

This research is rooted in marrying elements of the two systems, Butoh and Surrealism, with movement as the primary medium. This movement project involved generating a choreographic process that considered the distilled elements of: duality, symbolism and the manipulation of time. Based on research collected, especially from

Frances Barbe's 2011 dissertation, "The Difference Butoh Makes: A Practice-Based Exploration of Butoh in Contemporary Performance." I distilled a personal Butoh practice, with efforts to gain as much knowledge and understanding of the form as possible, and to make this practice uniquely Surrealist, I used André Breton's "Manifesto of Surrealism," where he describes what the practice that a Surrealist might surrender to looks like. I applied Breton's use of "automatic writing" and expanded "writing" to include movement as a form of automatic association. In the creation of a choreographic process, I articulated a lens that consisted of a specific method to filter my thinking and movement, arriving at a movement offering that was a collision of two former avant-gardes, merely an *example* of what could happen intermingling elements from these two worlds, Butoh and Surrealism.

Note: Firstly, in most all of the literature about Butoh dance, Butoh is oddly, in my mind at least, not capitalized. I have chosen to capitalize Butoh every time to give it the same contextual weight as Surrealism. Lastly, The use of the Japanese surnames in this thesis follows Frances Barbe's note on using Japanese names in her 2011 dissertation, "The Difference Butoh Makes: A Practice-Based Exploration of Butoh in Contemporary Performance and Performer Training." "In Japanese language, surnames come first. I have chosen to translate all Japanese names into the English convention of surnames last" (Barbe iii).

### Purpose of the Study

I was interested in linking Butoh and Surrealism. I wanted to further investigate, André Breton's insights into the manifestation of dreams by way of Surrealism as well as his technique of "automatic writing" (expanded to include moving for my purposes) and

the universal body in crisis from Hijikata's Butoh dance (as the initiation point of Butoh), but expanded Butoh to include the next generation of the form, from my teacher, Diego Piñón. I also used much of Sondra Fraleigh's insights from her book, *Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy* to give weight to my departure into a practice. By relying on the uniqueness of my dream imagery to inform my choreographic choices in their initial stages, while also filtering them through the lens of Butoh dance, I sought to merge the two systems, creating openings to new and rich choreographic choices. The methodology for this process is explicated later in Chapter III.

### Problem Statement

Butoh and Surrealism share some common features, three of which are: duality, symbolism and the manipulation of time. This project was an examination of the intersection of these elements and the development of a movement practice using these three, shared focusing lenses of Butoh and Surrealism, culminating in a performance.

The methodology of this study sought to generate movement through improvisation and studio exercises based upon a melded Butoh/Surrealist universe developed through applied research in the convergent elements of duality, symbolism and the manipulation of time. The elements that I distilled ultimately informed movement choices shaping a movement offering; a generated example of what could happen when this choreographic process is applied.

### Goals

Prior to this movement thesis project I determined a list of goals I would aim to achieve throughout the exploration of "DUALITY, SYMBOLISM, AND TIME: *A Convergent Practice in Butoh and Surrealist Expression.*"

1. Develop a choreographic process that combines elements from Butoh and Surrealism, specifically duality, symbolism and time.
2. Document the creative process through journaling and other processes.
3. Distill specific examples that can be used by other artists seeking to develop a Butoh/Surrealist practice.
4. Create a movement offering that can serve as an example of what can arise from a Butoh/Surrealist practice.

### Definition of Terms

These definitions were constructed to serve as operational terms to assist me through the conceptualization of this movement project. They are terms that I frequently used when thinking about the convergence of Butoh and Surrealism and the presentation of my body as a medium.

**Mover**—is someone that is moving for the sake of movement without consideration of being witnessed (seen). This intentioned body is immersed in the phenomenon of the moment, moving alone, or moving in a space with other movers, and either being witnessed or not. I am making a distinction between “dancer” and “mover.” “Mover” is a more expansive way to describe a practitioner of movement. While “dancer” carries with it the weight of codified training, “mover” neither suggests rigid dance training nor denies it.

**Witness**—is someone that is holding intentioned space for a mover. They are either invited to be present during a movement offering or they are witnessing by chance.

**Stillness**—refers to a state of being where there is a blending of the mind/body duality. This stillness occurs through the practice of being present, aware of the phenomenon of the present moment, noticing time passing and without commentary or judgment, being sensitive and aware of the present moment.

**Movement Offering**—a sharing of movement that takes place in a space that isn't a normal or conventional performing venue.

**Ritual**—is an unself-conscious act without deliberate “aesthetic” concerns, arriving from anonymous tribal influences over many generations and epitomizing the group's fundamental value system. It is also the creation of an exceptional individual who transforms his or her experience into a metamorphic idiom known as “art” (Highwater).

**Site**—is the location that the movement offering takes place in. Through a process of existing in the space, becoming present and receptive to the phenomenological essences encountered within the site is unique to the site. The individual absorbs and intuits the site at a fundamental level, dancing place itself.

#### Limitations of the Study

I was limited to my own creative capacity and to my own physical ability. Additionally, I was limited to the time limitation of the study. Furthermore, I was limited to rehearsing both inside of my home studio and outside at Mount Pisgah. Practicing at Mount Pisgah limited me to being beholden to various weather conditions.

#### Delimitations of the Study

In order to narrow the scope of my study I identified the following delimitations:

1. I will be the subject; my moving body will be the instrument that is used to filter the Butoh/Surrealist criteria. The movement generated in the studio is the product of filtering movement and ideology through a lens of designated Butoh/Surrealism criteria, it is not a narrative or a story; it is non-linear.

2. It is Diego Piñón's approach to Butoh that I am most influenced by currently; and it is his teachings and ideas that I channeled most when distilling my movement practice.

3. The rehearsals took place both inside of the studio and outside at the site.

4. The music that was created by Andrew Stiefel was his creative product. The input that I offered came in the form of dialogues over the duration of our time distilling the project. We referenced a site-specific collaborative performance project seen in Portland, Oregon on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 titled, "REED (2010)." Composer Emily Doolittle created a score to reflect the soundscape of the Audubon site in Portland, Oregon, tracking the sounds over the course of a year. She included in her work, dancer Tracy Broyles, Oboist Catherine Lee, Clarinetist Jennifer Woodall, and Bassoonist Alexandra Eastley.

5. The site selection and thinking surrounding a movement offering in the specific site was not rooted in Western, site-specific dance, instead the performance on the specific site borrowed from various Butoh practitioners, specifically performance artists Eiko and Koma.

6. I focused my use of Surrealism to André Breton's 1924 "Manifesto of Surrealism." Though I was influenced by many Surrealist artists, for the purposes of this project, I chose to rely primarily on my interpretation of Breton's 1924 manifesto.

### Significance of Study

Through this project, I intended to investigate the convergence of two systems, Butoh and Surrealism by exploring with improvisation how the body can be used as a medium to filter each aesthetic.

This project intended to investigate the two systems, intellectually and bodily, gaining a deeper knowledge of what evoked the birth of such artistic movements, how they could manifest in the body as a medium filtering movement through their systems, and how that movement might be interpreted in my 21<sup>st</sup> century Western body (I ask myself, what sort of timelessness does this product of the convergence of Butoh and Surrealism demonstrate?).

After a choreographic process was distilled, the same movement was offered at one location, Mount Pisgah outside Eugene Oregon. The movement was offered with the presence of composer Andrew Stiefel's sound landscape, which intended to enhance the sounds of the natural environment.

Through creative/choreographic process and offering from the lens of Butoh and Surrealism, I sought to explore and expose the possibilities available to my body— as a medium, as a readied canvas, as an unwritten document. This project was an experiment in questioning and creating an opening above all.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Though I am not the first to draw parallels between Butoh and Surrealism, there remains little published literature regarding shared elements. I am able to outline some intersections between the two systems through the synthesis of writings from Miryam Sas in “Hands, Lines, Acts: Butoh and Surrealism” and Johannes Bergmark in “Butoh—Revolt of the Flesh in Japan and a Surrealist Way to Move.” I am also able to give weight to the similarities between the two systems with support from Sondra Fraleigh’s, *Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy*, and by Frances Barbe’s 2011 dissertation, “The Difference Butoh Makes: A Practice-Based Exploration of Butoh in Contemporary Performance and Performer Training,” and lastly, I use André Breton’s “Manifesto of Surrealism” to expound Surrealism. In this chapter, I will provide a narrative for my findings on the convergence of Butoh and Surrealism, specifically their treatment of duality, symbolism and time. I will use other sources: *Meshes in the Afternoon* a Surrealist film by Maya Deren and Alexander Hamid and Tatsumi Hijikata’s Butoh dance, *Rebellion of the Flesh* to demonstrate the application of duality, symbolism and time. Lastly, I will include interests that sculpted my movement practice and continued to guide me throughout the development of *Vessel Se(A) Moon*.

#### Surrealism in Japan

In Gérard Durozoi’s *History of the Surrealist Movement*, he describes the first international *Exhibition of Surrealism*, which was held in Tokyo from June 9 to June 14, 1937 (334). This piece supports my supposition that Butoh and Surrealism are (and were) connected; it demonstrates that there was a Surrealist movement unfolding in Japan prior



to Butoh's inception. It also demonstrates that Hijikata had access to, and was probably influenced by, artists and art in alignment with the Surrealist ideology. Prior to the *Exhibition of Surrealism* (originally titled *Surrealist Works Abroad*), poems by Aragon, Éluard, and Breton were translated into Japanese in 1926. The Surrealist poems, though likened to Dadaism and Futurism (by the Japanese), provided the modern mentality necessary for the Japanese to disrupt the primarily realist or symbolist tradition (Durozoi 335).

During the late 1920's Japanese painter Harue Koga began experimenting with a graphic art, perfecting a "mixture of geometric planes and figurative parallels whose poetic strangeness is unquestionable" (*The Sea* [1929]) as described by fellow painter Ichiro Fukuzawa (Durozoi, 2002). Koga, while reflecting on the figurative elements in his painting said:

The objects which figure in a work of art, even if they come from the world of one's actual experience are, for all that, no more than representations, and they will continue the destructible matter of this world of experienced sensations. I am searching for that which, through reality, manages to free itself from reality (Durozoi 335).

In 1930 a translation by Japanese poet and critic Shûzô Takiguchi of André Breton's *Surréalisme et la Peinture* was published. There was a strong exchange between French and Japanese Surrealists beginning in the 1920s. This exchange was reciprocal: Japanese painter Ichiro Fukuzawa spent 1924 to 1931 in Paris influencing the works of Max Ernst and Chagall (Durozoi 335). Takiguchi shared a connection with Butoh creator, Tatsumi Hijikata, as an associate and patron. Takiguchi was commissioned by Hijikata to write many of the programs. In the program of Hijikata's *2nd Dance Experience* in November of 1960, Takiguchi wrote:

Again I must use this well-worn word: avant-garde...Be that as it may, many people must have remarked that the meaning of this word has been changing bit by bit. The orders of modern art are becoming classical, displayed on the shelf of ready-made goods; it has begun to be proved that nothing new can be born of an avant-garde art that tries to take these [older forms] as its model. We must be searching for a new space for arts occurrence, different from the one that has existed up to now. Yet the carelessly used fixed concepts of art are themselves already problematic, a big problem (Shûzô Takiguchi).

Miryam Sas concludes in her article, “Hands, Lines, Acts: Butoh and Surrealism,” that Butoh is a form that moves to reject all ‘isms,’ refute all acts, and then to act within this refutation. What makes Butoh a kind of Surrealism as described by Sas is its refusal of Surrealism and all known precedents and forms of creation. Butoh’s rejection is the achievement of Surrealism (Sas 22).

In 1938 Takiguchi wrote an article seeking to reconcile the problems that existed for Surrealism in Japan. In his 1938 article he questioned the relationship between art and politics and especially emphasized that “Japanese Surrealism could not be a copy of the European version: “Surrealism, that is, the movement of *Surrealism* which has spread from France, cannot, in its original form, completely match the situation in our country...Surreality is one of the universal values invoked by man’s desire” (Durozoi 336). It is possible that Japanese Surrealists felt they had to move to other media such as dance in order to define the movement in the Japanese context.

Looking at many Surrealist images from Japan, Koga’s *The Sea* [1929] provides the most resonant example for me, of what could result, in Japan, from the automatism described in Breton’s “Manifesto of Surrealism.” Koga’s *The Sea*, resembles work being created by French artists during the late 1920s; its application of biomorphism, which models artistic design from naturally occurring patterns or shapes reminiscent of nature

and living organisms, is among the most prominent Surrealist aspects of the painting, as well as elements of symbolism, paradoxical images (duality), and a reference of time through the juxtaposition of period specific objects. This finding compelled me to return to André Breton's first manifesto<sup>2</sup>, to understand what information artists working in the post Dada and Futurism movements would have been exposed to.

### Dreaming and the "Surrealist Manifesto"

"The mind of the man who dreams is fully satisfied by what happens to him" (André Breton).

When I began drawing a bridge connecting Butoh and Surrealism, I considered the function of dreams to the manifestation of some kind of Butoh or Surrealist product. Having the intuition that these two systems were more than just similar, an anchoring element being their emphasis on imagination, automatism, and authenticity; I drew a link between the two through their regular reverence of dreams to manifest the subconscious mind through a medium. I thought about how I dream and considered the components that make up my dreams, arriving at duality, symbolism and time. In a way, dreams are always all duality, symbolism and time. Duality, symbolism and time are essentially Surrealist. Surrealism occurs through dream (subconscious mind) recovery. The same is true for Butoh. Breton's first manifesto aided in fleshing out Surrealism for me, which enhanced my distillation of a studio practice that, at first relied on dreaming to recover myself, evacuating my ego (shedding of my daily self/daily habits). Breton describes in his manifesto,

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<sup>2</sup> André Breton wrote his first "Manifesto of Surrealism" in 1924. This is the manifesto that I most closely considered when developing my studio practice. Breton followed his 1924 manifesto in 1929 with *Second Manifeste du Surréalisme*. In the second manifesto, Breton asked Surrealists to assess their "degree of moral competence." The manifesto excommunicated Surrealists reluctant to commit to collective action (Durozoi 193).

The mind of the man who dreams is fully satisfied by what happens to him. The agonizing question of possibility is no longer pertinent...and if you should die, are you not certain that of reawaking among the dead? Let yourself be carried along, events will not tolerate your interference. You are nameless. The ease of everything is priceless (13).

This “namelessness” is something that is a key metaphor in Hijikata’s movement language. Miryam Sas writes about the examination of Hijikata’s Butoh as a secretion (something that is expressed or created) from his “body without intention or will, an intransitive production that is as much a giving over or spilling over of the self into the exterior as though it were any kind of project or form. This *informe* [tr. formless] secretion that appears or is secreted ‘of itself,’ challenges the idea of origin” (30).

Prior to the Surrealist movement exploding in Japan, André Breton declared such a thing as ‘Surrealism’ in his 1924 “Manifesto of Surrealism.” He defined Surrealism as “psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern” (Breton 1924). In Breton’s manifesto his opening lines read,

So strong is the belief in life, in what is most fragile in life—*real* life, I mean—that in the end this belief is lost. Man, that inveterate dreamer, daily more discontent with his destiny, has trouble assessing the objects he has been led to use...if he still retains a lucidity, all he can do is turn back toward his childhood... (3).

Central to this expression of the real mind was the reality of dreams and undirected thought. Breton's lingering Dadaist connections were evident in his assertion that Surrealism had no aesthetic or moral preoccupations. The anti-aesthetic manifestation is that the artist gives up conscious control of the artwork, making this about the denial of

the artist-creator. It is further anti-aesthetic in that beauty is something that results from unexpected juxtapositions (duality) and not from composition. Juxtaposition, such as a submarine in the sky in Koga's *The Sea*, is an example of duality being expressed. The aim for Surrealists was to above all, resolve the two states of dream and reality, which are seemingly contradictory. Through the act of this resolution, what manifests negates the engagement of any rules or the expectation of a final product. What Breton further describes in his manifesto is a necessity for man to recover his innocence, and he suggests the way to do this is through reclaiming his imagination and using a medium to manifest his fantasies, giving "free rein to them" (18). I would rely on this last suggestion to make my practice a synthesis of the two artistic worlds that is the focus of this thesis.

The foundation of Surrealism relied heavily on the significance of the dreaming state, with far less interest placed in waking events with the significant exception of "automatic writing." Breton describes his interest in the organization of dreams, noting the lack of transitions, rather dreams abruptly move from excerpt to excerpt. Breton suggests that the waking state, that which interrupts dreaming, is the phenomenon of interference. He describes a method of "automatic writing" that mimics the unconscious dreaming state. Surrealist images come to the human mind spontaneously; they are not evoked according to Breton. Breton's emphasis of "automatic writing" provided a framework for my movement practice. Surrealists were also deeply interested in interpreting dreams as conduits for unspoken feelings and desires. In Breton's manifesto, he delineates two primary distinctions in Surrealism, "automatism" and "biomorphism" as Surrealist strategies. In psychology, "automatism" refers to involuntary actions and processes not under the control of the conscious mind, such as dreaming or breathing.

Automatism plays a role in Surrealists techniques such as spontaneous or automatic writing, painting, and drawing; free association of images and words and collaborative creation through games like Exquisite Corpse.<sup>3</sup> Biomorphism and automatism are not necessarily independent of one another: automatism may generate a variation on an organic image, such that the image looks biomorphic. Together, both relate to the surrealist interest in representing the process of dream thoughts.

### Duality, Symbolism and Time

In the literature that exists on Butoh and Surrealism the preeminence of duality, symbolism and time are not explicitly stated; however, for the purposes of this study they are three ways that these two forms connect. The consideration of duality, symbolism and time are the fibers that texture *Vessel Se(A) Moon* (the piece that arose out of my practice of distilling Butoh and Surrealism through the lenses of duality, symbolism and time). I present two examples that demonstrate the duality, symbolism and time elements in Surrealism and Butoh: Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid's Surrealist film, *Meshes of the Afternoon* from 1943, and the Butoh piece by Tatsumi Hijikata titled *Rebellion of the Body*, sometimes called *Revolt of the Flesh*.<sup>4</sup>

We see a constant dualism in *Meshes of the Afternoon* through Deren and Hammid's juxtaposition of the shadow and the physical body (Deren's image is the first to appear). This black and white film, with the music coincidentally composed by Teiji

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<sup>3</sup> See APPENDIX A for "Exquisite Corpse."  
([https://www.moma.org/learn/moma\\_learning/themes/surrealism/tapping-the-subconscious-automatism-and-dreams](https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/surrealism/tapping-the-subconscious-automatism-and-dreams))

<sup>4</sup>I attended a lecture by Morishita Takashi (Archivist at Hijikata Tatsumi Archive, Keio University) and screening of *Rebellion of the Flesh* at the Performance Art Institute in San Francisco on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Ito begins with a delicate arm holding a flower appearing from the top of the screen. This altering of perspective or tricking of our eye is something that was often used in Surrealism, often referred to as *trompe l'oeil*. The use of the shadow and the physical body, demonstrates the dual parts of the being, in a sense this is the simplest example of dualism; light and dark, yin and yang, corporeal and non-corporeal, dream and reality—all dualisms. This fuels the Surrealists fire.

Hijikata powerfully develops androgyny; a specific dualism in his Butoh masterwork, *Revolt of the Flesh* (even the title could be interpreted as a duality). Other dualisms abound in this piece. The use of high contrast to underscore the dualism is also prevalent.

There is some disagreement in the literature with regard to duality. A distinction that Sondra Fraleigh clearly states in *Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy* as not being a consideration is Japanese Butoh is the distinction between Western (Cartesian) split of mind/body. This is not the way in which duality is expressed through Butoh of Hijikata and Ohno. Fraleigh suggests that there is actually “nondualistic morphology” occurring in Butoh. She states that, “bodily experience in butoh is fluid and cyclic. It is more about identity in the making than a finished arrival” (47). Though I strongly agree with her impression that Butoh transformation is “fluid and cyclic” and even that it emphasizes “identity in the making” rather than a “finished project,” I do think that duality is a strong component to the transformative process in Butoh; the space between the dualities being expressed is the most authentic expression of the body. The point is that to the viewer, like in Surrealism, images can be different things at different times, and even at the same time.

Duality is expressed through a juxtaposition of symbols. The body is able to express juxtaposition through improvisation by exploring the process of evacuation of the ego, thus accessing the most primal, neutral state. I used this process of evacuating the ego to invite duality into my practice. A link between the two systems is through the abandonment of the ego (a kind of duality). Duality is not fixed. Sondra Fraleigh offers an example of the expansion of the shadow self that she experienced directly while in a workshop with Nakajima Natsu Nakajima<sup>5</sup> and Yoko Ashikawa. Fraleigh describes her experience as an “expanding of darkness—not in the sense of gloom, but more as in a dream, moving shadows imagistically out to my sides, behind me, and in front. Or stated more experientially: multiplying my shades of darkness, I expand into disappearance. Renewing my sense of self and connection in what Jung<sup>6</sup> explained as “active imagination” and the emergence of the dream body” (Fraleigh 70).

The abandonment of the ego is a tool for making the body available to express dualities, a neutral body. Imagery in both these artistic movements relies on images being transformed and thus transformative. The manifestation of duality takes on many forms in both Butoh and Surrealism. What I am selecting, for emphasis for the purposes of the distillation of a movement practice, is the most consistent way in which I see duality living in Butoh and Surrealism - through conscious abandonment of the ego. This abandonment of ego is an aim through surrendering the imagination of the body in the present. Abandonment is the process by which you manifest primal images to mutate and

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<sup>5</sup> I was so fortunate to study with Nakajima Natsu in San Francisco, CA during an intensive workshop in the summer of 2013. Nakajima Natsu is one of Diego Piñón’s teachers.

<sup>6</sup> Carl Jung (1875—1961), a Swiss psychiatrist and one of the founding fathers modern depth psychology.



morph. You let your mind/body wander so that the body can morph and not be dictated to by the conscious mind while at the same time is freed by the unconscious mind.

Being a bodily vehicle for imagery to flow through it is an aspect that Butoh and Surrealism share. Pure psychic automatism in Surrealism, as described by Breton in his “Manifesto of Surrealism” is a force beyond talent and image of personality, it is an evacuation of personality. Returning to Sas’ commentary on Hijikata’s Butoh, the dance is an expression of secretion, “a giving over or spilling over of the self into the exterior as though it were any kind of product or form”(30). In Butoh, the dancer must become a receptacle, abandoning technique, daily rituals, and the ego. Though the approach is to abandon the ego, what happened during “automatic writing” or “automatic movement” might be better characterized as an integration of all parts of the human. Butoh is a movement form in which the dancer makes visible the desires of the body to cultivate “the powers in the concrete irrationality of the spirit and the body, in the unconscious, in thoughts, memories and pains repressed by taboos” (Bergmark18). Sondra Fraleigh, in her 2010 book *Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy*, describes Butoh as a form that seeks to cultivate a body that acts as a concrete, objective container for transformation, and one that abandons ego. Hijikata described his practice as a dance that is “danced in a manner where he digs within himself for the roots of suffering by tearing at the superficial harmony.” The abandonment of ego is much like the pursuit of “absolute truth” in Breton’s Poetic Surrealism, by “freeing both interlocutors from any obligations of politeness ‘absolute truth’ can be achieved” (14). Another duality in Surrealism, as described by Breton, is among one of its common virtues. He describes

Surrealism as being perceivably arbitrary because of the ostensibly contradictory aspects of the form. It could be that,

...one of its terms is strangely concealed; or because, presenting itself as something sensational, it seems to end weakly (because it suddenly closes the angle of its compass), or because it derives from itself a ridiculous *formal* justification, or because it is of hallucinatory kind, or because it very naturally gives to the abstract the mask of the concrete..." (38).

Miryam Sas wrote, "Butoh is an effort to reach back to the moment when that terror or awe is still vivid, before its covering over—when the birth cry of the act can still be heard. That cry comes from a place of paradox, from an act and its negation at once."

The second element of convergence that I identified for my choreographic thesis between Butoh and Surrealism is symbolism. In Butoh, props are often used as metaphors to evoke strong imagery for the dancer and also for the observer. These objects may be referred to as "elements" as Diego Piñón often does or "materials" as Frances Barbe does (130). The elements can be anything really, such as an egg, a flower, a potato, etc. What makes these elements symbolic is the meaning that is assigned to it. For example, the egg can be the seed of your life, the flower can be the universe, and the potato can be the root of your ancestors. The meaning that is imbedded into the object makes it significant. In Surrealism, the use of symbolic images is also often applied. A frequent example in many Surrealist works post 1924 is the clock image, referencing time (or the manipulation of time). Another frequent example is that of an eye. The eye can be a reference to the portal that ingests and processes information from reality. When looking into the eye, the observer can access information about the eye's internal world. This is an especially relevant example of symbolism, if we consider the Surrealists emphasis on dreaming and the subconscious mind.

There was a related, specific artistic movement called Symbolism, which can give us some insight into the use of symbolism in Surrealism. Symbolism flourished as an art movement between 1885 and 1910. Though a separate movement from Surrealism, Symbolism provided a visual vocabulary and influence for Surrealists. Symbolist art rejected both Realism and Impressionism, earlier movements that experimented mostly with techniques of painting. Symbolists were driven to create evocative images rather than works that were directly descriptive. Symbolist painters often used mythological symbols and dream imagery to create a visual language of the soul (Balakian 9). Examples of Symbolist painters are: Gustave Moreau, Gustav Klimt and Léon Bakst. Symbolism began as a literary movement and moved to visual art, like Surrealism. Also like Surrealism, Symbolism was French driven.

In Butoh literature the term metaphor often comes up, I wish to expand the term “metaphor” to be a kind of symbolism. Miryam Sas wrote, “Expression is a kind of secretion, and secretion is a kind of metaphor in Hijikata’s language and in his dance” (30). Portraying dreamlike fantasies, Surrealist works are characterized by a realistic, irrational style. The Surrealists invented impulsive approaches to art making that were based upon the psychotherapeutic procedure of “free associations.” While Max Ernst created poignant, semi-abstract forms, Dali and René Magritte painted their dreamlike imagines in a realistic style, while using their own paranoiac-critical methods. Dream inspired symbols such as melting clocks and huge metronomes came to define the works of these Surrealist artists.

Butoh is not a formal dance syntax that exists within the Butoh technique, though a familiar body usage does exist, which is shared amongst different Butoh artists:

asymmetrical, angular, inwardly rotated limbs; off-kilter balances; small, isolated movements; and extra-musical rhythms. Eye usage is also very particular. The eyes are often thought of as hanging mirror balls that reflect everything around them. Fraleigh offers a general way of working with the eyes and the face by creating a dance from *butohfu* (dance notation or poetry), exploring how the face enters the dance, and then performing the face dance only. In this way, we understand the emphasis on subtlety and the specificity that is considered in the face is essential to the form. This attention or consideration of an active and alive face is a clear departure from the either extreme of expressive and melodramatic exaggeration or post-modern “stone-faced” performance. As in unlearning the “civilized body,” or the “trained body,” during a Butoh exploration, the mover will need to unlearn unconscious expressions and to allow the flesh of the face to be moved. In Butoh training, it is encouraged that the mover explore extreme edges and move all of the flesh towards one point, then another, then another; next, one can begin to explore the places in-between or the *ma* (interspace, pause, or space between). This *ma* is a kind of duality space, where things are not what they seem.

The third aspect shared between Butoh and Surrealism is that they are both particularly fascinated with time. Butoh is a time-based form; time as a metaphor often occurs in Surrealism, for example the imagery of melting clocks (for example: many works by Salvador Dali)<sup>7</sup>. While Butoh utilizes the body to achieve a manipulation of time through perception, Surrealism often relies on other mediums to be the vehicle for transference of the subconscious mind. It is the manipulation of time that is striking in Butoh, this happens through the use of extreme slowness. Patience is a practice that is

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<sup>7</sup> *The Persistence of Memory* (La persistencia de la memoria) by Salvador Dali, 1931.

necessary to the form; it exists through the time-based process of uncovering something within the mover. These ideas are distilled in Fraleigh and Nakamura's book, *Hijikata Tatsumi and Ohno Kazuo* in the "Dance Experiences" section where, for example, Ohno outlines the concept of "not starting" as the essence of Butoh (114). The example that I recall here to support the manipulation of time function in Butoh is Hijikata's *Rebellion of the Body*. In *Rebellion of the Body*, Hijikata elongates time through slowness. By evolving into a bodily situation slowly, he amplifies movement origins, creating the illusion of time pausing. His ability through Butoh, to make transposed time is Surrealism. The Surrealists treatment of time is not fixed it is floating, as is the "slowness" of Butoh. It makes the viewer float into dream consciousness by being unnatural.

Hijikata's longtime Butoh partner, Kazuo Ohno saw Harald Kreutzberg dance in 1934. Ohno's exposure to Kreutzberg's dances possibly influenced the Butoh birth that followed. During the seven nights of performances in Tokyo, Kreutzberg performed some of his most famous dances, including the *Engel der Verkündigung [Angel in Annunciation]* and the *Master of Ceremonies*. Though these dances are symmetrical and rather formal, much more so than early Butoh, intriguing parallels exist (Sas 26). The parallels are slowness, informality and precise movements offered with casualness (Sas 26). Surrealism's emphasis on time manifests firstly in the mere obvious, it is a time-based form, often with poetry or materials such as paint and canvas the primary mode for transference. The second aspect of time being emphasized in Surrealism is the specialness placed on the crepuscular time of day (between sunset and full darkness), liminal states. Surrealism as a method signified an art or the creation of art through a

process that corresponded rather closely to the state of dreaming. The states of dreaming and reality would then be resolved in an absolute reality, or a state beyond reality – *surréalité*. The exploration of this uncensored state was the key point; art was the byproduct in a sense. But in another sense, art was the means of exploration and expression. This notion of art as the means of exploration, and the corresponding de-emphasis on the product is a key element to both Butoh and Surrealism.

In the film *Meshes of the Afternoon* by Deren and Hammid, the use of time is like Butoh. Since the medium is film, and thus time-based, clearly the manipulation of time applies. The title of the piece indicates that the action is taking place at a specific time of day (the transition from day to night – this time of day is highly valued in Surrealism, known as twilight or crepuscular. It plays a specific role in Surrealism because of its perceived closeness to the dreaming state, a liminal state). Deren settles onto a chair after walking up a flight of stairs. She closes her eyes; as she does this, the camera frames the perspective of Deren, sinking into a dreaming state. This is indicated by the narrowing of the camera shot, and then the frame is shot through a tube-like object, further indicating the sinking inward to the characters internal dream world. This example also speaks to a symbol of the dream state.

#### Distillation of a Methodology

Having collected many rich ideas from Breton's 1924 manifesto and having also distilled these ideas, and Sondra Fraleigh's *Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy*, combined with my own Butoh dance experiences, I decided that I wanted to create a movement practice that comingled Butoh and Surrealism; considering especially duality, symbolism and time. Navigating through Fraleigh's book, I found my way to

Frances Barbe's brilliant dissertation. I rely here especially on Chapter 4, "Preparing Performers: Butoh and Performer Training" in her dissertation, *The Difference Butoh Makes: A Practice-Based Exploration of Butoh in Contemporary Performance and Performer Training*. This chapter helped to distill the Butoh aspect of my movement practice and has given me some insight into thinking about Butoh in the context of academic dance training.

One of the most fundamental elements of Butoh is the aim for transformation, to be authentic<sup>8</sup>. Sondra Fraleigh emphasizes that Butoh is an expression of developing a vast bodily range, which includes the imagination (71). The philosophy of Butoh "suggests bodily potential, not unity" (71). Butoh is a practice of quietly processing (inside), positions of not knowing, being lost, "and waiting, as they excavate the body's cellular memory and allow it to morph from image to image. Concerning the future, there is increasingly an aura of discovery and renewal in butoh" (72).

In Barbe's Chapter 4, "Training Repertoire" she discusses the training approach that she distilled, careful to not limit her practice to be a "definitive and 'universal' Butoh training method" (112). This chapter examines her approach for preparing students for the demands of Butoh-rooted work. Her approach applies methods from Tadashi Suzuki's

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<sup>8</sup> There is a distinction between authentic and Authentic. In the 1950's Mary Starks Whitehouse started a practice that involved free association of the body within a group of participants. Though I am familiar with this practice and have engaged in Authentic Movement with a certified facilitator, Melissa Rolnick, the authentic that I refer to in this research does not refer to Whitehouse's codified practice. I am using the term authentic to reference what Piñón says while instructing his students to discover their dance; He encourages his students to cease to express the ego, genuinely exploring a specific task such as express your animal instinct.

actor training method as practiced by her teachers, John Nobbs and Jacqui Carroll, as well as yoga.

Barbe applies stillness, slow motion, or small-scale movements and gestures to begin her workshops. I will include a few of her structures<sup>9</sup> as examples that I used to provoke my creativity. First I'll discuss, 4.4 "Training for Transformation." As previously stated, transformation is a key task in Butoh and is difficult to train. Barbe offers a way into transformation that is quite accessible. She strips the concept of transformation and distills it to be a sort of game, one that revs up the imagination, possibly a Western accommodation. The ripest of the three structures that she offers is 4.4.1 "Face and Mask Work." In this example, Barbe introduces a concept called "Sour Lemon," where she asks performers to make extreme face and body "masks" (123). Some of her examples include: "happy baby" and "cold shock" (123). On a particular cue, which could be a vocal cue or a chime, the performer must go into that particular "state" either instantaneously (on cue) with no visible process of change or very slowly (123). "They must maintain the 'life-force' of the state in stillness for it is in prolonged stillness that the performer observes the exact moment that a state starts to 'die.' The research is to ask how to inject life into it continually in order to maintain a still but not static state" (123).

4.4.2 "Materiality" is the second example from Barbe that I use. In this example, Barbe uses material elements to guide or evoke a particular energy from the performers.

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<sup>9</sup> Barbe explains that she prefers the terms "structure" and "experience" over "exercise" because of the implications that "exercise" carries. For example, the term exercise can be used to describe a bicep curl has a direct path to a single goal. Barbe prefers to open up the parameters for the pathway that one may take to arrive at the end, so the terms "structure" and "experience" open up other associations (113).



These objects are used to “objectify and transform the body” (130). The example of “walk as smoke” or become a “pillar of ash” are specific examples that she shares. These examples are meant to allow the mover to achieve a physical state of being that is beyond the daily self (130). Barbe includes that when watching a performer exploring “walking as smoke,” the observer does not recognize that the performer is “walking as smoke” because they are not miming; rather the observer recognizes that the performer is involved in a transformative process.

After researching the above scholars I was left with the intention and tools to generate my own Butoh and Surrealist choreographic process, considering especially duality, symbolism and time.

I am going to take a moment here to discuss the problematic tasks that I set forth for myself when seeking to distill a Butoh and Surrealist practice, the first being the mere fact that I am a Western dancer. How can I reconcile with the fact that I am seeking to distill a practice that involves the collision of two forms, Butoh from Japan and Surrealism from France, when both forms were generated in part to revolt against the West? It would be irresponsible of me to negate this important truth. I will borrow something that my teacher, Diego Piñón says often while instructing his students, and that is that “Butoh is universal.” The intention of the original form (Japanese Butoh) and the philosophy that maintains, which Sondra Fraleigh clearly states, is that Butoh is indeed a philosophy (76). “It is an unfinished metaphysical philosophy of the dancing body that accounts for weakness and death, identifying with nature, decay, regeneration, and transformation...”(76). Fraleigh also includes that “the cultivation of creative interspaces in butoh has promoted a global morphology that continues to evolve” (76).

Fraleigh also includes a section in, *Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy* called “Fallen Western Dancers” where she describes a question proposed by Gunji Masakatsu: is Kazuo Ohno “a fallen Western dancer, expelled from Japan, and then rediscovered?”(93). She describes the backgrounds of Butoh creators, Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno. They were not traditional Japanese dancers, they were modern dancers first trained in German Expressionism (Fraleigh 93). Since Butoh was rejected in Japan at its inception, Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno are “fallen Western dancers” claimed Gunji Masakatsu (Fraleigh 93). In the beginning of Butoh Hijikata and Ohno used their foundations of Western dance forms to incite their unique creative expression. They emphasized the power of individual expression, reflecting on Eastern nativism, thus transcending beyond traditional movement forms such as ballet and German Expressionism (Fraleigh 93).

I am a trained mover, taking classes in a variety of idioms beginning very young; I now primarily train in modern dance. I began studying Butoh in 2008 and my training since has been sporadic; though the training I have sought has influenced my thinking about movement and my choreographic processes. Fraleigh discusses the function of improvisational dance in university dance classes as being containers for the encouragement for expressing “basic elements of dance” (50). “Form, space, and goal-oriented improvisations explore lines, circles, or level change. Time is another matter. It is split into mathematical rhythmic units...Time and timeslessness, however, will be left out. Form and emptiness as well” (50). I identify with this description of improvising in a Western modern dance class; the emphasis on accessing creativity only penetrates the conscious body so deeply. In fact in my experiences, it has not been encouraged to be too

emotive. Herein lies yet another challenge for me; how can I evacuate all of the training that is stored in my body's memory? Diego Piñón expresses often, that the ability to transform and transcend is part of our privilege of being human and it is our task to try.

With the scholarship of those discussed in this chapter, I was eager to distill my own practice that sought to bridge Surrealism and Butoh through movement. What follows is a methodology for the formation of a syncretic practice.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

What really counts is to strip the soul naked. Painting or poetry is made as we make love; a total embrace, prudence thrown to the wind, nothing held back (Joan Miró 1936).

After gaining perspective about Surrealism and Butoh, especially the shared use of duality, symbolism and time, as well as examples of how to develop a practice, I wanted to craft a methodology of my own. Throughout the development of “DUALITY, SYMBOLISM, AND TIME: *A Convergent Practice in Butoh and Surrealist Expression*,” I was able to identify key points that helped me achieve the goals identified at the start of this research. I wanted to generate a creative practice that would yield a distilled process, resulting in a movement product. This product being something that could be offered as an example of what could arise from such a convergence needed to, above all, address duality, symbolism and time. For the purpose of this document, I will recall the developments chronologically to communicate each point in the progression.

#### Dream Journaling

The figure of ONE to whom dreams repair, becomes carefree and temerarious.  
(Akaji Maro 2007)

I began developing my methodology with dream journaling. I referred to the tools outlined in André Breton’s Surrealist Manifesto, “automatic writing” for ways in which to conduct a Surrealist directed creation. For the period of twenty-eight days I engaged in a practice of free association based on the recollection of my dreams.

The free association was not limited to writing, in fact I used many different mediums to recover my subconscious mind, such as: charcoal and paper, writing (poetry),

painting, gathering of symbolic objects, movement, photography, and voice recordings. See the appendices for examples of this process.

As mentioned in Chapter II, the crepuscular period is significant to Surrealism so, as often as I could, I recovered my dreams in the early morning, just after waking or if woken in the middle of the night, I tried to recover images from that sleep state that I had just left.

What resulted from all of this gathered material was proof of prominent images; images that I clearly favored in my dreaming state. Some of those images included a connection with my younger brother, water (calm and turbulent), the moon (its feminine qualities), floating on decaying wood and being caught in a web. The goal was not to analyze my dreams; I was not interested in creating a product that yielded a linear narrative. Nor was I seeking to tell a story through movement; I was however, experimenting with what could result from allowing dream images be the impetus for movement generation, thus resulting in a product.

After lifting the most significant (recurrent or most resonant) imagery recovered from my dreams, I began to distill a movement practice.

#### Surrealism and Butoh into a Practice

The next phase of experimentation involved generating movement based on the most prominent images recovered from my dreams. I used symbolic images that would occur in my dreams to develop movement rituals based on some of Diego Piñón and Frances Barbe's Butoh explorations. I also used a practice presented by Portland based Butoh artist, Mizu Desierto, that I will call "Embodiment of 9" to inspire the development of my movement product, *Vessel Se(A) Moon*. When selecting recovered

images to use in my studio practice, I took specific images such as ‘floating on the calm sea in a decaying wooden vessel, while being rained on’ and experimented with expanding them to become more universal ideas, such as: ‘hydrophilic’ meaning the attraction or affinity to water. The aim at opening up the imagine through expanding it’s meaning was in attempt to not ‘act’ or ‘mine’ anything; not relying on any known movement vocabulary or daily habits.

Often in Piñón’s Butoh, objects (symbolic) that are separate from the body are used to signify something that can assist the mover in activating deep parts of themselves. This may include an egg, imbuing the egg with the seed of my history, Or a head of cabbage that gets thrown around until it is disintegrated, signifying the tire that we start to develop of something, thusly turning it into garbage. The object could be anything really, what charges the object with significance is the imagination that is activated when we place meaning into the object. I used significant occurrences from my dream accounts to apply symbolism to my movement practice. I brought objects into my home studio, exposing the history of the object through movement.

One development of my process was dancing in the studio and ‘seeing’ myself while moving. I installed eleven different sized mirrors onto one wall in my home studio. While moving with objects, improvising with the imagery from my recovered dreams acting as the guide, or simplifying my movement to repetition of a ritual, I would video record the sessions and play them back to notice how my perspective was altered through the display of only some body parts (body parts missing or interrupted by non reflective space).

In October of 2013, I went to Portland, Oregon to participate in a three-day workshop focused on the integration of Body Mind Centering and Butoh, led by Renee Sills and Mizu Desierto. Desierto presented a task to the participants in the workshop that included dancing nine states that she introduced to us before beginning; this resulted in a ninety-minute exploration. Desierto cued all of the transitions through a music shift. Some of the ‘states’ that we were asked to explore included stillness and decay.

Desierto’s example of a movement practice evolving over time, while transitioning through specific states provided a solution for my evolving question of how to distill what were unstructured studio improvisations, guided by imagery. I was previously video recording most all of my improvisational sessions, sometimes reviewing them to make notes on what something felt like verses what it looked like.

After returning from working with Mizu Desierto and Renee Sills, I made the decision to improvise nine of the most resonant images from my practice and dance them in ninety-minutes. I did this three times, until I was ready to distill even more, condensing ninety-minutes into sixty, then thirty, until finally it became eighteen minutes.

The movement evolution of nine elements that I embodied is:

1. Meditation on stillness,
2. Vibration into emptiness (“on a bridge the dew with the head of a tabby cat lulls itself to sleep” – Breton)
3. Body of water (Be as water is. Flow around the edges of that, which is in your path)
4. Glass table (Our thought is an eye)
5. Vortex into age 4, (buried in the sand)

6. Pointillist Carrington—Tanning,
7. Evaporate Decay (chicken transformation –“surrealism will usher you into death, which is a secret society”- Breton),
8. Attraction to water,
9. Transcend.

### Studio Practice Examples

Below are seven movement practice examples that I developed to help guide my movement distillation in the studio. These examples were developed based on Frances Barbe’s Chapter 4, “Preparing Performers: Butoh and Performer Training” in her dissertation as well as pieces that I have gathered from work with Diego Piñón’s explorations. The examples described in this section were used primarily in the early stages of my studio practice. Through the application of these tasks, I was able to gather unfamiliar movement vocabulary, a vocabulary that sought to evacuate the technical movement training that is woven into my body. By exploring the variety of tasks that I created for myself, the aim was to eliminate the impulse to make habitual shapes while improvising. Instead, the challenge was to use my imagination as the impulse for movement.

Movement Practice I. *Being still*: This exercise can be done standing, sitting or lying down. It involves activating my senses, through non-activity. Often, I would begin each studio practice with this task, to ground myself into the space, becoming aware of time passing. This can be done with eyes closed or open. I found it to be most useful to have my eyes closed, allowing for more internal focus to be cultivated rather than fixating on information outside of my body.



Movement Practice II. *Face in the mirror*: This task involves creating facial masks of emotions including those of: happy, sad, lust, surprise, anger, fear, hope, desperation, etc. This is to be done without the use of a physical mirror. While ‘trying on’ the range of different emotional masks (exaggerated expressions), the aim is to imagine what its reflection looks like, engaging in an expression dialogue with the imagining of expression and one’s ability to manipulate physical expression.

Movement Practice III. *Vortex*: This exercise involves imagining that the body is caught in an elemental vortex such as water or wind. It is an experiment of yielding to a force outside of the physical body, imagining and exploring how that force can manipulate the body.

Movement Practice IV. *Filling/emptying the container*: This process involves imagining that the body is a container that can be filled and emptied with elements and ‘states’ including: water, air, fire, sadness, masculine energy, feminine energy or an animal’s intuition. The task is to experiment with what could be possible if I could evacuate ego, daily habits, personality and preferences and be filled and emptied with things outside of myself. Often I ease into this exploration with both feet planted on the ground, in parallel with torso folded over legs. I first imagine that I am empty and wait for the impulse to be filled up. Since our bodies are primarily water, I often begin with the force of water filling up inside of my body and being emptied.

Movement Practice V. *Restriction*: This task involves non-access to limbs, either arms or legs. I select a pair of limbs to restrict and bind them together with twine exploring what kinds of experiences are possible without full bodily participation. As I advanced along in the development of *Vessel Se(A) Moon*, I applied this task with the

structured material that was part of the piece. With restriction, I found that I could explore range with other parts of my body that I wouldn't typically have expressed fully.

Movement Practice VI. *Blindfold (seeing the future)*: This task involves using a blindfold to explore movement in the studio. Guided by intuition and the third eye on the forehead, one can explore the dance of the future.

Movement Practice VIII. *Umbilical cord*: This task involves tying a piece of twine around the waist, or any limb, with a rock attached to a long piece of twine hanging from the body. This exploration involves imagining that the twine is the umbilical cord; this dance involves dancing one's beginning.

#### Creating *Vessel Se(A) Moon*

I distilled the nine embodiments into eighteen minutes. This eighteen minute sequence is what developed into *Vessel Se(A) Moon*, the piece is a movement offering that resulted from distilling prominent dream images. The dream images that I sourced are:

- my brother with long wavy hair,
- a dilapidated vessel that was also my body,
- a conversation with the feminine moon,
- the evening of the death of my grandmother
- working for my family business,
- many occurrences of floating on a large body of water

I sought to distill the essence of the dreams, expanding them to become more universal.

For example, I often recovered images of my younger brother from my dreams, to

symbolize him; I developed the umbilical cord task. The twine tied around my waist was a reference to being connected to my family.

To pay homage to my teacher Diego Piñón, I tied many pieces of found red material together to create a very long attachment. This attachment was a reference to what Piñón speaks a lot about during his teachings, non-attachment. The color red is something that is almost always used in Piñón's work. I recently asked Piñón what significance the color red has to him and he told me that it is a reference to his heart and his blood. For me, the red is also symbolic of my grandmother and a dream that I often have of her, a piece of her coral jewelry.

I created a mast and a sail to signify the voyage that I was embarking on, my body as the vessel and the earth as the large body of water. To represent the feminine moon recovered from my dream, I selected nine movers to participate in forming a circle around my body. Each mover was attached to me with a piece of twine; this twine symbolized our umbilical and other connections. Here I am interpreting the symbols and signifiers closely; however, there are many layers attached to these examples, including dualism and multiple symbols.

As I processed through the creation of materials that would be used in my practice/*Vessel Se(A) Moon*, the process of creating the materials became part of the movement practice. I was less and less able to separate my 'daily' (everyday tasks such as washing dishes, folding clothes, falling asleep, etc.) from the practice. For example I constructed a web-like net in collaboration with textile artist Anna Marie Veysey that became part of my offering dress, when more became known about the structure of my

movement offering, creating materials to layer into *Vessel Se(A) Moon* became the improvisation. This is especially true for the sail and mast that I created.

#### Sound Landscape: Collaboration with Composer Andrew Stiefel

I worked with musician and composer, collaborator and friend Andrew Stiefel to generate the sound landscape for *Vessel Se(A) Moon*. Stiefel is completing graduate studies in composition from the University of Oregon. We collaborated on three previous projects from 2012-2014. Sound was an important aspect of my studio practice, though it was recorded sounds that I used to guide my moving experience or create an environment for the space in the studio.

Stiefel is interested in amplifying sounds found in the natural environment with instruments both found and traditional. For example, Stiefel wanted to study the birds that would be sounding during *Vessel Se(A) Moon*, his interest when creating sound for the piece was in generating sound that would compliment the birdsongs by creating instrumentation that would emulate the birdsongs. Stiefel and I were engaged in a dialogue about my movement generation from its inception. We had initially decided to have him witness my practice through its duration; however, we made the decision for him to not see the structure of *Vessel Se(A) Moon* until the month before the movement offering at Mount Pisgah. This mystery gave him the chance to develop music based on the ideas that expressed about the movement rather than the movement itself. I wanted Stiefel's influence to come from the rich dream imagery that I was sourcing for movement.

Stiefel wrote a piece of music for two percussionists and two flutists. The percussion included: obsidian chimes that Stiefel himself constructed, rocks, two gongs,

four singing bowls, and a bell tower. Stiefel wanted to amplify the bird songs at Mount Pisgah as well as the sounds created by the elements (wind, rain). The score is improvisational, it required that the performers give space to the sounds in the natural environment, careful not to over play.

### From Studio to Site

I selected a location at Mount Pisgah, Buford Park Arboretum in Eugene, Oregon to offer *Vessel Se(A) Moon*. The site was a place that I connected strongly with. The rock formation on a west facing side of the mountain, created a natural amphitheater, which was a great amplifier for sound.

I transitioned from my home studio to the location at Mount Pisgah, one month before the offering. I had received permission from Lane County Parks to present my movement offering on April 26, 2014 as well as permission to be on the location practicing.

When I moved from my studio to Mount Pisgah there were many new concerns to address, such as the weather. In March and April, it is typically very wet in Eugene. The rain was something that I had to be aware of when deciding when to present my outdoor movement offering. I selected a date that was far enough into April that it would hopefully yield tolerable weather conditions.

### Offering of *Vessel Se(A) Moon*

This eighteen-minute piece included, eight other movers, four musicians, a composer, three videographers and two photographers, as well as many friends who volunteered their time on the day of the offering to post signs, paint dancers, and many other tasks.

Andrew Stiefel and I decided to offer *Vessel Se(A) Moon* at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014. This time was selected specifically because of its correlation to the sunset. Stiefel developed his music score based on the sounds that would be present during the transition from day to night, the crepuscular phase.

At 4:30 p.m. the eight others movers involved in the piece arrived to begin painting themselves in the traditional white body paint often seen in Butoh performances. I chose to have the performers apply this body paint because of the transformative aspect that it can invoke. There is a ritual involved in the process of applying the paint (traditionally wax mixed with rice powder), one that I learned through the Butoh Company Dairakudakan in 2008. At the start of the application, silence is encouraged to induce an altered state, to transform into something and someone other than the 'self.'

The day of the offering, the weather was very unpredictable. It rained and hailed, was frigidly cold and then the sun came out. It was difficult to know what weather conditions we would be performing in exactly, so we tried to stay as warm as possible leading up to the 7:00 p.m. offering. When people began to arrive, a dear friend, James Wood and his son walked the entire site, blessing and cleansing it with sage and stones. Christian Cherry and Andrew Stiefel greeted witnesses at the bottom of the trail. Stiefel lead the witnesses in with the task to listen to their own breathing by plugging their ears. The witnesses were lead up the trail and to the site in a single file line, to form a circle around the eight movers lying in a circle around me and my mast and sail.

My task was to transition through the nine states that I created, to happen over eighteen minutes. The movers around me, slowly, stood up, connecting with their roots and walked a circle around me. They were all attached to me with twine, symbolizing an

umbilical cord. I was also attached to the piece of red material that scaled the entire side of the mountain; the red attachment was tied to my sail, with a rock tied to the end of it, symbolizing an anchor and the weight that I carry with me always.

The movers took eighteen minutes to walk up the side of the mountain, ending at midway at the top of the mountain, connecting to the red attachment, which attached to me. They then disappeared behind brush, to then reappear at the end of the offering, to finish the circle.

I finished the piece by walking up the side of a mound comprised of many small pebbles, residue from exploding the side of amphitheater rock wall.

## CHAPTER IV

### EVALUATION

#### Evaluation of My Methodology

Early on during the development of my studio based movement practice, I discovered the challenges of working alone. Often, when practicing Butoh dance, I am one in a collective. Without having other movers engaged in my practice with me, it left no possibility for dialogue about the process, though dialogue is something that I feel is essential to the form. The dialogue with others that arises from practice often sheds a new perspective on personal internal commentary; sometimes shifting foci away from personal experience or confirming shared feelings. If I had the opportunity to test this methodology again, I would include more movers during the process of developing and distilling a practice.

During the studio based practice phase, I relied on video recording to gather information about what something felt like versus what something looked like. The video recorder (computer) also acted as a kind of witness to the process. Since I was aware that I was (sometimes) being documented, my attention was often drawn to the video recorder, sometimes distracting me from delving into each specific task. Perhaps the most valuable information gathered from the video, during the time when I needed to start distilling a sequence, was my reliance on familiar movement vocabulary. As mentioned in Chapter II, I am a trained dancer, so my habits come from specific movement idioms. Often in the context of an academic improvisational course, the filtering of recognizable 'steps' is acceptable; however, in the context of the Butoh and Surrealist system that I wanted to create, recognizable 'steps' was not what I wanted to result from being guided



by imagery.

The reliance on our daily habits is something that Diego Piñón discusses as being a part of our natural tendency. He expresses the importance of moving in service of me and being authentic. This was a difficult task for me to integrate. Since I have so much movement vocabulary written into my body, the Butoh/Surrealist practice that I was distilling in my home studio required that I abandon my body knowledge, unlearning the movement vocabulary that I had gathered over the years, to be open for authentic expressions guided by imagery. I went through a phase during the nearly seven-month developmental process, where I relied on very minimal and slow movements, exploring the depths of moving images through my body.

Regarding the convergence of Butoh and Surrealism, going into this project I had more physical experience with Butoh than Surrealism, so I knew that it was going to be challenging for me to give both systems equal weight in my focus and the development of my studio practice. It remained a challenge throughout the project, to understand how Surrealism could manifest in the body since there are few examples of dance-based Surrealists. In Johannes Bergmark's paper, "Butoh—Revolt of the Flesh in Japan and a Surrealist Way to Move," he cites a performance artist from the 1970s named Alice Farley. The piece that Farley performed in New York was titled *In(visible Woman)* and *Surrealist Dance*, I could find little recovered material documenting this piece. Sondra Fraleigh discusses a dancer; American Maureen Flemming that references both Butoh and Surrealism in her work calling it "surreal movement poetry" that explores the "journey of the soul" (Fraleigh 77). It was my intuition that led me to merge Butoh and Surrealism when I discerned what my thesis research was going to be. As I engaged in

the process of gathering literature about the two systems as well as physicalizing both, I was less and less able to navigate their differences. I will express this more fully in my conclusion, the notion of non-separation between Butoh and Surrealism.

Without a clear direction of how I was going to distill my practice into something that I could offer, it was through the mentorship of Mizu Desierto in October of 2013 that I was inspired to condense my loose structure into a frame of nine. This frame, though limiting in its specificity, allowed me to decide which images I was going to fully express over time.

The decision to offer *Vessel Se(A) Moon* in April, came after I decided that I would like to be somewhat comfortable in the weather conditions that I would present in. I am satisfied that this was a decision that was made early on, because it allowed for a lot of time to be engaged in my movement practice, to ‘live’ the images honestly in my body. Something that I considered when developing the structure for dream journaling (one week), was that I may become bored with dancing the same images over and over; however, I used the images as points of reference, while acknowledging though my body that I was constantly evolving and changing. Using a specific image for example the evening of my grandmother’s passing, as a point of reference, during any given movement session, that same image could spark another memory. Instead of forcing that memory out of my consciousness, I could use the information to source movement. When I was honestly recovering images and allowing the images to guide the movement, I was not trapped dancing known movement vocabulary.

Around February 2014, my practice transitioned from primarily being a solo movement one into involving more administrative tasks such as organizing a photo shoot

to capture the images for the posters, securing the permit for Mount Pisgah, gathering and creating materials to be used in *Vessel Se(A) Moon*, and going from the studio to the site to move through my dance.

Overall, this thesis yielded an interesting and engaging task for me. While reflecting on the process, I do wish that I had involved more witnesses along the way. The practice became such a precious animal for me that I preserved it for primarily myself. I think that it would have been valuable to consider more input from others. Without much feedback from others, I was able to make choices fueled by my intuition; however, different perspectives could have been useful, encouraging me to consider making different choices, things that I had not considered, rather than my preferences. I do think that because self- evaluation was written into the process-making, what resulted was a direct reflection on my own artistic voice. I did involve my thesis chair, Christian Cherry along the way, and I am grateful for the input that he generously offered, especially his questions on how duality, symbolism and time were manifesting in my practice.

I will now transition into evaluating the offering of *Vessel Se(A) Moon* at Mount Pisgah on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

#### Evaluation of the *Vessel Se(A) Moon* Offering on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014

The final movement offering was an exciting endeavor; it was essentially the first time that I shared my movement material with others. Because of the unpredictable weather conditions on that day, it was difficult to know what to expect during the time of the offering. It was very cold, wet and windy outside, making it very difficult to stay warm.

Andrew Stiefel's sound score involved the participation of the witnesses to generate some sound. Stiefel led the witnesses in a silent meditation that was to evolve into a sound expression. There was little participation from the witnesses in this regard. After reviewing the video of *Vessel Se(A) Moon*, it is my feeling that the witnesses may have been overwhelmed with stimulus upon walking up to the space of the movement offering. Since *Vessel Se(A) Moon* was not a typical "dance performance" performed in a typical performance venue, it was possibly a new experience for most of the people who chose to attend. There were a lot of senses being activated, so it is possible that the witnesses did not understand Stiefel's directions, forgot about them as time passed, or were embarrassed or unsure about their role in participating. Audience participation is often much less demanding and certainly less abstract/philosophical. Regardless of the outcome of the witnesses' portion of the sound score, Stiefel and I anticipated that a lack of involvement might happen, thus not making the audience portion of the score crucial.

Lastly, with the presence of other people observing my movement evolution, it was more difficult to stay present in my dance. There were moments that I noticed that I was taken away from my tasks in the dance. Bringing witnesses into the movement process (studio practice) earlier could have helped mitigate this problem. Because of the nature of the nine elements that I embodied, there were no arcs to the piece. Often in a dance there is a climax, It was important for me to not construct or manufacture a dance, I wanted to develop a piece out of a practice and I do think that my goal was achieved.

After the offering was completed at Mount Pisgah, I experienced a sense of resolution. It was satisfying to share the result of a nearly eight-month process. Since I had not placed a great deal of emphasis the "product" being the most significant part of

the project, I was satisfied with the research endeavor that resulted in an offering, I was less focused on the perfection of details, rather, I was interested in the honesty of the movement of imagery through my body, yielding into a transformation.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

If we are to imagine Butoh as in any sense a return to Surrealism as suggested by Miryam Sas in her paper titled, “Hands, Lines Acts: Butoh and Surrealism,” it would be a “return by moving away.” The similarities between Butoh and Surrealism, if Butoh effects any kind of return to Surrealism or seems at home in Surrealist ideas, is accomplished only through a refusal of all known precedents and forms of creation. Paradoxically, in the end, the achievement or attempt has much in common with Surrealism (Sas 30). At the root of both of the forms is a recovery of dream images, which is an activation of the childlike imagination; Hijikata calls upon the necessity of remembering the origin condemning “what we usually call expression is, in fact, the name of that which has forgotten its origin” (Sas 30). This muse (dream recovery) creates and opening for the manifestation of duality (evacuation of ego), symbolism, and time to emerge through a medium.

The position that Sas offers, of Butoh being a “return by moving away” though a compelling approach, is not the position that I seek to embrace after undergoing this body research of DUALITY, SYMBOLISM, AND TIME: *A Convergent Practice in Butoh and Surrealist Expression*. I feel that both Surrealism and Butoh sought to embrace similar ideologies; therefore, Butoh does not arrive at Surrealism through firstly refusing. The most compelling result of combing both Surrealism and Butoh, using my body as the primary research tool, was the semblance of the two systems. Butoh looks like Surrealism, and Surrealism can appear as the materialized internal organization of Butoh imagery. Therefore, Butoh is a kind of Surrealism. Butoh can be viewed as a sort of

Surrealism, a very special theatrically set form, but essentially a Surrealism.

With this thesis I aimed to examine, through three identified shared lenses of Butoh and Surrealism, improvisation and studio exercises rooted in duality, symbolism and the manipulation of time, culminating in a performance. I also sought to develop a choreographic process that could function as an example for other artists interested in the convergence of Butoh and Surrealism. The artistic outcome of this process was a movement offering that served as an example of what could arise from a process of converging Butoh and Surrealism. A video of the final offering which I titled *Vessel Se(A) Moon* is included in this document.

Although the creation of *Vessel Se(A) Moon*, was purely an example of the development of a process, I felt successful in the artistic product. I feel I achieved my artistic and aesthetic goals through the process of “DUALITY, SYMBOLISM, AND TIME: A Convergent Practice in Butoh and Surrealist Expression.” With the examples produced in this movement research, scholars and choreographers interested in pursuing a choreographic process that utilizes inquiry into the connections of Butoh and Surrealism could employ “DUALITY, SYMBOLISM, AND TIME: A Convergent Practice in Butoh and Surrealist Expression.” It is my hope that this research can serve as an opening for further inquiry.

Though the inception of Butoh happened in Japan in the 1950s and Surrealism was born in France in the 1920s, the systems are still relevant because of their emphasis on using our imaginations as the detonation for creativity. When we recover our origins, we can create space for our future, there is rich imagery that hangs in this balance.

## Summary

This project yielded a very interesting and exciting movement offering, *Vessel Se(A) Moon*. I was surprised by what I was capable of creating through the engagement of such a detailed and unusual process, one that relied on my dreams as the impetus for distilling a practice. My aim when setting out to generate a Butoh/Surrealist practice was to create a process that could be shared with others. Below, I share suggestions for the engaged reader that wishes to embark on such a voyage. May your journey be rich.

- Limit your dream journal to a short time period, such a 5 days. There will be so many rich images that arise when you get into the “automatic” aspect of the writing. You will have a difficult time distilling which images to hold onto.

- Select a studio space that inspires you. In my case, it was my spare bedroom that I cleared out to be my sacred movement space. Though not initially inspiring, it became a gallery space that I could rearrange with mirrors and introduce props into. I also set up a video recorder that stayed in the same position.

- When distilling the movement practice, curiously approach each studio improvisation as your own unique expression. Start to name things early on, such as my example of the “umbilical cord”. Lift images from your dreams and expand the imagery to make the themes more universal. The “umbilical cord” image was an expanded idea from a dream about my younger brother.

- I recommend distilling your images to a manageable number such a nine. It was important for me to keep the number of images small so that I was honestly able to remember the images as they passed through my body and to keep them clear.

- If you intend on performing in another location such as I did (Mount Pisgah),



explore that location early on in your process.

Reflect often during your practice with whatever medium you choose. I continued to dream journal throughout the entire process.

Invite witnesses into your private studio practice, this is something that I regret not doing during my process. Working alone in such a detailed and unusual process for such a long time began to get lonely. I was longing for dialogue and feedback. This could be a rich additive to this Butoh/Surrealist practice.

Lastly, enjoy the unique expression that arises.

## APPENDIX A

### FREE ASSOCIATE AND PLAY EXQUISITE CORPSE

Below are the instructions for two Surrealist activities from the MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) website ([www.moma.org/learn/moma\\_learning/themes/surrealism/tapping-the-subconscious-automatism-and-dreams](http://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/surrealism/tapping-the-subconscious-automatism-and-dreams)):

#### Free Associate

Sigmund Freud and other psychoanalysts used a variety of techniques to discover the **subconscious** thoughts of their patients. The Surrealists used many of the same techniques to stimulate their writing and art. One of the best-known techniques is called “**free association**.” You will need a partner for this activity. Copy five of the following words onto a sheet of paper and read them to your partner one at a time. After you read each word, instruct your partner to respond immediately with the first word that comes to mind. Jot down their responses next to each word on the paper, then switch! Are any of these associations surprising? Feel free to come up with a new list of words for additional rounds. Round 1: Pine tree Flashlight Book Hand  
Round 2: Mushroom Parrot Ship Bus Glove

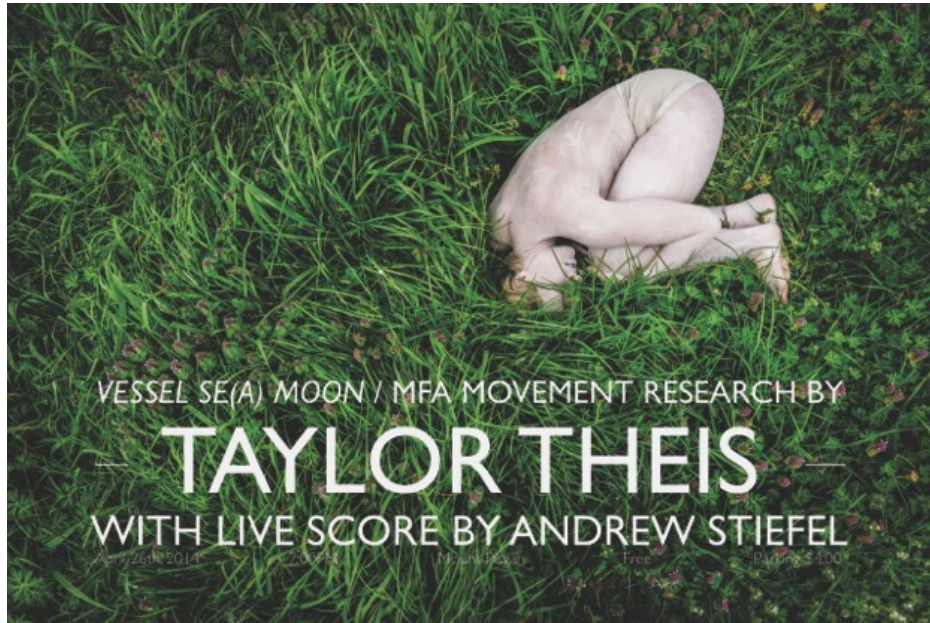
#### Play Exquisite Corpse

These instructions for playing “Exquisite Corpse” were originally published in a 1927 issue of the Surrealist journal *La révolution Surréaliste*. Play a round with your family or friends (ideally in groups of four). The instructions can be adapted to make drawings, collages, and poems.

1. A piece of paper is folded into the same number of sections as there are participants.
2. The paper is unfolded and given to the first player, who draws in the first space, spontaneously, leaving slight traces of lines extending into the next section. The player then folds the paper over to hide what he or she drew.
3. Each player continues the drawings in their successive section, taking cues from the bits of lines that their predecessor left visible.
4. When the last player has finished, the sheet is opened to reveal the full drawings.
5. What was it like to draw or write without seeing the other sections? Are you pleased with the results? How do you think your drawings or poems would have differed if you'd had a chance to view the previous contributions?

APPENDIX B

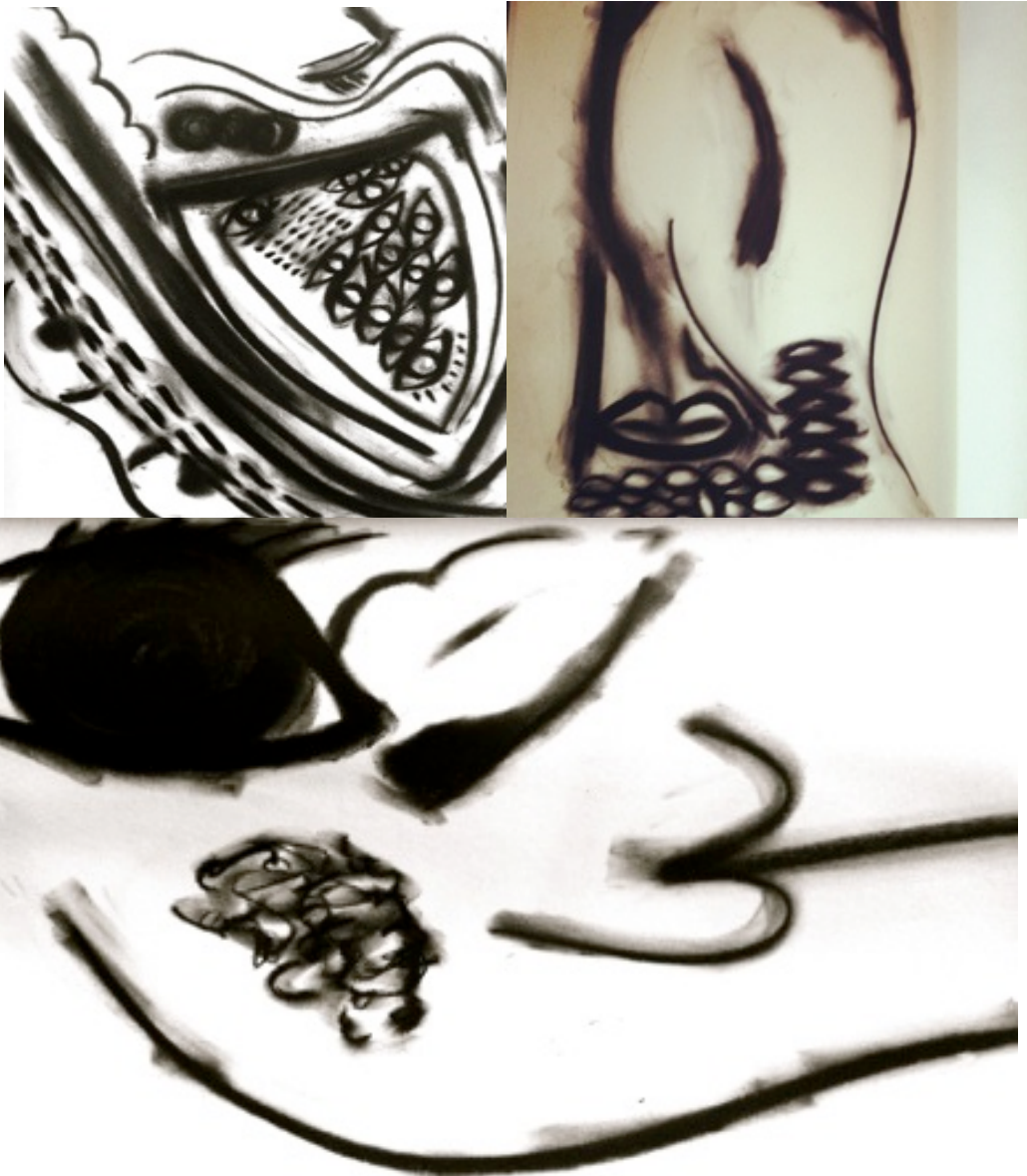
*VESSEL SE(A) MOON* POSTERS



## APPENDIX C

### EXAMPLES OF DREAM JOURNALING

These sketches are examples of what was produced from dream journaling. Medium: Charcoal on paper.





APPENDIX D

DREAM JOURNALING CONTINUED



## APPENDIX E

### CHARCOAL “AUTOMATIC WRITING”

This is another example of a charcoal “automatic writing” manifestation from dream recovery. This images became the map to the pathway of *Vessel Se(A) Moon* at Mount Pisgah.



## APPENDIX F

### IMAGES FROM *VESSEL SE(A) MOON*

The following are the images captured by photo journalist, Casey Minter of *Vessel Se(A) Moon* on Saturday April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at Mount Pisgah. The offering began at 7:00 p.m. and was attended by around fifty people. These images are included in this document with permission from Casey Minter.





































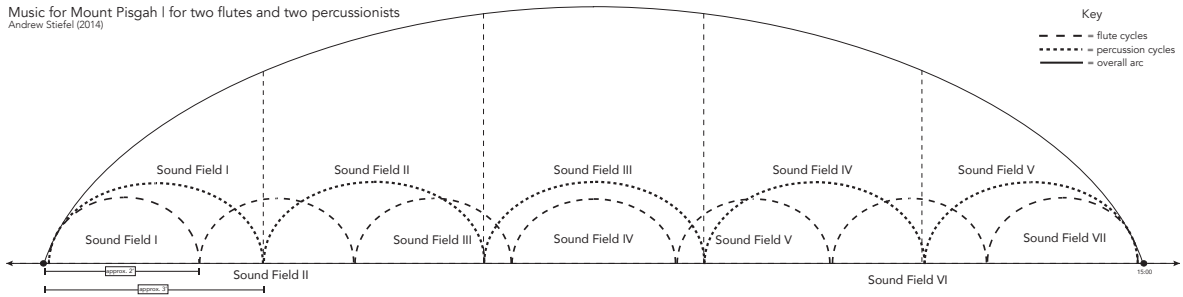


# APPENDIX G

## ANDREW STIEFEL'S SCORE

This is the improvisational score that Andrew Stiefel created for *Vessel Se(A) Moon*. This document is included with permission from Andrew Stiefel.

Music for Mount Pisgah I for two flutes and two percussionists  
Andrew Stiefel (2014)



### Performance Notes

Your role as performer is to amplify or translate the sounds you here around you. Gradually erase yourself as you become the voice of the soundscape around you.

50% or more of the piece is silence. Listen to the environment around you. The sounds you hear are the primary musical material of the piece.

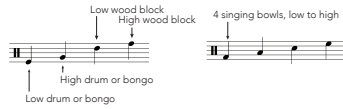
Do not study the other parts. Listen to the other performers—human, animal, or force of nature—and find the songs you have in common.

#### Melospiza melodia: the song sparrow

Song Sparrows share their music with the community around them. Each bird knows 7-9 songs, of which it has 2-5 songs in common with each of its neighbors. These shared songs form a network of sound that envelopes the landscape.

The material provided represents a starting point. You should listen to the birds around you and enter their community by imitating their songs.

#### Percussion notation



### Audience listening meditation

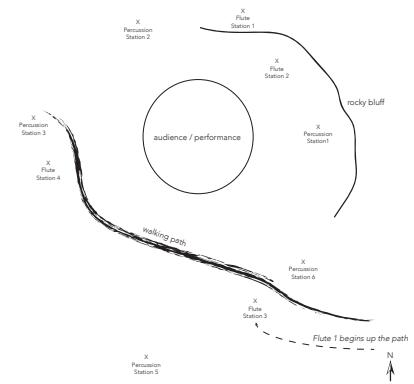
As the audience enters the performance space, they are led in one complete revolution around the area before being seated in a circle.

Start by listening to your own breathing cycle. As you become aware of your natural rhythms, gradually make the sound of your breathing audible. Begin to expand your awareness to the sounds in the environment around you. Pick one sound to focus on. Discover its primary pitch. Gradually begin to reinforce the pitch of the sound source by softly humming or singing its primary pitch. Allow the intensity of your voice to increase very slowly. Continue humming or singing as long as you can naturally and until all others are quiet. Always be aware of your breathing cycle.

### Percussion set-up

- Station 1 & 4
  - 1-2 sets of obsidian wind chimes
- Station 1
  - 4 singing bowls
- Station 4
  - 1 bell tree
- Station 2 & 5
  - 2 wood blocks or other wood sounds
  - 2 bongos or other drums
- Station 3 & 6
  - 1 small to medium gong or suspended cymbal

### Spatial Arrangement



APPENDIX H

“AUTOMATIC WRITING”

Below is the result of a dream journaling practice that I engaged in during the distillation of my Butoh/Surrealist practice.

BELLEY TO BELLY  
UMBILITCAL CORDS

MAMA  
PRESSURE  
DISSOLVE

I AM  
MYSTERY  
SAFE  
TIME  
GUTS  
WRINKES

COIL  
WOMB  
FATHER

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