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Taking Flight Reflection

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Taking Flight Reflection

Erratum

Sponsored by Mark Broomfield

Taking Flight Reflection

Cooper Breed

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ABSTRACT

Taking Flight was originally choreographed by Mark Broomfield over fifteen years ago. The piece was solo work created for a young man exploring his place in this world and titled *La Pasion Coje Vuelo*. Editor's note: *This reflection gathers the thoughts and impressions of one of the dancers for the 2020 restaging.*

In the 2019-20 academic year, Mark Broomfield restaged *La Pasion Coje Vuelo* for the spring performance of the SUNY Geneseo Dance Ensemble. He reimagined and recreated this piece after casting Sonia Bartolomeo ('20) and me, Cooper Breed. Broomfield was able to take a piece he once created and rework it as *Taking Flight* to fit the current dancers.

Throughout the restaging process, we discussed the piece's original meaning and how the movement explores risk-taking and determination in pushing yourself to new heights. In addition to this, we were encouraged to form our ideas and messages. I interpreted this piece to surround this idea of taking in the environment around you and incorporating it into who you are, learning from it, and letting it make you stronger.

There were two distinct yet symbiotic parts when it came to developing and indulging ourselves in this piece. The first was creating a personal connection: How are we interpreting this piece and its movement? Further, how are we bringing ourselves to it? To facilitate finding answers to these questions, Broomfield asked us to bring in three artifacts from our lives that we felt represented who we were as individuals. The three artifacts that I chose were Buddhist prayer flags, a ceramic elephant that I had painted as a child, and a photo of my sister and me as young children. The Buddhist prayer flags are an homage to my Chinese heritage and they bring forward their many meanings. The ceramic elephant represents a playful and simplistic view of life. Last, the photo reflects the importance of family in my life.

The second part was to create a character to portray to bring that personal connection to life. How can we portray our personal connection through the movement? The development and creation of characters would allow for an emotional disconnection between

ourselves and the piece. It allows for the vulnerability of the piece to fall on a fictional character, not on your own well-being.

One of the most powerful preparation exercises was to review the entire piece and assign motivation and purpose to each movement. We asked ourselves why the character moved in a certain way, and what caused them to do so. I was able to incorporate the meaning of my personal artifacts by applying them to my character and letting them influence the motivation. I let serenity guide my character and allow for those qualities to seep into my movement.

The solo performance and the film, shot and edited by Keith Walters and Mat Johnson, also became symbiotic parts. The solo work could be seen as the power of the individual, showing challenges and triumphs. In contrast, the film is a reflection of collaboration and friendship. Together the two parts bring forth a deeper meaning to the overall project. They are pieces that both challenge and complement the other.

I am very thankful to have had this experience during my time at SUNY Geneseo and to have an artifact such as this. I am also very thankful to be able to share this with one of my very first friends at SUNY Geneseo. As much as this piece was a solo work, it became a collaborative process between myself, Sonia Bartolomeo, and Broomfield. Sonia and I share a lot of similarities, not only in our interests, but in our values and lived experiences. I think it is these qualities we share that make the video artifact so beautiful and relatable to our audience.

A recording of Taking Flight is available in the online edition of Proceedings of GREAT Day 2020, found at <https://knightscholar.geneseo.edu/proceedings-of-great-day/vol2020/iss1/6>.