

tasa envision

Spring 2016



Texas Association of Schools of Art

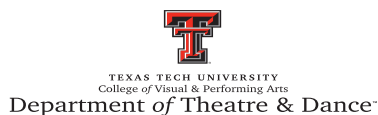
2015 Texas Tech University Recap

Texas Tech University
College of Visual and Performing Arts
in collaboration with TASA:

Texas Association of Schools of Art *present:*

Interdisciplinary Arts Conference **ARTS PRACTICE RESEARCH** *Scholarship, Pedagogy, and the Creative Process*

OCTOBER 1 - 3, 2015



In teaching the fine and performing arts, real-time and immersive learning engages students in “arts practice”—that is, in the processes, techniques, skills, data-sets, and critical perspectives whose combination in real time yields the art object or experience. **Arts Practice Research**, organized in trans-disciplinary collaboration with the Texas Tech College of Visual & Performing Art, Texas Association of Schools of Art (TASA), the TTU School of Art, the TTU Vernacular Music Center, the TTU Department of Theatre & Dance, the Roots Music Institute, the Department of Fashion Design, and the Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts, will bring together teachers and students, creators and scholars, campus and community, vernacular and cultivated genres, “traditional” and “modern” idioms.

Nick Cave will serve as Keynote Speaker for the Conference. Mr. Cave is a Messenger, Artist and Educator working between the visual and performing arts through a wide range of mediums inclusive of sculpture, installation, video, sound and performance. He has been described as a Renaissance artist and says of himself "I have found my middle and now ... working toward what I am leaving behind."



Photo by Sandro

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PAINTING IN TRANSIENCE

By Linda Fawcett Hardin-Simmons University

The work of 4 artists explored this theme.

Christi Blizzard, independent artist, San Antonio

She was raised on TV.

She is a Conceptual artist.

In school, added Tattoos to her own body about the art she was studying. Later, she achieved airtime on the Today show by holding up hand-painted signs from the crowd during outside shoots, signs saying brief phrases similar to Barbara Kruger and/or Jenny Holzer slogans, such as: "I kind of dominate the little moment I'm in."

"I am not a ghost" got her escorted out from Good Morning America.

Why GMA or the Today Show? Answer: They let me. A form of journalism. Cultivating self-awareness as a kind of conceptual, ongoing self-portrait, as Blizzard became noticed and then became paranoid, she began to make work about paranoia. Did more signs and also t-shirts with slogans seeking airtime. Also make videos with others performing while wearing her masks of TV and political personalities. "I don't know if I'm a painter anymore." Now Blizzard is trying to get on Survivor.

Blizzard: "If rejected from Survivor I'm going to try standup [comedy] next."

Hannah Dean, Lubbock Christian University and Texas Tech University

Dean began with: "Sounds redundant but I'm a painter who wants to make paintings..." and she admired the "dead white European museum" painters during her art training.

Dean has today broadened her scope of what a painting can be. A painting can be an object or a receptacle of action. The artist takes in the external and regurgitates an internalized reaction.

In one series she used cheap acrylic paint and craft store additives (as a statement in itself) to make 3-minute paintings of Google Search thumbnails on Cezanne.

Dean's videos:

Showed excerpts from a 7-minute video of a "motion painting."

Showed a video of excerpts from a 30-minute action of the artist methodically eating what looked like biscuit dough and chewing and spitting it back out, then placing it on herself. The video finished with Dean covered up by a painterly white texture made in this manner.

Scotty Hensler, Texas Tech graduate

Young, recent TTU grad graduate. He admitted that transience is difficult in typical painting because there is always an object.

Day Job: hangs shows. (inherently transient art spaces).

Hensler does a lot of portraits. Painted portraits about identity. Some portraits are painted panels semi-covered up with a plain wood panel (reminiscent of unpacking shipped work) that in itself suggests transience.

Kind of an analogy: the cave paintings were hidden for centuries between their original function and being rediscovered.

Fav painters: Duchamp, Francis Bacon ("beyond representation"), Neo Rauch (narrative painter). Your fav art styles and painters are form of "baggage" to go beyond. Beyond contemplation. In body next. Then make something and at once the past sets in that then suggests a future...)

Renaissance scenes of narrative played out in several places in one panel to show time.

ANDREW MARTIN, Texas Tech U., Interim Dean and Prof of Painting

His latest body of work is suggestive of communication tower-signals. Use of Grid arrangements. Dark backgrounds on wood panels that extend from the wall a couple of inches, shaped/carved to suggest

PAINTING IN TRANSIENCE (Continued)

flat-panel TVs. The picture plane can be a screen (like a tv or computer or phone screen) and as screen quality improves our awareness of "it-as-a-screen" disappears.

Showed works that consisted of grid-arranged multiple panels, each panel within a single work suggesting some sort of screen image, most painted (low-contrast portraits split up by static lines) and some with embedded tiny screens showing video loops.

Martin researched holographic visual illusions, intrigued by the power of the mind to fill in missing information Conclusion: perception must actually be conceptual. We are always mediating reality. What we "see" is a conceptual construct.

The act of painting or drawing makes a subject more than it "was," more than mimesis, boundaries blur, content defined as images are shaped and changed... capturing, disassembling and reassembling like what communication towers do with video/audio signals.

WASH {Workshop in Art Studio + History}

By Rebecca Dietz, San Antonio College

Valerie Powell, Assistant Professor of Art + Foundations Coordinator, at Sam Houston State University gave a lively presentation of the W.A.S.H. (Workshop in Art Studio and History) program in Huntsville, Texas. W.A.S.H is an innovative program for first year students, offering a unique opportunity to participate in an experimental studio environment. In the nine-credit program students take a block of 3 courses: 2 and 3 dimensional studio art classes and Art History. Students explore various aspects of contemporary art in experimental studio environments Monday through Thursday, with Friday lecture on art history or theory. The program provides an immersive environment for students to explore contemporary art issues and develop lasting peers groups to throughout their academic career.

Powell's lecture focused on the importance of risk-taking in art and the fear of failure that accompanies and often undermines artistic growth. In her speech titled "Fail Faster: Exploring Risk Taking in the Creative Process," Valerie described how W.A. S. H. students are introduced to risk-taking, encouraged to step out of their comfort zone, push projects to risk failure and then analyze the nature of failure within the work. Experiencing failure and understanding the root causes provides an antidote to the fear of failure, fosters curiosity and exploration in its place. Powell's slide lecture included witty and insightful statements such as "In order to participate in the creative process YOU WILL FAIL (sometimes out loud, in public; with tears/feeling).



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“Why are you doing this to me?”

Philip Monaghan and David Trinidad in conversation with Kristi Humphrey, and the gallery lecture that followed.

By Carol Fairlie, Sul Ross State University

The panel began with Mr. Trinidad discussing the inspiration for his poems, based on memories of watching old “late show” movies with his Mother. He read one of the poems while images of the paintings created by Monaghan flashed across the screen behind them. The impact of these movies on young “queer” boys and the impact of the heroine in each of the movies, combined with the role of gender and the restrictions of society was discussed in relation to their creative bodies of work. The changing of historical restrictions in place during the 1950’s impacted the role of women, creating a rise of feminism and women’s liberation which was born out of civil rights movement and then dovetailed into Gay liberation. Up until the end of the 1950’s, images of the “bad girl, the oddity, being queer, and being a rebel were only overtly referred to in these old movies; striking a resonance in the gay community.

The words used in Trinidad’s poetry portray stark scenes from these movies. They evoke Camp images and resonate the emotional passion in the female characters. Those words/images are the catalyst for the subject matter in the paintings by Monaghan.

During the gallery talk that followed, a fascinating discussion of the concept of Camp and it’s relationship to the images (since it wasn’t applied when these were made) and the impact of the Motion Picture Code that was in place from the 1930’s until the end of the 1950’s on the portrayal of women shed even more light on the work. These were films produced after World War II and Monaghan pointed out that they were created to show women their place and the repercussions of what “stepping out of that place” could be. Mr. Monaghan’s show included paintings that were direct images drawn from the movies, but collaged narrative from the films superimposed with paintings. In the front of the gallery there was a video narrative of the poems being recited buy Trinidad and in the back corner of the gallery, four monitors playing disconnected clips of scenes from the movies referenced.

I enjoyed the lecture and the exhibition, but discovered the more I considered what I had seen, the more I had to re-analyze my preconceived notions. I found myself researching the definition of what the Motion Picture Production Code was and how it controlled the film industry, as well as reinvestigating the concept and Aesthetics of the term “Camp”. I called up friends to get their take on the ideas, and ultimately rethought the concept behind Monaghan and Trinidad’s collaboration.



2015 TASA "One Foot Exhibition"

By Rebecca Dietz, San Antonio College

The 2015 TASA "One Foot Exhibition" is an annual juried exhibit with student and faculty award winners. Charles Adams, of CASP (Charles Adams Studio Project) was this year's juror. The submissions for this year's exhibit were exhibited at the Texas Tech University Satellite Gallery at LHUCA, during the conference and as part of the lively and well-attended First Friday Art Crawl in LHUCA (Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts). Faculty winners included Mark Greenwalt (first place), Shannon Cannings (second place), Alexandra Robinson (third place). Student winners included : Jennifer Fisk (first place), Elizabeth Grimmett (second place), Chris Marin (third place). As TASA's One Foot Student Exhibition title indicates, submissions for this show must be limited to one square foot for 2D work or one cubic foot for 3D pieces.



Paul Hanna Lecture: "Felice House, Giving Voice to the Female Hero"

By Hollis Hammonds, St. Edward's University

Felice House transforms male dominated archetypes from Hollywood Westerns into heroic female icons in her large-scale figurative paintings. House was awarded the annual Paul Hanna lecture at the recent TASA conference in Lubbock, Texas. Through her lecture, she wove a narrative of heroic female characters (from the historical to the mythical) as represented in paintings and sculptures across time. Representations of Joan of Arc, for example, painted and sculpted from both male and female perspectives, helped to frame her own work as a female artist, painting the female hero. Her lecture revealed the dominance of the male hero throughout Western art history, and the difference found in representations of equally strong female archetypes. For instance, art historical representations of female heroes were often sexualized or overly feminized, as so often found in images of Joan of Arc,

Paul Hanna Lecture (continued)

where her tomboyish haircut is rendered as long flowing hair, and her manly wardrobe is replaced with a longer dress-like garment.

Felice House is a figurative painter who studied at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, the Visualization Laboratory at Texas A&M University, and the University of Texas in Austin. Her recent series of paintings, titled RE•WESTERN, were the primary focus of her Paul Hanna lecture. Interested in gender flipping, House transforms images of the “mythical American West through a postmodern lens that reflects and critiques Hollywood Westerns.” Her series, RE•WESTERN, places contemporary women into iconic movie images of such characters as John Wayne and James Dean. It is also worth noting the way in which she paints. The scale of her paintings is typically larger than life. Young, beautiful, yet dominant female characters are portrayed through quick and gestural mark making, painterly strokes and intense swaths of color. These heroic female representations are realist in style, yet expressive and alive in their rendering.

Throughout her presentation, Felice House reflects on her frustrations with placing her female characters in the pre-existing archetypes of the male hero. She states that “while effective, performing this “gender flip” is ultimately frustrating because it places women in the same existing male framework that female heroes have been forced to reference, which has the effect of cementing the role of hero as male.” She is self-reflective and critical, yet her work not only questions the heroic framework in Western art history, but also provides a fresh perspective on American Hollywood Western film iconography. House is indeed successful, in her RE•WESTERN paintings, in creating contemporary empowered visions of women through the lens of the male hero archetype. The complexities and layers within this topic, along with her virtuoso skill in painting, made this an engaging and inspiring Paul Hanna lecture.

Curriculum Meeting

By Mark Greenwalt, College of the Mainland

TASA curriculum meetings are well attended and the elimination of studio courses from the Core Curriculum remain a growing concern. Some schools have already submitted new proposals for 2016 while other are considering adapting the successful proposals of Amarillo College and South Texas College found on the TASA website. A show of hands indicated that an increasing number of schools have the support of their administrators regarding restoration of studio courses as an option in the Creative Arts, Foundational Component Area.

Still, other art departments have not been allowed to propose studio courses by their own administrations. At many levels of academic leadership in the State of Texas, TASA members suspect that a fundamental misunderstanding remains regarding the various ways in which studio courses support the metacognitive learning goals of a general education. Along with other issues, TASA is researching and developing advocacy statements that may help justify studio submissions institutionally and beyond. TASA members are likewise encouraged to provide information to TASA relating to ongoing curricular issues.

Gen Ed Core Curriculum:

TASA reminds schools that the THECB is wary of studio submissions that are predominantly “skills based” (I.e., skills specific to visually communicative media such as photography or drawing). The TCECB has suggested that not more than 50% of a course grade can be related to performance of such media-based “skills”.

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/pdf/6003.pdf?CFID=21752401&CFTOKEN=64064454>

Instructors might therefore base grades more significantly on creative behaviors, participation, attendance, written content, and quantities of artifacts produced for a given assignment. Schools should emphasize how studio courses meet core objectives (such as critical thinking and social responsibility etc.) and provide rubrics to assess these objectives.

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Curriculum Meeting (continued)

Field of study:

The THECB has indicated that they will be initiating a process for establishing a “field of study” (FOS) for the fine arts, divided into a variety of pathways such as painting or sculpture. FOS’s might better facilitate transferability from two-year to four-year institutions statewide. However, it could also place limitations on four-year schools who do not use the same ACGM course numbers in their foundation courses. More discussion is required, but it is hoped that all schools and TASA members will be positioned early-on to provide feedback as this process unfolds.

Course eliminations:

The THECB has eliminated several advanced studio courses from the ACGM (such as Digital II, Life Drawing II, and other courses).

TASA is looking into the possibility of a comment process to the THECB regarding deletion of these courses so that they can continue to be used in two year programs as electives, satisfy articulations, and provide in-depth student knowledge within a particular subject area. TASA believes that 4 year colleges may adapt to these cuts by converting these advanced courses to 300 level courses.

Creating Art Infrastructure/Developing Artist Research

By Chad Farris, University of Texas Pan American

I found this session on Creating Arts Infrastructure/Developing Artist Research to be quite interesting, informative and inspiring. I find that we all need motivation from time to time. Many of us are caught up in the academic duties that come from working for colleges and universities and often neglect our artistic needs. Then you come across individuals and programs that can renew this need to connect with other creators and artist . These projects and programs can and do that for many of us.

The featured panel have all developed infrastructures for the making, exhibiting and or the understanding of art. These environments and communities are greatly needed and appreciated . I would like to offer my thanks to all on this panel for renewing and inspiring me to continue on my adventure of being a creator and artist.

The Panel Consisted of the following:

Hans Molzberger:

Teaches at Houston Baptist University, Director of the Hilmsen 1 Residency in Hilmsem, Germany.

hm@hans-molzberger.de

David C. Lindsay :

Associate Professor at Texas Tech University. Developer of the Popwalk phone app for artists.

www.davidchapmanlinsay.com

Monica Proffitt:

Artist and director of the Starry Night Artist Residency and Exposure Program in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. <http://starrynightretreat.com/residencies>

TILL YOUR EYES WATER: A solo performed by Jess Humphrey, (San Diego State University,) and created by Humphreys, Leslie Seiters (San Diego State University,) and Eric Geiger (University of California at San Diego).

By Joe Pena, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi

This exquisite performance, as part of a larger collaborative work entitled *Shaking, Touching, and Queering* was envisioned by Humphrey, Seiters, and Geiger, as a reflection on the patterns that have reappeared, developed, and influenced their work from their continuous years of practice together.

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TILL YOUR EYES WATER (Continued)

In a rigorous piece wherein she submits herself to the audience through various actions including dance, reading, wrapping a phone cord around her leg, and more, Humphrey is not only performing for the audience but engaging them as well. At one point Humphrey is seen wildly shaking (as the name refers

to the act and the abstract title) while singing "Moon River" by Andy Williams and while appearing to

be initial humorous slowly descends (or ascends?) into a moment of intense privacy. In another segment Humphrey is feverously reading her actual abstract (see below) on *shaking* while marching in place on top of a table then moving down to carry the same table across the stage. We can't understand what she is saying most of the time but it wasn't necessary as her actions are emphasizing the importance of the narrative.

Jess Humphreys kindly contributed to this summation with a quote on her performance: *"As I mentioned during the piece (while walking in place on the table) and in the post-performance discussion, we created this dance from three abstracts written in response to the TTU conference steering committee's call for proposals. We were interested in reflecting upon our 8 years of practice together, and then "reporting, in a critical and analytical fashion, upon the considerations that went into its creation, thereby 'opening out' the collaborative process for investigation and dialogue". When we were invited to be a part of the performance rather than the themed formal session we imagined, we jumped at the opportunity to "fold" our writing "back into" a dancemaking process.*

Our practice led to the writing, the writing steered the solo, and now the solo will reveal what is next in the writing, which will likely yield further development of the dance or a new work altogether. Part of this dynamic, reciprocal process is collecting responses to the solo." ~ Jess Humphrey

*Humphrey also provided the abstracts below on the individual patterns that make up the larger body of work with she writing the "meta" abstract as well as that on *shaking*, her colleague Leslie Seiters writing on *touching*, and Eric Geiger writing on *queering*.*

Shaking, Touching, and Queering

We three practitioner-researchers have practiced together at least weekly, often bi-weekly, and sometimes daily for the past seven years. Our embodied praxis includes a weekly, spontaneous dancemaking practice followed by conversation, collaborative dancemaking processes, performance, teaching and co-teaching, designing dance curricula, and formal study of somatic methodologies and the praxes of artists in our respective lineages. Our practices range in formality and include evening-length dance works, private studio time where anything can happen, and structured study sessions. There are aspects of our practices that are consciously chosen and/or designed, and others that reveal themselves over time. The latter, more unconscious aspects include recurring movements, methods, compositional elements, themes, and states of being that are revealed through observation, reflection, articulation, conversation, and pattern recognition.

We propose a themed formal session of three interrelated papers exploring three emergent acts/actions/activities that have reappeared, developed, and, over time, influenced our praxis. They are shaking, touching, and queering. Threads through all three include intimacy,

binaries/contradictions/paradoxes/continua, and the gentle unraveling of social constructions, habits, and our choreographed selves. Shaking, touching, and queering have been both products of, and ways into, all of our practices. They are methods, values, descriptors, and inroads to each other. This particular constellation of verbs does not alone represent our work. We arrived at these three topics

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TILL YOUR EYES WATER (Continued)

while reflecting on our seven years of working together through the lenses provided in the description of this conference.

The “modes of knowing” in Robin Nelson’s Practice-as-Research in the Arts (PaR) model include *know-how*, or first-person, embodied, tacit knowledge, *know-what* or, the articulation of the *know-how* made possible through reflection, and *know-that* or the third-person, relatively objective knowledge traditionally valued in academia. Our papers and presentations on shaking, touching, and queering will emerge from all three modes. We created the following questions, loosely correlated with each mode, as ways of approaching our respective abstracts: 1. What is it? How do you do it? 2. What does it do? To you? To the world? 3. How might it change you? How might it change the world?

Shaking

In dance, shaking is the new plié.

Shaking is everywhere—it can come from everywhere, happen everywhere, and go everywhere—within one’s body, across disciplines, cultures, and time. It is relatively fast and small, repetitive, back and forth (up and down, side to side) movement. The Kalahari Bushmen, the Shakers, Western therapists, Kundalini practitioners, and dance artists all utilize and make sense of shaking in different ways. Shaking is a neurogenic tremor in Tension & Trauma Releasing Exercises (TRE), a bio-energetic meditation and ecstatic spiritual practice in Bali (Ratu Bagus), the natural, physiological response to trauma in mammals (Peter Levine’s Somatic Experiencing), called Waidangong in China, and can be found in myriad dance contexts worldwide. In my experience, it is part of all stages of dancemaking including training, creation, and performance.

There are many ways to shake. Methods range from totally free form to highly structured. One way into shaking is through “bouncing” (lightly bending and straightening) both knees simultaneously or in alternation. One can also feel (or imagine) the vibration of one’s cells, growing that vibration into shaking. In some practices, the main instruction is to simply allow the shake to happen.

Shaking can queer, disorient, agitate, frighten, and alienate. Stigmas attached to being out of control in our culture give words like “steady”, “rock solid”, and “stable” positive connotations while “spastic” and “shaky” are considered negative descriptors. A shaking person is more difficult to touch than a person who is still. The fact that shaking is a symptom of several neurological disorders or disruptions (Parkinson’s Disease, Essential Tremor, seizures) can even further “other” a shaking person.

Shaking can also release tension, induce euphoria, generate heat, circulate chi/prana/energy, reduce stress, stimulate creativity, increase heart rate and circulation, create community, and be/create choreography. After shaking, I feel undone, vibratory, whole, and ready.

Could shaking be an antidote to fixation? What if shaking is an embodied way to consider, navigate, and/or reconcile binaries? What if the back and forth movement is a physicalization of both/and that makes *both* both/and *and* either/or possible at the same time?

Touching

“Through our skin, we touch and are touched by the outer world. This outer boundary is our first line of defense and bonding. It sets our general tone of openness and closedness to being in the world.” –Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen

Touch is a dialogue.

It is an outward action that calls for equal inward attention, a way of being in relation. It occurs person to self, person to person, person to immediate environment, and person to surroundings. Touching is personal. Touching is functional, intimate and anatomical. Touching includes listening, directing, following, tracking, blurring, asking, blending, redirecting, accidentally bumping, tracing, transmitting, interrupting, riding, demanding and asking for nothing.

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TILL YOUR EYES WATER (Continued)

Touching orients, provokes immediacy, gives feedback, and has a two directional quality that can tune readiness, receptivity, and awareness. Practicing *touching* develops capacity to be soft (adaptable) and direct (willful) as two aspects of the same activity. The *person-ness* of touch prompts real (literal) connection that can transcend a representational aesthetic in dance. It can create: more subtle articulations, access to unknown pathways, support and entry to wilder/bigger/more extreme physicality, permission to change, and rest. I often remind myself to *touch the floor*. This recurring prompt quickly reflects my state, collects a sense of skeletal wholeness, connects me to sense of weight and gravity, energizes me, and reveals what is extra.

My dance practices are designed away from representational and towards re-experiencing, re-relating and re-presenting. Repetition of choreography can be an activity that is less about refining and more about *refinding*. Touching supports this return to experience and sensation.

A favorite question I ask in technique class is “what if this is what we are training for?” How does it affect our studio practice if dancing together is as much a culmination as it is a preparation? Touch is an activity that requires practice in order to *give* and *receive* unencumbered by expectations of what should happen. Touching is our first mode of receiving information from the world. It is a routine activity with potential for ever more precision, accuracy, clarity, permeability and ability to connect without anticipating or lagging.

Queering

Queer as a verb.

Queer can be used as an adjective, a pejorative, a noun, a sexual orientation, and as an identity (gender or otherwise). But, what if queer was an action, a verb? What is queering? Queering is relational. It is divergent from what we perceive as stable. To queer something is to deconstruct, dismantle, deviate and jeopardize the foundations of certain kinds of normativity in order to reclaim abjected spaces and identities, and construct new dialogues. Queering fails, provokes, purposely contradicts, rejects, transforms, re-evaluates, and accepts. What is discovered when our perceptual orientations are reversed, our identities inverted, and the production of meaning is dispersed across multiple places, times, and ways of being?

Through my numerous creative processes, practices, and teaching I have found that the failure, rejection, and provocation that can arise through queering can transform my physical and emotional states and create a kind of destabilization of myself. In this state of unsteadiness I practice moving away from traditional value systems of precision, articulation, specificity and clarity of intention and make room for otherness to emerge. I give myself permission to be messy, sloppy, inarticulate and disoriented. Through this practice as research, I have discovered that I don't have to say no to normative values and systems in order to say yes to otherness. This induced state carves out space to cultivate my awareness, notice what arises, and shifts my perception of binary opposites as existing on a continuum.

Queering is risky. By diving into uncertainty and alien systems we become vulnerable. If queering is integrated into art making practices and processes then it is inevitable for compassion and empathy, through this vulnerability, to become part of the work's lineage. Paying attention to the process changes the process. The work does not attempt to be representational. It does not depict compassion or empathy but generates a context in which the value system of the process and its lineage is the actual desired change. Through the work we become permeable to the world. That which increases our capacity as artists also increases our capacities as human beings.

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TILL YOUR EYES WATER (Continued)

Solo performed by Jess Humphrey (San Diego State University) at the 2015 TASA conference at Texas Tech University on October 3rd, 2015.

