

## Teaching Statement & Philosophy

### Teaching Philosophy

My focus in teaching is to prepare an individual for academic, artistic, and human flourishing. I want students to move, think, and feel through the world with honest and critical engagement, with the ability to reflect, connect with community, and apply themselves as seekers and doers.

As a dance-centered arts educator, my teaching philosophy is centered around fostering an inclusive and joyful learning environment that empowers the individual voice, promotes sustainable thinking, encourages artistic citizenship, and teaches students how to embrace risk for personal and creative growth.

My teaching and leadership methods have developed from years of experience teaching in public education, as a director for dance and choreographic residencies, as a yoga instructor, and teaching in higher education, as well as from a collection of voices from family, artists, and kinship. My roles are also informed by my research in performance, choreography, and improvisation, engaging with diverse movement forms, environments, and communities.

### Student-Centered Development & Learning Environment

I believe a student-centered, collaborative, and holistic approach to learning encourages students to experiment, play, learn, and fail as acceptable tools within their growth process. I consider how my students can gain confidence in their art-making, theory, and expression through individual projects and group activities. **I recognize that each person brings their values, cultures, history, and experiences into the room and I am committed to creating a respectful community that supports all students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, or economic status.**

I believe a learning environment should foster individual awareness and community building. **Art and dance exist within social and political contexts, and our engagement as artists extends beyond aesthetics.** Students must learn to develop their autonomy and practice utilizing their voices while respecting others. As their instructor, I lead lectures and discussions with interactive tasks that expect students to respond to the group, in pairs, and through personal writing reflections. I motivate the conversation by posing deeper questions; giving space for diverse opinions to interact with each other. I help to bring multiple perspectives to the conversation, as I want to create an educational environment that embraces students' concerns and welcomes critical dialog and discussion in our everyday practices.

Within physical movement courses, I care about instilling a practice within my students that mentors longevity and mindfulness. I begin each class with mental, emotional, and physical student check-ins. I integrate injury prevention awareness into my training and movement phrases. **I emphasize moving away from perfectionism and the desire to please but instead, I encourage students' self-worth and individuality.** How can we celebrate our unique artistry as a strength, understanding that the vibrancy of the arts cannot be sustained off monolithic perspectives? **I ask students to be honest with their injuries, practicing rest as a foundation for a sustainable dance career.** How can we train our bodies diligently but with care at the

forefront of our practice? I encourage students to bring their whole selves into the studio and their work.

### Embracing Risk

The classroom is a space for courage and risk-taking. Within art-making, movement research, critical discourse, and scholarly research, I encourage students to consider looking beyond their edges of familiarity. In a physical sense, I often implement improvisational practices into my lessons for students to develop tolerance and comfort with the unknown. Improvisation teaches us to become aware of our mind-body connection and respond to our environments with impulse, intellect, and conviction. Learning to harness an ability to improvise provides students with a sense of control to maneuver within an unstable context, relying less on my answers, but rather, practicing directing attention to their intuition.

I enjoy bringing students beyond classroom walls, facilitating unconventional exploration and real-world engagement. An example of this is allowing students to experience site-specific applications and learning to dance on sites of different textures and shapes. Grass, concrete, structural buildings, public, and open-air environments teach students to respond in creative ways, practicing problem-solving, vulnerability, and innovation. How can we perform on uneven surfaces while staying safe? How can we expand our knowledge about ourselves and our surroundings? Another example is promoting risk in art-making, such as in my interdisciplinary courses like the intersection of dance and camera. I encourage students to go for the vision they imagine, trusting a way through, regardless of any lack of technical or financial resources. Or, can I challenge students to use dance and film to create an embodied documentary for social and environmental justice?

As a choreographer, creative risk-taking is central. I am interested in creating work that often involves a physical object or digital environment for dancers to respond to. Moving with set pieces, physics, and evolving environments allows dancers to find new economic pathways in their bodies and generate an expanded awareness of movement vocabulary, teamwork, and responsibility. **For myself, and from what I observe, I often find that engaging in physical risk-taking can foster a greater sense of trust in ourselves and within our group.**

### Conclusion

My teaching experience spans from in-studio practices, lecture and discussion, workshop, and hands-on application. Every semester informs my own growth journey, allowing me to analyse areas for expansion. I believe a teaching role is just as much the learning role, and thereby, my teaching philosophy is always evolving. Dance in its nature provides the ability to learn about the world from a deeply sensitive and connected place that as an artist and educator, I feel privileged to advocate for a life-long relationship of the form. I am committed to guiding students toward academic and professional excellence. Equally, I am interested in the overall wellness of the student, striving to create experiences that shape and impact the person beyond the classroom.