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Dancing from the Inside Out

Using design thinking to explore the intersections of street dance, social media, and self-identity in Aotearoa

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design

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Abstract

Street dance, derived from hip hop dance, is a vehicle for self-expression, connecting with others, understanding purpose, promoting confidence, challenging and improving oneself, and positively impacting participants’ lives (Henderson, 2010). Beyond a form of physical activity, it holds much potential to influence self-identity.

Since the advent of YouTube in 2005, social media platforms—particularly YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram—have become central to street dance culture’s production and consumption. These networked mediascapes have increased the culture’s visibility, accessibility, participation, and provided a platform to share dance expression, join the international street dance community, as well as access or even create professional opportunities. The way street dance cultural flows circulate through social networking sites recursively shape and inform the culture itself.

Dancing from the Inside Out uses design thinking methods to investigate how engagement with street dance culture in networked spaces—where self-identity is performed, actively constructed, and negotiated—might impact an individual’s relationship with street dance. Following empathy research, the project uses the Māori health and wellness model Te Whare Tapa Whā as an analytical framework, and identifies an opportunity to strengthen one’s taha wairua, or spiritual wellbeing, concerning ideas around self-expression and understanding identity. These concepts are at the heart of street dance culture and promote identity development, though risk being overridden by emerging cultural practices that digitally networked spaces have shaped.

The project’s design response takes the form of Hikoi (Māori term meaning to step, stride, march)—the initiation of a movement starting in online social networking environments, in pursuit of the heart and soul of street dance. A practice-based design investigation, Hikoi movement builds a narrative across Facebook and Instagram, and using video portraits, blog posts, and still images, that adhere to a manifesto, aims to inform and inspire Aotearoa street dancers about strengthening taha wairua, in the age of social media.

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My first gesture of gratitude extends to my God, my heavenly Father, and friend. He has given me the courage to push through this journey. I am nothing without His love, guidance, and faithfulness.

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I’d also like to acknowledge my fellow Masters of Design students colleagues Vaughan Flanagan, Franco Lora, and Harita Kapur, for your camaraderie and encouragement throughout this project, and also my World of Wearable Arts family for being so supportive in the last home stretch.

Finally, this project is dedicated to the street dance community—thank you for being the motivation for this journey. Thank you to the dancers who have joined with me throughout this process, and generously volunteered your time and talent. I am so grateful for your willingness to not only invest in me, but in our street dance culture. We have such rich opportunities ahead of us.
The intent of this Masters of Design is to explore design thinking processes as a means of strengthening Aotearoa street dancers' self-identity in the age of social media. This differs from the project's initial direction. Social media has created a multiplicity of opportunities for street dance culture, including the enablement of previously unavailable networking prospects. The project originally sought to leverage these possibilities and connect Aotearoa street dancers to greater professional opportunities. However, in critically analysing the various intersections of street dance and social media, and how these might affect an individual, it became apparent that a greater need might exist in responding to behavioural shifts within street dance culture since the introduction of new rich opportunities dance has given me to develop my individual identity. I believe design can contribute to the development of street dance as the culture continuously evolves.

The various intersections of street dance and visual communication design have always been of interest to me. In earlier years this was realised as the likes of poster and shirt designs for street dance competitions and concerts, and later branding design for dancers and dance organisations. I have lived and worked in Los Angeles as a designer for a collective of YouTube choreographers and a designer for Infinite Dance Crew, which provided insights into the cultural practices of YouTube dancers, and a broader understanding of street dance culture in the US. My time in Calais also presented me with the chance to immerse myself in the nonprofit organisation Invisible Children in the wake of the Kony 2012 video being released—the biggest viral campaign in the history of the Internet. This provided a fresh revelation of the potential of design to be used as a vehicle for social and cultural change.

Shifting from aesthetic value to the creative process, my interest in dance and design has evolved to be motivated by the potential design process might have contributing to street dance culture. I believe in the power of design to influence cultural change. This project aims to explore this through the lens of street dance, and my position as a young Pasifika female, with experiences in visual communication design and the local and international street dance community, arm me with a unique array of perspectives in undertaking this project.

The power of dance and its ability to inform self-identity is one I know firsthand. As a Pasifika female adopted into a Pakeha family, finding a sense of purpose and understanding has always been a personal struggle for me. Despite being raised in a loving family, underlying issues stemming from my adoption motivated a need to find a sense of place dance was the space for me. In particular, the non-conformist style of street dance and its culture resonated with my lived experience and encouraged discovery of purpose through dance expression. It gave me a sense of belonging, and understanding more about who I am.

I was actively part of the Auckland street dance scene for seven years. During this time I co-founded and coached Wellington based street dance crew Infinite, which I competed and performed with all over the country and on an international stage. Today, I am no longer actively involved in the culture, however I have maintained relationships with members of the street dance community, and continue to observe the culture via online platforms, and support various competitions, shows, and fundraisers. Through my various roles and relationships in the community, I have come to have a strong understanding through the new opportunities available through social media, and also the changes in the way the culture operates, and how this might differ from the changes I have seen in the real world. I believe this design can contribute to the development of my individual identity.
The body of the exegesis opens with an exploration of various occurrences at the intersection of street dance, social media, and self-identity. There is currently a very limited literature in this field; this research attempts to contribute to an emerging body of knowledge in this field. As such, a contextual foundation for the project is formed by weaving together texts from hip hop and street dance literature, popular culture and new media, and self-identity, to further an investigation and focus on the design thinking processes.

Design thinking is presented as a form of inquiry to grow understanding of street dance culture in order to produce empathy-informed solutions. It is employed through the use of the Double Diamond model (Design Council, 2006), constituted by four convergent and divergent phases: Discover, Define, Develop, Deliver. As part of this process, qualitative research methods of immersion, observation, and engagement are used to expand breadth and depth of understanding concerning a participant's behaviours, attitudes, and mindsets, as a member of the street dance community.

Te Whare Tapu Wha, the Mihi health and well-being model, is identified as a suitable analytical framework for its holistic view of the self, and highlights the experience of releasing my own video on YouTube informed the change of direction for the project. Engagement with the self, and the role of digital environments in shaping self-identity, is explored in a series of image and video portraits, blog posts, and a narrative encouraging self-expression and the development of social identity through dance movement. These are distributed through social networking sites, in the hope of recursively informing Aotearoa street dance culture.

The body of the exegesis in its totality reflects the impact of social media and engagement, are used to expand breadth and depth of understanding concerning a participant's behaviours, attitudes, and mindsets, as a member of the street dance community.

Hikoi, a movement aiming to strengthen dancers' taha wairua, (spiritual wellbeing) of as an opportunity for design response. Subsequently, the concept of Mihi, a movement aiming to strengthen dancers' taha wairua, is developed and iterated through design-led research. The project presents a manifesto, video portraits, blog posts, and a series of image created for social media, creating a narrative encouraging self-expression and the development of social identity through dance movement. These are distributed through social networking sites, in the hope of recursively informing Aotearoa street dance culture.

The body of the exegesis in its totality reflects the impact of social media and engagement, are used to expand breadth and depth of understanding concerning a participant's behaviours, attitudes, and mindsets, as a member of the street dance community.
Aotearoa Street Dance Culture

The Aotearoa street dance scene today is a dynamic space of cultural production, consumption, and community for its participants. Stemming from its hip hop roots as a voice for otherness, the culture is one that embraces diversity, and particularly resonates with Māori and Pacific Island youth. Street dance in Aotearoa has experienced a large increase in participation in the last decade, which can be attributed to a rise in street dance competitions, continued international success by our dancers and crews, and most significantly, the new connectedness made available by social media.

As a geographically isolated country, socially networked mediascapes have enabled greater accessibility and visibility for street dance cultural flows, providing networking opportunities for dancers previously unavailable. Our most notable example of this is Parris Goebel, a young female choreographer from Auckland identifiable by her ‘Polyswagg’ style, who is highly sought after in the entertainment industry, and whose career started by posting dance videos on YouTube. Her company The Royal Family are perhaps the most recognised entity of Aotearoa street dance, however the national community operates out of a much wider body of studios and crews throughout the country, who continue to invest in the development of street dance and its participants.

Street Dance Origins

Street dance is derived from hip hop dance, which originated in Brooklyn, New York, in the 1970’s. It was one of four elements of hip hop subculture, which was birthed as a voice of resistance and expression for otherness, predominantly black American and Latino youth. Hip hop was a way for minorities to deal with hardship and provided an alternative to gang violence. Underpinned by a system of knowledge and philosophy negotiated by its participants, it came to be an identity and a worldview (Morgan & Bennett, 2011). The culture is a way for youth to understand themselves, and positively impacts participants lives through embracing diversity, fostering community, being participant and youth driven, promoting confidence, and challenging and improving participants lives (Henderson, 2003). These values are reflected in street dance’s non-conformist style, allowing freedom of expression by the dancer, who can continuously create new moves, but also have a new way to socialise within a group (Petracovschi, Costas, & Voucu, 2011).

Since hip hop’s origins in the United States, street dance has spread around the world. Parallel to its hip hop counterparts, the culture represents a rich ‘glocal’ dialogue that mediates its American roots with local appropriations of a globally accepted model (Morgan & Bennett, 2011). Additionally, as a form of popular culture, it is woven between complex intersections of its subculture origins and dominant cultural appropriations within the global capitalist marketplace (Baumre, H. 2002). These transcultural convergences are reflective of the potpourri of ways in which street dance culture operates today. Though founded on non-conformist and underground values, its popularity within dominant culture has contributed to street dance often operating in a more formalised structure. Street dance today, contrary to its name, is often taught in dance studios, alongside styles such as ballet, jazz, tap, and contemporary dance. Participants may learn in open classes or workshops, or train with a dance crew—the membership of which can be achieved via an audition process.

Street Dance and Social Media

The internet has transformed the circulation of hip hop cultural flows, democratising distribution channels and empowering young people to share their ideas, expressions and experiences (Morgan & Bennett, 2011). Since the advent of YouTube in 2005, social media platforms (in particular YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) have become central to street dance culture’s production and consumption. The ability for any street dancer with access to a digital camera and the internet—to upload videos of themselves dancing, and be viewed by anyone, anywhere in the world—has changed the way participants engage with street dance culture.
The production of dance videos capture movement in a variety of ways. This includes ‘class footage’ shot from the end of classes using selected groups of dancers, live dance performance or competition footage, and ‘concept videos’, used to describe videos using a form of storytelling in the video production to add meaning to the dance sequence. Concept videos often take on a cinematic quality and require a level of planning to achieve a higher level of production.

Videos are distributed and disseminated through the street dance community on social media networks. This can be achieved through video sharing platforms such as YouTube or Vimeo, however recent developments on Facebook have provided its own video sharing capabilities, removing the need to be redirected to other video sites. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, can also be used to direct consumers of media to video content using teaser posts, announcements, or short clips from the dance video.

Social Media and Self-Identity
In The Language of Social Media: Identity and Community on the Internet, Seargeant and Tagg (2014) present sociolinguistic research from scholars and researchers examining the presentation of the self, and the negotiation of being a networked individual, in online spaces. Seargeant and Tagg offer discussions and varying views of how identity is defined, though in summary, sway towards identity being a fluid concept, pluralistic in nature, and one that is actively constructed and dialogically performed in online social media spaces.

As self-identity is actively constructed on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, activity on social media becomes a form of impression management and projecting various facets of the self into digitally networked environments (DiMico & Millen, 2007). Dancers can align themselves with various groups, affiliations and communities, as an act of self-presentation, and to symbolise cultural citizenship of street dance communities. ‘Liking’, ‘favouriting’, and ‘sharing’ videos is also a marker of personal taste (Burgess & Green, 2009). Through this activity, one is able to reveal not just who they are, but project who they may want to be, or how they think they should be seen by others (Seargeant & Tagg, 2014). As such, self-identity becomes informed by other individuals within dance networks. Posting dance videos may be more than an act of sharing self-expression, but a way to project the actual, ideal, and ought self, into the digital world.

Street Dance and Participatory Culture
The way in which street dancers are able to be active producers and consumers of video content represents what Henry Jenkins describes as ‘participatory culture’. This notion stems from Jenkins’ research in the early 1990’s of fan and gaming culture, which identifies fans (readers) as active consumers of content, and active contributors to popular culture’s livelhood, through engaging with online communities that connect, create, collaborate, and shape the flow of media (Jenkins, 2006). Shifting from a top down one-to-many communication hierarchy, Jenkins’ work has been notable in identifying media users as having increasing influence within popular culture due to the networking capabilities of internet technologies.
Though stemming from fan and gaming culture, application of Jenkins’ participatory culture theory is widespread. Jenkins (2006) defines participatory culture as “a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civil engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known to the most experienced is passed along to the novices”. This is exemplified by today’s international street dance community, through which engagement with networked digital mediascapes, enables dancers’ participation through sharing dance videos, receiving feedback, commenting, sharing knowledge and information, and connecting with and ‘following’ other dancers, from the global street dance community.

In Popular Culture and New Media: The Politics of Circulation, sociologist David Beer (2013) explores the complex interweaving of popular culture, new media, and the social and cultural contexts they exist within. Building on participatory culture theory, Beer highlights John Urry’s notion of ‘feedback loops’, whereby data circulations—in this case dance videos—recursively feed back into the culture and influence the way it operates, and how it is viewed and engaged with by participants. It is these feedback loops that this project seeks to explore. The circulations of dance videos within street dance’s mediatised networks has led to an increase in the culture’s accessibility, visibility, participation, and professional networking opportunities. This project aims to investigate how such outcomes have recursively transformed engagement with street dance culture, with a focus on the networked individual.

The Networked Participant
If we view self-presentation on social media as an act of negotiating identity, we can see how one’s understanding of the self might be shaped by interaction within participatory cultures. As street dance culture is closely linked to identity development, the increased cultural flows circulating through online street dance communities—giving rise to the culture’s accessibility, visibility, participation, and professional networking opportunities—can largely impact how a dancer might understand themselves. For example, the number of ‘likes’, ‘shares’, ‘retweets’, and ‘follows’, in response to dance videos produced by an individual, can influence the dancer’s sense of self. Strong online community support and popularity may encourage the pursuit of becoming a ‘DIY celebrity’ (Burgess & Green, 2009), where an individual is able to achieve fame and success from social media audiences. Conversely, low support from online affiliations and communities may lead a dancer feeling discouraged and disconnected.

While street dance is characterised by its social nature, interactions amplified by mediatised networking sites have the potential to draw value away from self-expression and identity development, from which the dance and culture was originally derived. Dancing from the Inside Out premises that the way dance videos—as representations and constructions of identity—recursively circulate through social networking sites and participatory cultures, has the potential to override the rich opportunities available to develop identity through the physical act of street dance. The project uses design thinking processes to explore this further and develop a design response.
Design Thinking

The term 'design thinking' has evolved from discussions in the 1960's identifying a desire for design to exist as a knowledge-based discipline, in order to better inform design practice. In his book The Sciences of the Artificial, Herbert A. Simon established a 'science of design' where he defined design as a "transformation of existing conditions into preferred ones" (Simon, 1969). This was pivotal in shifting the definition of design from a craft based skill into one that was a problem-solving, process-oriented activity, which underpins design thinking models today.

I appreciate design as a verb—an action word and an act of service, beyond a skill set in aesthetics. Though escaping a single unified definition, design thinking is generally used to describe a process that places people at the centre, and involves ‘users’ throughout design thinking modes to addresses ‘wicked’ problems through an iterative and action-focused approach. Its ability to interrogate complex situations in times of rapid technological change—affecting all tiers of how we live our lives—has increased design thinking’s popularity over the past decade, subsequently raising contestation in academic discourse for its broad-sweeping nature and slick tool kit appeal (Mootee, 2013). Despite this, it is the human centred approach at the core of design thinking that reasons its application for this project, valuing the people the design works to serve, and providing a framework for the investigation of the ‘wicked’ relationships at the intersections of street dance culture, social media, and self-identity.

Paralleled by the rise of participatory design, service design, experience design, social design, design thinking represents an increased emphasis on the importance of the connection between the design process and people or users, where the users’ wants and needs are integral to the development of a solution. Empathy research to gain a greater understanding of the user, allows discovery of new insights to develop the design response. Additionally, involving users to test prototypes throughout the process also give further agency to design development to produce effective outcomes. This has been a key aspect of the project, where street dance participants’ involvement have been valuable in moving the project forward.

The values and mindsets while engaging with the design thinking process are also characteristic of its approach and key to its success. According to Nigel Cross, the process is one that transforms abstract requirements into constructive responses, through thinking that is both practical and imaginative (Cross, 2011). His view alludes to the mindsets of the design thinking process as being intrinsic to the process itself. Embracing ambiguity, experimentation, being action orientated, holistic, iterative, collaborative, and fluid, are all important cultural values in using any design thinking approach, and have been adopted throughout this project’s process. These values embody a reflexive practice, and have allowed for serendipitous occurrences through interactions with dancers, to guide and inform the design outcomes.

The Double Diamond model

This project embodies the design thinking process through the Double Diamond framework (Design Council, 2006). The model uses four distinct stages to represent two divergent and convergent modes of thinking: Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver. These form the basis for the design-led research approach.

It is the human centred approach at the core of design thinking that reasons its application for this project, valuing the people the design works to serve.
Discover

The beginning of the process is marked by a motivation to gain understanding. Divergent thought processes are employed to develop empathy and uncover new insights and information about the people concerned and their relationship to the situation being addressed. This project uses observation, immersion, and engagement, as a means to investigate and understand motivations, behaviours, and attitudes, at the intersection of street dancers, street dance culture, and social media.

Define

The process then shifts into convergent mode and is a phase of analysis and synthesis to bring focus and define the scope of the project. Sorting, sense-making, and identifying patterns highlight opportunities for the design response, and ideation processes and prototypes are used to test initial concepts. This project uses the Māori wellbeing model Te Whare Tapa Whā as an analytical framework for findings from the Discover phase. Insights and ideas are then distilled into an actionable brief, marking the conception of Hikoi—the initiation of a movement to encourage self-expression and understanding identity through dance.

Develop

With a sense of direction for the designed response, the Develop phase is an iterative and action-focused time of prototyping and testing to define how the solution will exist. This part of the project is used to extrapolate and develop the Hikoi movement strategy and components, through a process of mind mapping and visualisations. Here, the manifesto, video profiles, and stills, are chosen as the Hikoi components. Collaboration and engagement with the street dance community throughout this phase inform how the design response takes shape.

Deliver

The final stage of the process is where the designed response is finalised and released. This is marked by the completion of the initial components of Hikoi, which are released on social media sites over time. Participant engagement is evaluated in order to inform how the solution might continue to evolve.
The beginning of the design thinking process was initiated by the Discover phase, to gather as much information as possible about occurrences at the intersection of social media, self-identity, and street dance. Aiming to increase knowledge in both breadth and depth, this first divergent phase of the project was about understanding. I had a level of knowledge shaped from my own experiences further informed by existing literature, however taking on a beginner’s mindset and shedding any preconceptions became paramount to uncovering new insights and gaining an increased empathy for street dance culture and its participants.

Immersion, observation, and engagement were the qualitative research methods employed (D.School, 2010). The collection of data throughout this phase used a reflexive approach—the fluidity allowing findings to inspire curiosities and inform how further data might be collected. I aimed to broaden my understanding of the street dance environment at a macro level, though also discover insights specific to individual participants. The following design thinking methods hoped to unpack experiences, behaviours, perceptions, and attitudes, that shaped how participants understood themselves as individuals, and as members of the wider street dance community.

Immersion
Past experiences in the street dance community made immersing myself in environments of dancers a natural mode of inquiry. I attended community street dance classes as a participant, observing other students who excitingly engaged with mobile devices during and at the end of class to document and share the happenings of the evening with social networks. I attended street dance shows and competitions as an audience member, taking note of the camaraderie between the dancers, the sense of achievement and confidence gained through their movement, and the increase in online activity following dance events.

Observation
In addition to observations in physical street dance environments, I surveyed cultural activity on social networking sites, observing the various types of video, image, and text based content dancers shared of themselves, or of others, with their networks. Beyond presenting the self via content relating to street dance, sharing also marked support for friends within the community or dancers that participants looked up to. Production value, aesthetic, and rhetoric of the posts was also noted—the visual style mirroring access to quality production tools, though acknowledging its street culture positioning.
Engagement

A rich depth of understanding was also achieved through engaging with participants through semi-structured interviews. These were of much value, allowing in-depth conversations—the semi-structured nature of the interview enabling flexibility within the conversation to build rapport, and accommodating the participant in guiding or directing the conversation if a pertinent direction arose.

Four interviews were carried out. At this stage, I was still trying to grasp an overview of the wider street dance community and how it had been impacted by social networking sites. As such, interviews were conducted with dancers in a position of leadership within the community (i.e., teachers, choreographers), for their holistic view. Interviewees included local participants, as well as YouTube choreographers from the United States, for their observations and perspectives from international community experiences. The interviewees were Libby Calder and Anna Robinson, Jared Hemopo, Nathan Kara, and Mariel and Keone Madrid (Appendix C).

Findings

The immersion, observation, and engagement methods uncovered rich insights affirming the complex interwoven nature of street dance culture, social media, and self-identity. Themes from the data collection reinforced the centrality of street dance as a social activity, with much of its impetus and character driven by its youthful participants and youth culture, sustaining constant evolution and development. Cultural practices also asserted the centrality of social networking spaces to the distribution and circulation of street dance cultural flows.

Social media was largely perceived as a positive tool for its agency of community participation, cultural distribution, and professional opportunities. However, it was highlighted that these opportunities had also become problematic in that dancers could get “lost in chasing the fame”, (K. Madrid, personal communication, November 11, 2015). Additionally, issues associated with “likes”, comments, and “sharing” on social media sites were identified as affecting an individual’s validation as a dancer, and subsequently could become a barrier to a positive street dance experience.

Concerning the physical execution of dance movement, an increase in accessibility to street dance videos via social media was largely attributed for an overall rise in technical skill. However, the saturation of dance videos was also identified as a potential barrier to dancers using movement as a form of self-expression and developing one’s own individual style.

Though social networking sites are central to street dance cultural production and consumption, with a plentitude of dance video circulations, observations suggest there is limited online spaces for street dance discourse. Text-based posts on Facebook from teachers and choreographers within the community occasionally expressed frustrations at the state of street dance culture, highlighting a lack of cultural knowledge and understanding that might contribute to the development of self-identity.

Patterns were also identified in participant behavior in online street dance environments. Dance videos were consumed on both laptop and mobile devices, and Facebook and Instagram were identified as primary platforms for Aotearoa dancers to share videos of themselves, videos of friends within their networks, or videos of dancers that they looked up to. The engagement with online street dance culture had various levels of engagement, from quick scrolling through social media feeds, to leisurely hours watching dance videos for both entertainment and inspiration.
The project shifted into the Define phase, involving convergent thinking through a process of synthesis, analysis, sense-making, and distillation. The aim of this phase was to distill findings to an actionable design brief to move forward with and respond to.

The SLAP (sort, label, integrate, prioritise) technique (Maeda, 2006) was used to group data and identify overarching themes in relationship to an individual's engagement with street dance culture. Early iterations of this process attempted to draw from the pluralistic sociological self-identity definitions as a form of categorisation. However, this proved to be difficult. The notion that aspects of identity are at the disposal of the individual lacked clarity and structure needed for analysis. Additionally, a level of understanding the self—in a mental, emotional, or spiritual capacity—were heavily evident in the findings, but not in the identity definitions I had been exploring. A more holistic approach was discovered by looking within our own country, and drawing from an indigenous model: Te Whare Tapa Whā.

The Te Whare Tapa Whā model
The Te Whare Tapa Whā model was developed by Mason Drurie in 1982 as a framework for Māori health and well-being (see Fig. 3). It provided a unified theory of health from a Māori perspective, beyond Western biomedical approaches that failed to recognise immeasurable aspects of well-being. Today the model has become widely used in New Zealand, achieving 'paradigm' status, providing a Māori perspective in a variety of contexts (Glover, 2005). It is based on the four walls of the Māori meeting house, the wharenui, each wall representing a cornerstone of Māori health. These are taha wairua (spiritual well-being), taha tinana (physical well-being), taha whanau (social well-being), and taha hinengaro (mental/emotional well-being). The wharenui metaphor illustrates the interdependency of each of the cornerstones of Māori health, for overall stability.

The Te Whare Tapa Whā model was adopted in this project for its holistic perspective, reflective of the all encompassing potential for street dance to simultaneously develop all dimensions of the self (Graham, 2002). Utilising Drurie’s model as an analytical framework allowed for identification of the respective presence or strength of the four Te Whare Tapa Whā dimensions in...
the discourse of participants. Analysis of the data suggested that while the physical, social, and mental and emotional aspects of dance are commonly taught and understood within street dance culture, the spiritual dimension of street dance is not as explicit.

Taha Wairua: Spiritual Well-being

Taha Wairua, or spiritual well-being, relates to a person’s life force, and the connection of self and spirit to others and the environment. It concerns the values and beliefs that shape how people live, and self-awareness of meaning, purpose, and personal identity. (“Well-being, hauora,” n.d.). In relationship to dance, Thorp (2011) posits:

Spirituality, in its most basic form, is the deep, conscious connection to the self through awareness…and the lived experience of movement. From this starting point, all the other connections to other people, the supernatural and the environment stems. Dance is a way to attune to, focus on, and experience this connection. (p. 59).

This conscious intent brings purpose and meaning to movement beyond physical execution, and can ‘elevate’ the overall movement as the dancer is more ‘in tune’ (Thorp, 2011). For the sake of this exegesis, street dancers’ taha wairua concerns ideas of consciously understanding or developing identity through movement. It also relates to an awareness of the relationship of the self to other dancers, space, and the greater street dance community, developing a sense of place and purpose.
A recent documentary Dancing In the Now (Samaya, 2015) describes contemporary dance as "a visual language for an internal world", that navigates a "labyrinth beyond time and space". Borrowing from its improvisational techniques that empowered a personal relationship with movement, my first prototypes aimed to facilitate choreographic activity for street dancers. I hoped to encourage street dancers to think about movement differently, to break free from familiar choreographic practice, and to deepen the understanding of movement as a form of self-expression.

I ran a series of workshops with individual dancers using a series of choreographic exercises I had developed. The response from the workshops’ participants was positive; the dancers found it mind-opening, discovering purpose within movement beyond shapes and style. Though I enjoyed this direction, the nature of the workshops felt contrived—the structure and individual format of the exercises disparate from the organic and social essence of street dance origins. I explored a variety of possible avenues to develop the project, however decided to focus on developing messaging to inspire dancers with ideas central to taha wairua.

Just as cultural flows that circulated through social networks had recursively transformed street dance culture, I was curious as to how I might also use the very infrastructure that had created impetus for the project, to distribute ideas central to strengthening dancers’ taha wairua. I developed the idea of initiating a movement on social media, promoting the power of dance as a vehicle for self-expression and a means of understanding self-identity.
Preparing to start a movement

Movement in the context not to be confused with the physical act of moving, is defined as "a group of people working together to achieve their shared political, social, or artistic ideas" (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.). Elements of a movement include a narrative describing its ethos, a connection between leaders and members, and an opportunity for members to contribute (Godin, 2008).

Responding to insights of the Discover and Define Phases, I developed a vision of a united body of dancers understanding the power of street dance to strengthen an individual's sense of identity, and bring a new consciousness of purpose to their dance practice. Using social media as a means of message dissemination and connecting people of shared values, I hoped the movement might inform, inspire, and empower participants with the rich spiritual opportunities dance presents as a form of self-expression, creating meaning, and understanding.

The name Hikoi is made up of the Maori term meaning to step, stride, or march. It is commonly used in association with traveling, regarding the indigenous rights of Maori, and issues such as the Treaty of Waitangi and Maori land rights, language, culture, and its relationship to the physical act of moving and the steps within dance. Secondly, its political connotations resonate with the cultural positioning of the movement, taking a stand to reclaim some of the values of street dance from which it originated. Finally, using a Maori term, I was able to acknowledge the indigenous Te Tapa Wai framework from which the movement developed, and also ground Hikoi as being from Aotearoa, in an internationally connected community.

My role as designer became to initiate the Hikoi movement, to build and transmit the narrative of its ethos, and begin to facilitate the way for street dancers to follow and become a part of the conversation. The first objective of the Develop Phase was to advance the vision of the movement into tangible outcomes that might appeal to participants and exist in a manner conducive to the social media platforms they would exist in.
Strategy
A strategy was developed to respond to street dancers’ behaviours on social media. Mind mapping and visualisation techniques were used to generate concepts in response to “How might we?” provocations centred on participant behaviour and the varying levels of time and engagement on social media platforms. For example, “how might we engage a dancer that briefly checks Instagram on a break at rehearsal, or Facebook while waiting a couple of minutes for the bus?” Conversely, “a dancer might spend hours in the evening at home on their social networking sites, watching and sharing dance videos of their peers or favourite choreographers from around the world—how might we use this time to inform, educate, and inspire them?”

In order to address these varying levels of engagement, a number of ideas were tested and chosen to initiate Hikoi. The first concept to take through to prototyping was the idea of short video portraits telling the stories of dancers from around Aotearoa, aiming to communicate the strength of their taha wairua. These would hope to encourage dancers to reflect on their own spiritual well-being in dance. The second concept to respond to low level engagement and reduced time was a series of still images, using image and text to build the Hikoi ethos. Additionally, to address opportunities for high level engagement with greater time and concentration, was the concept of blog posts, enabling leaders of the street dance community to discuss issues within the street dance community. The final constituent part would be a manifesto, encapsulating the essence of the movement, and outlining Hikoi’s values and direction. Ideas for a manifesto video and brand video to contribute to the Hikoi narrative were also developed through to production stages, but were later disregarded due to time constraints of the project. The following section discusses the development of the strategy’s components (see Fig. 4). Responding to primary platforms used by Aotearoa street dancers, the social media sites I have chosen to use for Hikoi are Facebook and Instagram. For a coherent online voice a Twitter presence would also be established, however this is secondary, as Twitter is not perceived to be as heavily used in Aotearoa as street dance communities in other countries.

Bringing Hikoi to life
Bringing each of the constituent parts of Hikoi to life was achieved through an iterative process of prototyping, testing, and evaluating. Against my natural tendency, I worked to engage with the production process in a fluid and agile manner, embracing change, ambiguity, and the ‘fail fast’ mentality. As a Masters research project, a collaborative approach was limited, however I was able to draw from others’ video skills in creating the video portraits, and also involve friends, colleagues, and members of the street dance community, for testing and feedback on prototypes. Though the following is discussed in neatly titled sections, the process was very non-linear, and each of the components were developed concurrently—the learnings from each iteration informing the progress of its counterparts.
Writing the Hikoi Manifesto

Developing the Hikoi Manifesto involved the initiation of a movement. A comprehensive understanding of its values, beliefs, and direction was necessary. I had a general idea of Hikoi’s ethos, and as such, took to writing a manifesto to explicitly draw out, articulate, and distill concepts around a dancer’s taha wairua. It challenged me to capture the essence of the movement, and create a narrative that would resonate with street dancers.

Multiple iterations evolved its messaging, rhetoric, and tone of voice—how outspoken or passive it might be, its use of language, and how much the movement might point fingers at the state of street dance culture, versus an ideal future.

As iterations were developed, I was inspired by social activist rhetoric, a tone that resonates and appeals to anti-establishment attitudes held by informed social beings such as KONY2012 campaign, #BlackLivesMatter, and Occupy Movement. I liked the idea of a voice with a determined presence, and worked to embody this through the iterations of the Hikoi manifesto and its components.

I was also influenced by sports advertising rhetoric, which often inspired through ideas of challenging one to become better, relating to street dance mentality of self-improvement. Drawing on these, I decided to take a strength-based approach through the ideas of the Hikoi manifesto, which then impacted on how I framed the movement, by using youth to inspire other youth. This attempt to encourage the movement to reflect on their own taha wairua in dance, and increase awareness of the opportunities available through the spiritual dimension.

Developing the Video Portraits

An emerging theme from the strategy development was the desire to create meaning and a sense of connection. As such, we wanted to explore engaging storytelling to connect to audiences, and to inspire street dancers with social media’s vibrant need for shared stories. Storytelling serves to connect to others, building understanding and awareness of the myriad of messages in our fast-paced and technologically integrated lives. As described by author and director Paul Auster (as cited in Fog, 2003):

"Telling stories is the only way we can create meaning in our lives and make sense of the world. We need them in order to understand where we come from and who we are. And by sharing stories of our experiences, we can better understand the contexts of our daily lives and explain how we fit into the world."

As a novice in video production, developing the video portraits required much preparation and going beyond the standard way of shooting. In addition to initial brainstorming, we were also involved in the visual process of creating the Hikoi portraits.

In developing the framework for the video portraits, I stumbled upon a series called One Minute Wonders. Despite following a fairly rigid and simple structure throughout the series—entering their studio, the interview shot, decor close-up—I was drawn to how markedly different their stories were. The varying personal symbols and signifiers within their portraits, along with their interview answers, provided a rich snapshot of the creative’s identity. This informed the development of the video portraits, reflecting the values of the Hikoi movement.
Early prototypes both in front of and behind the camera, allowed me to test interview questions, try various video and audio production tools and techniques, and consolidate a shot list that would successfully capture the dancer of the portrait in a way that might support their taha wairua narrative. As representations of identity, I wanted the videos to feel honest and authentic, presenting a realness that shifted beyond the visually dynamic shapes of street dance movements.

Once I had a solid prototype, I contacted a number of dancers who I perceived as embodying the values of Hikoi, to shoot the final profiles. Filming in Wellington, Auckland, and Christchurch, each dancer was given the same briefing, asked the same interview questions, and followed a similar structure for the shoot. This consisted of filming in the dancer’s home environment, dance studio environment, with a traveling scene in between. I worked with different videographers in each city, using a shot list and references for consistency, though also capturing any extra shots we thought might add extra texture to the dancer’s narrative. My role by this stage of production was to be director and producer, though building rapport and working collaboratively with both the dancer and videographer was important for everyone to feel comfortable and capture the personal stories we hoped to tell.

The editing process was also iterative, and required working through further prototypes to establish a suitable length, test various backing tracks, negotiate a balance of narrative and dance movement, and test various image treatments and editing techniques.

Developing the still images
Instagram is characterised by its highly visual media feed, which is often used by dancers to share dance videos, posters that promote workshops and events, and photos taken from various dance related activities. In the same way, the Hikoi still images also hoped to serve multiple roles within the movement’s narrative—supporting other components, but also contributing to building the Hikoi ethos. Many of the iterations of the still images worked to define Hikoi’s visual aesthetic, which would exist alongside the visual language of street dance culture, on social media platforms that supported an everyday vernacular.
The visual expressions of street dance culture are as diverse as its participants. At the core of the street dance aesthetic is its hip-hop and street culture influence, characterised by its often raw rough-edges, and grungy street appeal. However, visual expressions increasingly reflect the more formalised studio culture, evoking a professionalism more conducive to the established contemporaries it might be taught alongside. Additionally, technological developments and lower production costs have made quality tools previously only accessible by media professionals, available to enthusiasts and serious amateurs, who are able to collaborate with other ‘cultural elite’ to produce media flows of high production value (Burgess & Green, 2009). This is increasingly evident in street dance visual language and videography, and the environment Hikoi would be entering into mirrors current techno-cultural circumstances. The still image prototypes worked to navigate how Hikoi could be visually expressed in a way that would evoke its hip hop roots, while also utilising and expressing its access to quality production tools prevalent in contemporary street dance culture.

Developing the blog posts
The Discover phase of the process revealed a lack of space in online environments for discourse central to street dance culture. As I gathered perspectives of respected street dance community members during this phase, I wondered how this rich knowledge could be shared with the community. This formed the foundation for the blog posts, which hoped to use times of high level engagement by participants, as an opportunity to inform and inspire participants in order to strengthen their taha wairua. ‘Affinity spaces’ are described by James Gee as ideal learning environments for users within participatory culture (as cited by Jenkins, 2009). This is because the participant is actively engaged with the topic, and motivated to gain new knowledge and build skill. As such, I contacted a few leaders within the street dance community who agreed to write a blog entry, and I met with each to discuss and collaborate on topic choices that resonated with them. Each writer was given a small brief outlining the general objective and tone of Hikoi, however beyond this it was important to me that the post would be a platform for the writer’s voice.
Final Works

Dancing from the Inside Out was premised on the notion that dance videos, as representations of identity, circulate through mediatised street dance networks and recursively impact how an individual might engage with street dance culture, affecting self-identity and specifically one’s taha wairua. Hikoi has been developed as a response to address this. It exists as an initiator of a movement, with a set of values that promotes street dance as a vehicle for understanding and developing self-identity.

The components used to initiate the Hikoi journey are the #HikoiSteps. Similar to a dance sequence, where the dynamic and varied individual actions of the dancer comprise a routine, so the #HikoiSteps take on their own form to build the Hikoi narrative. These are the manifesto, the Inside Out video portraits, the still images, and the Real Talk blog posts.

Critiquing the “likes and follows” behaviour within online street dance culture, Hikoi positions itself as “the underdog”—a voice that is unsuspecting, quietly outspoken, and persevering. At times Hikoi is provocative—sure of itself and unwavering in its ethos—but it is also uplifting and inspiring, and personal in its approach. Its non-conformist appeal remains true to the voice for otherness from which it was originally birthed, providing a place of belonging for street dance youth who might discover the power of movement as a way to develop a sense of identity. Each of the tangible components of Hikoi work to embody these characteristics.

Visually, the aesthetic of Hikoi navigates a grassroots ethos with an understanding of design principles. It also negotiates the visual language of street dance culture and the everyday vernacular of street dance participants’ user-generated content. Images take on a grainy quality, with a muted or desaturated colour palette. This carried through to the use of the grid and the choice of typefaces, that employ an “undesigned” appeal. A glitch technique is also sparingly injected within video, symbolising Hikoi’s disruptive voice, though also as an ironic comment on the consequences of technology within street dance culture. Blurred figures capture the dynamism of movement, while also giving a nod to the everyday vernacular of its horizontal positioning. Sneakers, a signifier of street dance culture and a marker of personal taste, showcase the
diversity of Hikoi members, and symbolise the literal and political translations of the Hikoi name. Imagery and videography is often up close, mirroring the personal approach of Hikoi, and encouraging the viewer to focus less on the dance moves and more on the act of moving. Representation of the face is avoided, unless profiling a dancer for an Inside Out video portrait, or a guest blog writer allowing the viewer to place themselves in the frame.

**Manifesto**

The manifesto is a statement of values and beliefs that define the Hikoi movement. All things ‘Hikoi’ adhere to the manifesto. Culturally activist in undertone but poetic and uplifting in expression, it outlines a narrative that presents connecting with the spiritual dimension of street dance as a challenge that is only for those who are willing enough. The narrative of the manifesto begins with ideas that street dancers are familiar with—moving, steps, counts, being athletes. It then uses the language of the familiar to guide the reader into ideas that might be more unfamiliar within a dance context—identity, self-expression, vulnerability, authenticity. As such, the taha hinengaro (mental/emotional well-being) and the taha tinana (physical well-being), are used as conduits to the taha wairua. The manifesto takes a strength-based approach and is purposefully lacking specific street dance or social media context. The idea here is the manifesto exists as a timeless document, allowing dancers to bring their own meaning to the text, evolving over time as their relationship with Hikoi and with street dance also develops. The manifesto is written from a first-person plural perspective, encouraging personal engagement, and reiterating the united voice of the movement’s members. The design of the manifesto features my old dance studio that I trained in for many years. The experiences in this space shaped much of who I am and my understanding of dance today. To the uninformed reader however, the empty studio represents a familiar space within contemporary street dance culture, and allows the reader to place themselves in the frame. The light creates a spotlight inviting the reader to embody the text in the space. In a shadowed and somewhat mysterious space, the light is symbolic of hope, synonymous with the strength-based appeal of the manifesto copy.
Inside Out Video Portraits

The Inside Out video portraits use storytelling to explicitly express the power of movement to create meaning and purpose, contributing to the development of one’s self-identity. Speaking about dance through the lens of their taha wairua, the portraits present dancers from around Aotearoa as a means to encourage viewers to reflect on their own understanding and relationship with dance. In this way, the video portraits use voices of youth to activate and empower other youth, acknowledging the origins of street dance culture and the grassroots ethos of social networking sites.

The video portraits start to reveal the identity of the dancer off stage and outside the studio, by following a narrative structure that employs an interview style, cut with a journey of the dancer leaving home and traveling to a dance studio where they train on their own. In addition to the audio of the interview, symbols and signifiers throughout the videos portray aspects of the dancers’ identity and environment that might inform the dancers’ movement, i.e. culture, family relationships. The framework of the narrative exists in a way that future profiles could easily be produced through collaborating with further dancers and videographers, continually building the textures of the Hikoi narrative.

Five dancers diverse in gender, ethnicity, age, home city, and dance experiences are presented in the final Inside Out video portraits. Selected to represent the varied backgrounds of the Aotearoa street dance community, they are Tash Crichton, Ken Vaega, Kat Walker, Stevie Haira, and Joseph Ling. Each of the videos highlight themes connected to the individual’s taha wairua. Connection, self-expression, identity, having fun, spreading positivity, and personal growth are presented as important aspects of street dance engagement for the individuals.

The videos’ art direction aims to embody Hikoi’s afore-mentioned characteristics. Shots are often close up and personal to emphasise the personal tone of the videos, and the colour palette shifts from being desaturated to muted colour, adding to the dynamism when movement is introduced.

The distribution platform of the video portraits is crucial for the videos’ circulation. The videos are designed to be released on Facebook, and are accompanied by a short introduction caption to outline dance affiliations, city of residence, age, and ethnicity, to provide context to the stories shared. Tagging the dancer and their dance affiliations within the posts also allows for the dancer and their immediate networks to be notified, initiating the distribution amongst street dance communities.

To introduce a video being released, the portraits are preceded by a teaser still with a quote from the video and a blurred shot of the dancer in the background. Additionally, to enable member participation and allow dancers to become part of the conversation and share their story, once the idea of the portraits is established, members are invited to create their own videos sharing their own taha wairua (see Fig 5). These can be selectively reposted on the Hikoi Instagram.
It's a way of expressing how I feel through what I love and through movement.

Tash Crichton

Christchurch

Fig. 5. Inside Out video portrait journey

Quote Teaser

Before

Video Portrait

During

Community Portrait

After

Inside Out video portrait:
Tash Crichton, 18
Christchurch
Inside Out video portrait:
Stevel Meira, 26
Wellington

Inside Out video portrait:
Joseph Ling, 27
Auckland
Still Images

Serving the brief engagements by participants on social media platforms, the Still images are designed to be recognised and understood quickly. Primarily designed for Instagram, they contribute to the HiKol ethos in multiple manners, either as individual posts reinforcing the movement’s values, or as support for other content. This includes teasers or provocations for the video portraits and blog posts. The Still images adhere to the HiKol aesthetic, using close up and blurred images of movement, a muted and desaturated colour palette, and signifiers and symbols of street dance culture.
Going Live

It was deemed important that the release of Hikoi into social networking sites wasn’t the big announcement of a finished product, but rather the first step of a journey. True to its underdog character, the beginning of the movement would embrace humble beginnings, with a quiet confidence that something had started, and that there was more to come.

The first online presence of Hikoi was marked by posting the manifesto on the newly created social media pages. Beyond sharing the project and its content on my personal social media networks—relying on connections in the street dance community for initial engagement—growth was to be organic, and the distribution of content would be dependent on engagement by the active street dance community to discuss and highlight issues within the culture and community that relate to dancers’ taha wairua. The social media context acts as an affinity space, aiming to educate and inform in an environment where participants are actively engaged. The tone of the blog posts adhere to the Hikoi character, and aim to be honest, provocative, and inspiring. The first blog post submitted as part of this project is written by YouTube choreographer Mariel Madrid, with her post “Classroom Etiquette and Technology”, which discusses the role of cameras and social media in street dance learning environments, and how this might affect dancers’ development (Appendix D).

Additionally, to adhere to Hikoi’s ethos and its position as a grassroots voice amongst increased self-promotional posts, parameters were established as to how Hikoi would engage within the social media environment. No posts were ‘boosted’ to become a sponsored post with greater visibility, and I avoided excessive hash tagging on Instagram to attract attention. Dancers featuring in content were tagged to notify their immediate networks; beyond this the distribution of content relied on community engagement.

Due to the multiple ways in which users can engage with their social media platforms, the way in which one might come across Hikoi content is equally varied and to a large extent, at the hands of the dancer. For example, content might be viewed first on Instagram, before Facebook, or perhaps not even seen at all. These nuanced readings are welcomed. Individual narratives encourage participants to build their own understanding of Hikoi, making the movement and its ethos personal to each dancer.
The frequency of content being released was negotiated by the level of attention and engagement required by each component—the low engagement content distributed more frequently, while high engagement content less frequently. An ideal timeframe would see video portraits released fortnightly, blog posts monthly, and still images weekly, or as fit to support the video profiles and blog posts.

A brief overview of Hikoi’s online presence to date highlights the Inside Out video portraits as being most successful in terms of shareability on Facebook, gathering support for Hikoi from local communities and affiliations associated with the dancer featured, and leading to further distribution of the video portraits throughout dance networks. The still images have received greater engagement on Instagram than Facebook, reflective of being more conducive to the highly visual nature of the Instagram platform. At this time of writing, the Real Talk blog posts are yet to be posted.
Dancing from the Inside Out aimed to explore how design thinking processes could be used to strengthen Aotearoa street dancers’ self-identity in the age of social media. I believe the project was successful in investigating this, both in contributing to a growing body of literature of street dance culture in Aotearoa, and investigating the application of design thinking methods within a street dance culture context.

Weaving together existing literature with findings from empathy research, the project identified the circulation of dance videos—additionally existing as representations of self-identity—as impacting a street dancer’s taha wairua, or spiritual wellbeing, relating to consciously understanding or developing identity through movement. An opportunity was highlighted to use design to strengthen a dancer’s wairua, through informing and inspiring street dancers about the potential of dance to create meaning and purpose.

The human centric nature of design thinking methods proved valuable not only in the defining the scope and focus of the project, but in developing the design response Hikoi, involving street dance participants throughout the design-led research in prototyping and testing. This informed the final components for the initiation of the Hikoi movement: the manifesto, Inside Out video portraits, the Real Talk blog posts, and still images.

There are a number of potential applications for the project that are beyond the scope of this thesis. Hikoi was developed with longevity in mind, as a framework that hopes to respond to street dance culture as it continues to evolve, and also facilitate ongoing conversations within the street dance community. Adhering to the manifesto, the framework encourages further generation of content.

Conclusion

Hikoi exists not as a solution, but a koha, or gift, that hopes to contribute to the development of street dance culture as it is increasingly shaped by practices and behaviours on social media.

The opportunity exists for the video portraits to feature participants from more towns around the country in order to build a richer narrative of Aotearoa street dancers, and the blog posts hold potential for contributions from more leaders within the community, providing a platform for discourse central to the development of taha wairua and self-identity in street dance. As dancers become more familiar with Hikoi, the project hopes to encourage greater participation by members via the creation of user-generated video portraits, or contribution to discussions provoked by the still images and Real Talk blog posts.

Over time, through the distribution, circulation, and facilitation of content that promotes the value of taha wairua in developing street dancers’ self-identity, Hikoi hopes to recursively inform street dance culture. In this sense Hikoi exists not as a solution, but a koha, or gift, that hopes to contribute to the development of street dance culture as it is increasingly shaped by practices and behaviours on social media.

Further opportunities also exist in developing the transformative nature of Hikoi by taking the values into offline environments. Drawing from the Hikoi ethos, the potential exists to use its online presence to facilitate face-to-face relationships, and run workshops and events in the community, collaborating with other dancers to further build on taha wairua concepts.
Reference List


Bibliography


Suk, A. [Amanda Suk]. (2015, March 24). I applaud you if you actually read through this lengthy novel of a reflection [don’t mind improper grammar or use of punctuations, etc. These are just spurts of thought bubbles]:: For a while now, dance wasn’t making me as happy. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/amandasuk730/posts/10103781693672369


Image List


Suk, A. (Amanda Suk). (2015, March 24). I applaud you if you actually read through this lengthy novel of a reflection [don’t mind improper grammar or use of punctuations, etc. These are just spurts of thought bubbles]: For a while now, dance wasn’t making me as happy. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/amandasuk730/post/10103781693672369


Fig. 1. Urban Dance Camp. (2015, January 30). Rude - Magic! / Koharu Sugawara Choreography ft Yuki Shibuya / URBAN DANCE CAMP. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8wpJ0TJm_s

Glossary

Class footage
Videos recording dance sequence at the end of a dance class or workshop, often performed by a selected group of dancers.

Concept videos
Dance videos integrating 'concept' or narrative to provide context or add value, meaning, or context to dance sequence. These often have a cinematic quality.

Follow
Refers to the act of subscribing to online identities.

Globalisation
Simultaneously engaging the intersections of global and local dynamics.

Hikoi (Māori)
To step, stride, march.

Koha (Māori)
Gift, present, offering, donation, contribution - especially one maintaining social relationships and has connotations of reciprocity.

Polyswagg
Used to describe street dance style developed by Parris Goebel, incorporating Polynesian influence into hip hop dance.

Tagging
Refers to identifying people in a social media post. This can be to include someone who was at an event/happening, alerting someone mentioned in the post, giving credit where credit is due, or increasing social media marketing by encouraging others to share it.

Te Whare Tapa Whā (Māori)
Health and well-being model developed by Mason Drurie in 1982, characterised by its holistic approach to health beyond physical well-being.

Taha Tinana (Māori)
Physical health and the capacity for physical growth and development

Taha Wairua (Māori)
Spiritual well-being, referring to one’s life force, determining, who and what we are, where we have come from and where we are going.

Taha Hinengaro (Māori)
Mental and emotional health, referring to the capacity to think and feel.

Taha Whānau (Māori)
Family health and the capacity to belong, to care and to share where individuals are part of wider social systems.

Wicked Problems
A problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognise.
15 August 2014

Phoebe Smith
14 Arizona Grove
Brooklyn
WELLINGTON 6021

Dear Phoebe,

Re: Social Media and Dance

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 13 August 2014.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committees.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University’s Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University’s Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

“This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University’s Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O’Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, e-mail humanities@massey.ac.nz”.

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to one of the University’s Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

John G O’Neill (Professor)
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs’ Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)

cc: Dr Max Schiesser
School of Design
Wellington

Mr Rodney Adare and Prof Andre Kiwir, Co-Heads
School of Design
Wellington

Mr Eugene Hansen
School of Art
Wellington

Assoc Prof Heather Galbraith, HoS
School of Art
Wellington

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council
Social Media and Hip Hop Dance
FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree not to disclose anything discussed in the Focus Group.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: [Signature]
Date: 26/01/15
Full name - printed: Olivia (Libby) Caldec

Dancing from the Inside Out
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: [Signature]
Date: 9/1/2016
Full name - printed: Tash Crichton
Dancing from the Inside Out
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: __________________________ Date: 23/10/15

Full Name - printed: Javed Hemage

Dancing from the Inside Out
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: __________________________ Date: 26/10/15

Full Name - printed: Nathan Kara.
Dancing from the Inside Out
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

[ ] agree, do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

[ ] agree, do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

[ ] agree, do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

[ ] agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: [Signature]

Date: 26/1/16

Full Name - printed: [Iva Lamkum]

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Dancing from the Inside Out
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

[ ] agree, do not agree to participate in the video portrait shoot.

[ ] agree, do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

[ ] agree, do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: [Signature]

Date: 11/02/16

Full Name - printed: [Esther Lam Young]

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Format for Participant Consent Form (2014)
Dancing from the Inside Out
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

YES
I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

YES
I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

YES
I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

YES
I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: [Signature]
Full Name - printed: [Full Name]
Date: 11/11/15

Format for Participant Consent Form (2014)
Dancing from the Inside Out
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: ____________________________ Date: 8/12/15
Full Name - printed ____________________________

Dancing from the Inside Out
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: ____________________________ Date: 7/4/16
Full Name - printed ____________________________
Dancing from the Inside Out
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish to not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I wish to not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: 9/12/15

Full Name - printed  Samara Te Aniwa Raueti

Dancing from the Inside Out
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to not agree to participate in the video portrait shoot.

I wish to not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I wish to not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: 4/4/16

Full Name - printed  GENG JOSEPH LING
Social Media and Hip Hop Dance

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree not to disclose anything discussed in the Focus Group.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Full Name - printed ___________________________
Dancing from the Inside Out
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

[ ] I agree to not agree to participate in the video portrait shoot.

[ ] I wish to not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

[ ] I wish to not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: [Signature] Date: 5/04/16

Full Name - printed: Katherine Walker

Dancing from the Inside Out
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

[ ] I agree to not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

[ ] I wish to not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

[ ] I wish to not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: [Signature] Date: 8/12/15

Full Name - printed: Gratson ZioGAS
Interview with Libby Calder and Anna Robinson

26 January 2015

Appendix C

When to you watch dance videos?
Anna: For me it starts on my mobile. Sometimes it’s an advert that’s playing too. You watch it and you’re like, “Oh, I’ve seen this before.”
Libby: Sometimes you can also just search something on YouTube and it’s a whole different world of dance.

Where do you watch dance videos?
Anna: Sometimes I’ve subscribed to some channels, like BodyRok or something, and it comes online. It’s like, “Cool, I’ll watch them all at the same time.”
Libby: I find it hard to find sometimes. You have to go through so many videos.

How do you come across dance videos?
Anna: I watch dance either from YouTube or through social media. I think we’re all on social media for that, so you get real closely related things.
Libby: It’s a tool for research. It’s also a way of following what’s going on in dance.

What motivates you as a dancer?
Anna: In terms of hip hop dance, people imagine it as really gangster and swag, and like full of hard out attitude, but I don’t think that’s what overrides that thrill of performing. I don’t think that’s what overrides the feeling straight after when I’ve got a perfect moment. It’s the feeling of being out there. I think that creative side of performing and creating something is definitely my motivation. Also I really like being fit. Getting to do a workout and get sweaty and it’s super fun instead of going to the gym.
Libby: The reason I’m a dancer is not that I like being in competitions. I know that if someone’s just taking a bit more time to get used to a move then that’s fine. If you’re in a workshop there’s that extra pressure to impress this person who’s teaching you.

Where do you watch dance videos?
Libby: I was talking to Nick about dancing recently. I think it’s a tool for research. It’s also a way of following what’s going on in dance.

When do you watch dance videos?
Anna: I watch dance videos at night or if I’m doing it for a purpose like choreographing.
Libby: I was talking to Nick about dancing recently. I think it’s a tool for research. It’s also a way of following what’s going on in dance.

How do you come across dance videos?
Anna: Sometimes I’ve subscribed to some channels, like BodyRok or something, and it comes online. It’s like, “Cool, I’ll watch them all at the same time.”
Libby: I find it hard to find sometimes. You have to go through so many videos.

What motivates you as a dancer?
Anna: The same, like when we were just starting. It’s love of dance and stuff. Now I think that’s still there but you’ve got to make sure that you get the dance and look really good doing it. Whereas when you’re in Infinite we know that if someone’s just taking a bit more time to get used to a move then that’s fine. If you’re in a workshop there’s that extra pressure to impress this person who’s teaching you.
Libby: I was talking to Nick about dancing recently. I think it’s a tool for research. It’s also a way of following what’s going on in dance.

How do you come across dance videos?
Anna: Sometimes I’ve subscribed to some channels, like BodyRok or something, and it comes online. It’s like, “Cool, I’ll watch them all at the same time.”
Libby: I find it hard to find sometimes. You have to go through so many videos.
no one’s fighting to stay. We’re really open and accepting.

Libby: I guess most dancers have an arty or creative side to them in hip hop, cos you have to create everything from scratch, unless you’re doing syllabus.

Have you ever posted a dance video on social media.

If so, what were some of the positive and negative aspects of that experience?

Libby: It was very good to show people competition routines when they couldn’t be in that country.

Anna: I’ve never posted anything like a dance video of me, I’ve never gotten around to making one. I don’t know how I’d feel if I made a solo video.

Libby: The internet is so mean.

Anna: I guess I’d be like, “what are people going to think?” I guess I’m not as confident as I could be in terms of that, there’s so much judging.

Libby: It’s only judging by dancers though. Whereas if you think of your family and friends, they’re so supportive. It’s not a safe environment whatsoever, unless you make it private or disable comments.

How do you think social media has affected confidence?

Libby: I think it would have brought a lot of people down. I think A LOT. A few people get liked by millions and feel really awesome about themselves and I think a lot of people get horrible comments—It’s a horrible culture that comes with YouTube. There’s other positives, but you always remember the horrible comments. It’s pretty easy to show the world, which is awesome if you know how to share it the right way.

Anna: I think it’s either really high or really low, not generally a middle ground. Cos if you’ve done something that’s average people won’t watch it, they don’t even care.

Libby: Everyone has to have their say. But some people are cocky enough to ignore that. Instagram is a bit more of a safe environment cos it’s your friends who choose to follow you, so they’re nicer. YouTube is nasty. It’s just a wider platform, people might stumble across you. Instagram can be more private. Instagram seems more negative and critical rather than focus on the positives. I don’t know how to use Twitter.

What’s your dance story and how did you get into dance?

I started in 2006 at school, I saw a hip hop competition called Bring It On, a secondary schools competition. I just remember being in the audience and the vibe was real positive, in my mind I was like ‘oh yea, (I’d be) keen to try that.’ And then yeah...

But I’ve always loved dance, from a young age, dancing around the house to Michael Jackson videos and stuff.

What happened between Bring It On and today?

In 2010, I watched my little brother performing in a church based crew, Heavily Chaos, they were a church based crew. I joined them with a group of my mates, jammed with them for a bit, and it wasn’t until I joined that crew that I actually started to find something more behind it—the dances often had Christian based messages, I kind of got attached to the story, and the messages we could share through movement and stuff. It was like this whole other world. We’d do church gigs, flea markets, community gigs. The vibe was just real positive.

Then some of the boys wanted a new challenge, Heavily Chaos kind of died out and the interest wasn’t there. We needed something new, something fresh, so we started a new crew Limit Break.

We still did all the similar things like community events, and all that church stuff, but we also wanted to do competitions. So then we made a few sets and did SDNZ Regionals 2008. That was a whole new level, being in the competition vibe, it was a mean challenge, it was exactly what we needed. We didn’t expect to get as far as did which was awesome - we ended up placing 3rd in finals, which advanced us to Nationals. Then we got 2nd at Nationals, so that secured our spot to go do the HHI (Hip Hop International) comp. That was off the chain. We didn’t have all the normal facilities dance
I haven't seen any real big progress, to make it any different. It's the same. You put in a crew, why is there nothing more? Maybe they need some contemporary classes or something and open up their minds. Straight up, I've never actually thought about this. Just like, different things on stage, why are they always facing the front in the same 'V' formation. It's amazing, but I remember watching the comp this year, waiting for something new.

Contemporary can be almost exactly the same as hip hop. So, what do you think we need?

Movement wise, hip hop can be fast and sharp, but contemporary can be fast and sharp. It should be a hip hop contemporary competition. They need to experiment more and try something new. If you've done hip hop and then contemporary, you've gained so much. For example, Joe Black's Dad is a hip hop contemporary. He's breaking down, you know? You've done hip hop and then contemporary, you've grown as a dancer. They're breaking down, they're taking out all their previous experiences. Contemporary is just more of a diverse movement, they don't have to be in the front. So, you've got to experiment more. So, I'm saying, it's amazing. But I've never actually thought about this.

What are three highlights of your dance journey, and why were they so important to you?

I've been freelancing since I was at university. We did a lot of stuff while I was studying. Black Grace gave me a head-start into that world so I knew how it all worked. My mentality going in as a first year student—everyone thought I was really serious. I ended up getting into Urban Youth (Black Grace), and that was my first time being a professional dancer. That was my first time being in a professional company. I didn't even know how to roll on the ground. The struggle was real.

I finished up that programme and Neil (Iremeia) approached me afterwards and offered me a scholarship to stay on, so I'd been training. I'd had a lot of stuff I'd been doing, but I'd never been in a professional company and I was still doing that in my free time. I didn't get paid for it, but it was probably the best programme I've ever done. I needed to get into that programme, like some people couldn't handle the discipline, but I think that's what I really got out of it.

One would be worlds. Representing my country, and not just represent the country, but people that had passed, that was a significant moment that I hold onto. Third one would be graduating. The reason: just everything that I'd been through to get to that point, all my ups and my downs.

Providing all the information, seeing what's happening on the other side of the world. It's really accessible. I can't think of any negatives.
When I'm creating art, I love to put a meaning or message behind it. When I'm teaching a class, I want them to develop in terms of becoming professional dancers, so I need to have a method of teaching that helps them grow. I've learned that developing my own methods in the past year or so. I want the class to learn something more than a few dance moves — I want them to develop as dancers or for other life goals.

I'm not confident with my choreography but I don't like to put it half the time, but when I have a meaning behind it that helps me push my art form.

The culture is what separates it. After watching Born of the Clouds, I've been watching his stuff on YouTube, and the way he creates his art is so creative. He puts time and energy into acting as well as dancing, making it a b-boy, graffiti, and know that it's hip hop. Street dance is constantly developing as a culture. There are so many elements to that push the dance.

So that appeal to you, that's unique about street dance? I'm also inspired by flips. I love tricking and b-boying. I'm really cool. It was a new art form for me, it was cool to try the acting thing. I also inspired by flips, I love tricking and b-boying, so much energy out in a positive way. I started doing jazz.

I really enjoy out of the box thinking. I think contemporary dance movement inspires me, but the hip hop scene— the culture of it, the way he creates his art is so creative. Like, the song, the concept, is so creative, like the song, the concept, was so creative. I like that appeal to you, that's unique about street dance?

What's your dance story? How did you get into dance? I'm from the kids who would move between the TV and Michael Jackson videos... My parents needed something to put me into and get my energy out of a dance studio, so I started doing jazz. I was really cool. It was a new art form for me, I was a b-boy.

My experience with the street dance scene began when I was in high school. I joined the high school dance team during high school, and I started doing that about four years after I started jazz.

My experience with the street dance scene began after watching Steeze at high school, and that's how I got into the contemporary dance scene. My experience with the street dance scene began after watching Steeze at high school, and that's how I got into the contemporary dance scene. My experience with the street dance scene began after watching Steeze at high school, and that's how I got into the contemporary dance scene.

Identity Dance Company (ID) had always been a hobby, but I realised when I was 16 that I wanted to pursue it and make a name for myself. Then we did NZ's Got Talent together, which initiated me into the crew. And then The Bradas came about when some of the younger brothers who were still in XS were going up to the adults division and ID. We have a show here called Out of the Box.

What are three of your most memorable moments? We have a show here called Out of the Box. We have a show here called Out of the Box. We have a show here called Out of the Box. We have a show here called Out of the Box.

What are three of your most memorable moments? We have a show here called Out of the Box.
roots about street dance and where it came from, the street culture, how it began. But also where it’s going is, it’s constantly developing every single day. No two days are the same. A new song with a new beat, a new move—it keeps it alive. Taking influences from other places as well.

Jacqui Cesan says that street dance is a contemporary art form because contemporary just means new. Street dance is always developing and redefining itself. It’s always going to be a new culture. It takes influence from everything it sees, everywhere it goes. Street dance in NZ - street dance started in the US but when it came to NZ it took on that cultural vibe here.

What are some of the ways, good or bad, that social media has affected your dance experiences? I came into awareness of the hip hop scene during the time that YouTube was big, and putting videos on YouTube was a huge thing. I can’t say too much from beforehand, but I’ve heard stories from people about before YouTube was around and how they had to go and learn off music videos and learn off their friends or make up their own moves. Now we learn off social media - seeing other dancers, seeing their concepts, you learn from that.

One thing that’s not good about social media is the fact that you can learn so much, that your own originality disappears. I’ve seen so many dancers I know that have their favourite performer online and they watch them so often that they become them, and they claim to have their own thoughts but from whatever you see, you’re always gonna take something from it. Another thing about social media that I think is great for dance is the fact that you can advertise yourself so well and you can create a career out of online use and advertising yourself online. It opens yourself to so many opportunities. I think it’s another platform to share your message. Sharing with a wider audience, or friends and family overseas. I think it’s a great tool. That people will copy, people can talk so freely about how they don’t like your art. I’ve never had it in a negative way.

I try not to see myself as a hip hop dancer I try and see myself as an artist. I love spoken word, I love rap, I love creating music... My movement is very much influenced by everything that I see, that I hear, that I’m a part of. There’s a few people that I know, even people within my own crew that I try to explain this to them, they agree, but at the same time they’re so stuck on watching their YouTube kids. Maybe they haven’t experienced it yet. I learned it from experiencing the LA teachers, a few of them inspired me to get like this. I guess there are a few hip hop dancers that are still about that for me it’s just an art form.

It was actually being in Australia at the start of the year, taking a class at HDI with Ian Eastwood. He’s known on YouTube for these weird moves, and he broke down his movement within the class to a point that we understood every single movement was meant for this. He explained the concept of the piece at the start, and he said “look I’m not gonna teach you guys 8 counts of 8 like they do in LA, I’m gonna teach you 2 counts of 8 and make you get this 2 counts of 8.” It opened my eyes a little to "Oh, I don’t have to teach like everyone else in NZ teaches, how the classes I’ve always been teaching, it’s ok to be weird and to be seen as different by people. Most of the time people love if you are different, cos it’s refreshing for you. And then when I got to LA the ones I felt more engaged with were the ones who provided—a vibe that they set, they said “be free to be free”. I learn so much about being open-minded and about trying to teach a class to be open-minded.

How would you describe the NZ street dance scene today? Thriving, and segregated. When I stepped into the scene it was very much about crews, when there was Stomp (collaborated crews). Whereas now it’s come to a point where there’s so many crews under one studio that they’ve called themselves a company and it’s a thriving community within that company—you have 7 year olds learning the bossest moves and becoming the most intelligent dancers too but they have a closed mind about stepping outside of their company. You still have people who come to different classes, they’re learning, but they themselves are not part of a specific company they just enjoy learning dance. So you have those people, but within the SDNZ type thing, it’s very segregated and people are either too busy or not willing to step outside their step area code to actually experience other people and learn new styles of dance.

It’s thriving in the sense that there’s so many more dancers than when we first began and that’s thanks to social media, and then it’s thriving because we have kids so much than we were so much better than we were at that age, and even older people coming out... but it is very segregated in the fact that people, I feel, are uncomfortable to step outside of their comfort zone.

What makes us unique? I’ve heard people say the cultural vibe, as in the Pacific Island cultural vibe, I think we add that to it. In the past we’ve always had people do the good old Hip Hop, Waacking... and then they go into the Sasa. I think that’s definitely been integrated into our culture—you have our polyswagg... I feel from watching that us kiwis have a knack for and ourselves to create something that’s new and different that the world hasn’t been seen before.

With social media you see so much of the same from LA because the moves that work over there are big straight lines that work en mass for you know when you’re back up dancing or with a group of people, like it’s a very much a multicultural country that we bring all those cultures into it. Cool cultural vibe as well as very innovative.
I think also if you’re stepping into the competition scene, you’re never gonna succeed on your first try, or most of the time you aren’t going to, you’re always gonna get a hundred no’s before you get a yes. You have to go through those hard phases so, especially for the young ones. They might be being taught by Parris or some of the ID boys that they’re going to be successful as well but nah you gotta realise that you have to go through the hard stuff yourself before you become successful.

A lot of the kids now don’t have the same motivation as when the companies weren’t around. You speak to any of the older dancers now, we all created our own crews with our friends and it was always about having fun, and maybe you wanted to compete in competitions. 1. Because you wanted to make a name for yourself 2. To make some money. But now the kids step into a pre-formed group, or a crew that is going to be developed underneath a company and they have someone choreograph for them. They have someone set up which competition they go to. They don’t have their friends step in but other dancers who have a similar want, to be in a crew. I dunno, I can’t say not as much motivation but a different motivation behind it cos creating your crew as opposed to stepping into a crew is a completely different process. I think that’s one thing is an understanding of the street dance scene, where it has come from before, and where it will be going to and where it is now is another thing that you have to understand.

Have you thought how to address that?

I think we’ve never discussed how we got there and what it was like even just two years ago. Maybe just a good sit down session and talk with them, but then I feel like that may not be as successful, cos the kids could turn off easily, if it’s not talking about what they’re interested in, only a few of them who are interested in knowing that. Maybe even setting up within the company or crew they’re in, they themselves for a month of their time have to develop choreography within that time with like three people from that crew - helps them learn what it does take as a choreographer to learn and collaborate with other people but also how we got to where we are. You could talk about how you came to be where you are and they see through following people they’re inspired by, the journey that they took...

A couple of the younger boys in our crew - they’ve never had to lead themselves, they’ve never had to try and find performance opportunities, they’ve always just had it handed to them on a plate and so these guys are 16 and world champions right now. They can say no to gigs I understand that, but I wonder what the motivation is for them to continue dancing. Is it because the fact that around school they’re now known as this person and that the girls will like them and they have a reputation to uphold? I dunno, it’s one of those things I get annoyed at just because I know where me and a couple of the boys came from and it’s completely different. It’s a privilege they’ve had that we didn’t so ya, different backgrounds bring different opinions.

Dance for me is a form of expression, I’ve found that over the past few years, when I started dancing it was because I loved listening to music and I loved moving to music, and for many years it was just because I love moving. I did martial arts, I did sports - I just love moving. But there’s something about music and moving that’s so cool. Over the past little bit it’s been about expressing my views because I don’t think I’m great at talking and public speaking is not my favourite thing in the world. I find it’s such a good way to convey my thoughts to someone, whether it’s through a performance or teaching or a video or even to myself. When you step into studio I struggle so much to create choreography so much but when I freestyle or when I put on a song that kind of speaks to me then my movement kind of conveys it cos I relate with it so it’s really a form of expression that allows me to understand and express who I am.
Finding out why you’re doing something gives you direction and lets you have good motivation moving forward, especially when things get tough. It’s really helpful to have that. And then, you know, you’re going to be a place. Where you’re going to be for the next five years, and that’s when you’re doing your planning and thinking about what you’re going to do next, instead of just thinking about where you’re going right now because, after all, that’s the way we think and plan things.

For example, there are a bunch of people at one studio. So we go, “Oh, how do we get all these people to one place?”, and we sort of do that. We try to make it a little bit easier, but really we can’t do that. So we’re just thinking about what we’re doing right now. Our goal is to be the best studio we can be. And that’s what we’re working towards.

Interview with Mariel and Keone Madrid

As the interview contained conversation to build rapport and allow the respondent to guide direction of the topics, transcripts contain conversations deemed to be relevant to the project.

Building Block - Where did the idea come from?

Building Block - Who are the creators of this programme?

The interview with Mariel and Keone Madrid was held on 11 November 2015.

1. What do you see as the most valuable for street dancers—building confidence or self-esteem, being part of a community, developing skill/technique, or having a sense of purpose?

2. How does the programme of private sessions, double classes which is a 2.5 hour class with a small amount of students between 10-20, and then we’re adding in a new part of the programme, the name is still in progress, but right now we’re calling it Mentor Month, where anywhere between 10-20 students come in and train with a specific teacher for a month, once a week. And basically they’re like consultations. We already have a little bit of experience working with people who have never danced before. So we’re trying to break it down into smaller chunks and make it more accessible.

3. What’s the process from when someone’s signed up to take a class with you?

Mentor Month - students come in and train with a specific teacher for a month, once a week. And basically they’re like consultations. We already have a little bit of experience working with people who have never danced before. So we’re trying to break it down into smaller chunks and make it more accessible.

Building Block - What’s the most important thing you’ve learned about dance so far?

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and to succeed. Because failing is kind of successful in a classroom, cos then you're able to understand things a little bit more so, I think that part is so important when you come into a class, just with that mindset, then you'll get the most out of it.

How has the class environment changed?

Mari: We always say at the end of the class that we can share stuff, but the presence of a camera in a room can do stuff to students mentally, and put unwanted or unneeded pressure on them. The classroom is developing their own work. Ya know if they want to be teachers one day we want to encourage that permission. They're gonna feel pressured to be really good. Ya know, it's kind of hard for people to be vulnerable I think when that's there. Like Keone's students might start opening it up to sharing things with the rest of the world without everyone's knowledge. It's kind of just what we strive to give the students.

What advice would you give your students to get the most out of taking your class?

Mari: We say come in with an objective. Don't just walk into class, have a plan of attack. If you know you struggle with a certain thing then.. Like if you don't like to go in groups and you struggle with that, then you're gonna be more bold and I'm going to push myself. Keone: One problem is that we thought that someone in the class there's no one else, it's not an audition. When you come in as a student, then you're able to come in and try things and the classroom is a place to fail. You hope for your students to take away from your classes.

Why do you dance and what does dancing mean to you? Personally and as a couple?

Keone: We have the same thing. We dance for a few reasons. I guess they're ordered in this order, one to God. God gave us this ability to move and express ourselves. The second part is to provide for our family. The third part of it is to provide for our students. And the third part is we love dancing. There's no denying that. If we didn't love it, it'd be really difficult to continue to do, but we love it and we care about it so much. And we believe that there are untapped potentials in the art form of dance that has not been exposed to the public yet.

And that's it. It's really difficult to continue to do, but we believe that there are untapped potentials in the art form of dance that has not been exposed to the public yet.

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Mari: We say come in with an objective. Don't just walk into class, have a plan of attack. If you know you struggle with a certain thing then.. Like if you don't like to go in groups and you struggle with that, then you're gonna be more bold and I'm going to push myself. Keone: One problem is that we thought that someone in the class there's no one else, it's not an audition. When you come in as a student, then you're able to come in and try things and the classroom is a place to fail. You hope for your students to take away from your classes.

Why do you dance and what does dancing mean to you? Personally and as a couple?

Keone: We have the same thing. We dance for a few reasons. I guess they're ordered in this order, one to God. God gave us this ability to move and express ourselves. The second part is to provide for our family. The third part of it is to provide for our students. And the third part is we love dancing. There's no denying that. If we didn't love it, it'd be really difficult to continue to do, but we love it and we care about it so much. And we believe that there are untapped potentials in the art form of dance that has not been exposed to the public yet.

And that's it. It's really difficult to continue to do, but we believe that there are untapped potentials in the art form of dance that has not been exposed to the public yet.
Mari: Yeah I feel like what we do has a different culture to street dance and hip hop and the different styles. They're two different worlds. And then I feel like industry is another world too. They're all sort of separate little pockets, and I think that there's this point where we can get to be around teachers and different people we think are doing it in the right way.

I think we're really good at doing this, we're really good at helping young people who are teaching and helping them to be good teachers and helping them to understand why we do what we do.

And I think that's really great—more of that would be beneficial to everybody...

I wouldn't say lately but we're getting there. I think the world in general, the invention of the internet, and the invention of social media—those are two huge shifts in culture and I think that we're still trying to begin to adapt to big, super important shift in how we communicate, see things and get information. So it's not going to happen overnight. Ultimately if people love dance and they love it for the right reasons and they're always asking, but when it comes down to it, you've gotta teach, and you have to give them something. You can use it to get the opportunity but if you're ready for the opportunity when it comes, it's not a good thing for dance in general. And things can get oversaturated or get weird. I think, I mean it's a great tool, but it's a tool and it's really tough to challenge everyone the right way.

Based on all of these observations, where would you say the street dance community is at today?

Keone: Dance is supposed to be fun. I go to the core of what dancing is—it's supposed to be a celebration, a worship and a social gathering of people. It's not meant to be kept individually, it's not meant to be. And I feel like what we do is really, really beautiful.

What are the right reasons?

Mari: And that's a huge challenge in the classroom.

Keone: I feel like it's that young, maybe last year,

That's the kind of people who are trying to get followers in different ways and hashtags and all of that crazy stuff. It's like that, that we're all trying to make a living and make a career out of it, but it's almost, it's not meant to be kept to yourself. It's supposed to be a shared thing, a celebration, a sharing of what we're doing and our style, and I love that.

If you continue to share and keep things in a selfless environment, I guess that's the way I would see it.

Based on all of these observations, where would you say the street dance community is at today?

Mari: And that's a huge challenge in the classroom, to get people to understand, it's like that, that everyone who's doing it is doing it for the right reasons.

And we have to have the presence, or connect with our supporters and our followers and keep that personal, and social media is supposed to be more personal, and social media is supposed to be the way to connect with friends or people around the world. For us, it's just a part of the business and part of our career.

Mari: It's still being defined.

Keone: It feels like it's that young, maybe last year.

It's a big challenge for a teacher. And so, if you're trying to get followers in different ways and hashtags and all of that crazy stuff, it's like that, that we're all trying to make a living and make a career out of it, but it's almost, it's not meant to be kept to yourself. It's supposed to be a shared thing, a celebration, a sharing of what we're doing and our style, and I love that.

If you continue to share and keep things in a selfless environment, I guess that's the way I would see it.
or when a person keeps dance to themselves. Mari: A shared thing. If you’re in a selfish place, and you’re making something for selfish reasons, it’s a different kind of thing, the vibe it puts out. And I’ve been there. I have to check myself all the time. That’s a human thing, not only dance but anything that humans are doing or thinking.

Any other comments about dance, social media, and identity?

Mari: I think that finding your identity has to happen outside of social media, and social media should just be an extension of who you are.

Keone: Social media and even dance doesn’t define you. You can be a good person and still make great things too, and you can be a great person and not be on social media and that’s fine. Your identity will come along, and young people don’t be in a rush to figure out what that is, and your experiences will help define that for you. So you have to go through life, it’s forever changing because you go through different things and it’s like this melting pot of different things and I dunno, I just don’t want people to think that those things define you.

Mari: You’re you and then you decide to share with everybody else is what you decide to share. I think that’s gonna be a challenge for anyone who is a leader or a teacher to give to the next generations and that’s really really really important, to encourage them and empower them to realise their potential and to help them and guide them to find their own identity and not be dependent on social media as verification that they’re any good. Cos there are plenty of people who are incredible and don’t, once you start playing the comparison game, you start feeling like you’re less than somebody else and that’s not true. It’s not a source of truth I guess. It’s just a thing. That’s an important thing to know and to be teaching and to be aware of. Who knows, social media now, but what else could be next you never know. I dunno I guess like, as an artist you’re used to making yourself vulnerable, but there’s a certain kind of strength that needs to be able to come along with that, so you’re so open to people and now I feel like there’s so many opportunities for people to be so open, that sometimes it just kind of opens everything up, and you can get really hurt. Building people up, not totally ingrained with it, but away from it.

Keone: Social media and even dance doesn’t define you. You can be a good person and still make great things too, and you can be a great person and not be on social media and that’s fine. Your identity will come along, and young people don’t be in a rush to figure out what that is, and your experiences will help define that for you. So you have to go through life, it’s forever changing because you go through different things and it’s like this melting pot of different things and I dunno, I just don’t want people to think that those things define you.

So it’s a thing now. Phones have entered every dimension, every space, including the classroom. I teach dance, granted not the regular classroom, but the ways in which the ability to record something has shot their pea shoot tendrils in between our eight counts and turned into a forest that can be really messy to navigate. Sometimes it’s great, yes, but often times I feel that the presence of a camera in a classroom, phone or not, can be incredibly invasive and detrimental to growth.

There are so many reasons that recording has become a regular presence. People love to keep track of things. I understand this. I used to record myself dancing pieces I choreographed and also pieces I just was trying to practice with the purpose of understanding my movement better. Recording myself was a growth tool. I was able to step outside of myself and watch from a viewer’s perspective. See what works, what doesn’t, what can be better, more clear. Often people do things like a “dance log” where they record themselves in classes to keep track of their dancing. But here’s where I draw the line. In class. Bringing that situation into the classroom. I never understood this. Class is learning time. Working, digesting, fighting to “get” something. It is completely absurd to me that in the midst of the learning process of a dance class, one that is exhilarating, challenging, emotional, and intense, that one has the time to go to their bag, get out their phone, and ask someone who is also trying to concentrate, to record you. I find it not only disrespectful of the teacher and other students, but so much effort.

What would be the problem with recording yourself after a class? When you’re alone? Even after you’ve let things settle into your body and brain more? Proper execution doesn’t come after 60-90 mins of learning. I can’t count the amount of times I had to practice things outside of classes to “get it.” And yes I would record myself, but in the privacy of my own home, training on my own, for only my eyes, and solely for the purpose of wanting to get better. My 15 year old self would have wanted to die if anyone watched those videos, I would have been so embarrassed. Not to say that’s right, but I was very much still in the beginning stages of my dance and I didn’t necessarily want to share it with the world until I got better. It’s like trying to talk with a mouth full of water, you want to communicate, but people can’t understand you. I wanted to develop my voice before even daring to try and say something.
A lot of people talk about being present these days. Being mindful. I think this has a lot to do with this. We have to let go of the idea that if we don't record something about ourselves, it's somehow less valuable. Or have the need to show everything about ourselves. This is a time in our lives when we have to take a step back and really think about what we're doing and why we're doing it. Sometimes we need to be more present in our lives than we are. Sometimes we need to be more present in our work than we are. Sometimes we need to be more present in our relationships than we are. Sometimes we need to be more present in our thoughts than we are. Sometimes we need to be more present in our bodies than we are.

I'm not sure if either one of these extremes is right. Perhaps we need to find a balance. And that balance is what we need to work towards.

This is a discussion and cause of traction all over the world. It's one of those things that happen in our conversations and strong opinions either side. Sometimes we need to change. Sometimes we need to stay. Sometimes we need to move. Sometimes we need to sit.

I want to protect my students and make sure that their learning space is free from external influences. I try to keep my students and make sure that their learning space is free from external influences. I try to keep my students and make sure that their learning space is free from external influences. I try to keep my students and make sure that their learning space is free from external influences.

Here's the next thing; sacred space. To me, the classroom is sacred. The classroom is the place where I go over and over again to make mistakes, to make little triumphs, to be challenged. It is a home. A place where I can be myself and be accepted for who I am. A place where I can be free and express myself without fear of judgment or criticism. The classroom is the place where I can be free and express myself without fear of judgment or criticism. The classroom is the place where I can be free and express myself without fear of judgment or criticism.

I often wonder what the affects on character development will be in the long run. Here's the flip side of the camera in class. Marketing is master. These days, there are many people throwing events, starting organizations, competitions, shows, opening studios, and having company classes. These are all building blocks for creating a community and creating a place for people to gather. They are creating a community and creating a place for people to gather. They are creating a community and creating a place for people to gather.

Harmony is possible, but we as a culture, no matter what role you play, must be thinking deeply about how we communicate to others about these issues. It's a sticky place, but the conversation that needs to be had. Not only for the sake of teaching, but for the sake of learning, sharing, and being able to speak our minds with clarity and conviction.

As a teacher, I want to protect my students and make sure that their learning space is free from external influences. I also know that media presence is something that will need to be learned. Maybe teachers need to take control of their classrooms more often and to speak more directly on reasons for the camera's presence and it's impact. Maybe the camera needs to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes. Whether through blogs or social media or personal conversations, teachers need to be more communicative before classes.