

Piece Background:

My project is a work in multiple parts that explores the nature of time through collaborative movement generation. I aim for it to be a conceptual expansion on a previously created short piece titled “too much/not enough.”

When I first started this project, I developed an interest in the scientific study of time—and while I can’t pretend to understand it as well as a scientist would, I have found much inspiration from the idea that time is relative to our place in space and that our understanding of time is a construct of the society we live in and how we chose to break down this incomprehensible thing into comprehensible nuggets—seconds, minutes, hours, days. To me, there is also something inherently interesting about the dichotomy between art and science in the academic world, and I want to explore in my work how science can inform, shape, and drive the art I create.

To create an evening-length work based in the science of time, the piece would explore the nature of time through five different lenses: **pattern, coincidence, milestones, dimension and space**. Choosing these specific lenses is informed by my (very base-level) knowledge of Einstein’s Theories of Relativity, which inform much of how time is understood and further studied today by scientists. Each of these explorations will result in a 10-15 minute movement study generated by the questions each of these lenses bring up—as detailed below—that would come together to create a five-section work.

Piece Structure:

Section I: Pattern

“Pattern” will study how we recognize and measure time passing in our lives—the sunset and sunrise once each day, the rotation of hands on the clock twice each day, our own body clock and its circadian rhythm telling us when to sleep and wake up every day. It looks at how we respect patterns and how we break them (and when we find it important enough to break them), and how that may alter time or other patterns for us. What does it look like if we stop doing something we usually do every day, and what does it take for us to make something a pattern for ourselves?

Section II: Milestones

“Milestones” will look at what we as humans put enough importance on to mark time by—which events in our lives do we link to a certain year or time period, and which events get lost in the clouds of memory enough that we can no longer say when in our life they happened or if they even happened at all? How can milestones in time mark a beginning and an end at the same time, and on which do we choose to place importance? In the bigger picture, what events or milestones in history do we continually look back on and learn from in order to move forward, and why are they so important for us to examine?

Section III: Coincidence

“Coincidence” will explore what might happen if our time syncs up with someone else’s—how can we be affected by another person’s actions or movements within our orbit? A simplification of a phenomena called the butterfly effect—the theory that a small and localized change in a complex societal system can have large effects elsewhere—this section will look at overlap, cause and effect, and compatibility. How deep does the interconnection of humanity go and how do each of us react to the small connections we can make with another person in just a moment of overlapping time?

Section IV: Dimension

“Dimension” refers to the scientific speculation that there are multiple universes in which time could function differently—at a different speed or quality of passing—and how that could affect how humans function in these dimensions. What would happen if time itself could be paused, rewound, fast forwarded, slowed down, sped up, etc.? How could that affect our experiences, our ways of life, our wants, and our needs? What stays the same and what changes if how the way time functions fundamentally changes?

Section V: Space

“Space” is the lens that most tightly binds time to science, as how time acts in outer space is the central examination of Einstein’s Special and General Theories of Relativity; however, this is a theory that falls outside of the understanding of most of humanity. In an art-driven interpretation of space, I want to ground the concept by also examining how we as people react to time in different spaces in our lives. We often find ourselves wishing time would move faster when we’re in a space that isn’t physically or mentally engaging for us; or if we’re working through a difficult time in our lives emotionally, we might want to skip over pieces of time—get to something more pleasant and less heavy. Conversely, we might have a desire for time to slow down when we’re in a space that is enjoyable for us—like when we’re spending time with our loved ones or doing something that relaxes us; or when we feel frantic because of an approaching deadline or cutoff date in our life, we might wish for more hours in the day. We are constantly reacting to time differently based on the space or context we are inhabiting at any given point in our lives.

Piece Process:

With the portion of this work that I have already begun developing, I began to build a movement vocabulary that is unique to this piece—a set of movements that can be manipulated by the dancers to explore how concepts of time can be physicalized to answer the questions detailed above. The repeated movement vocabulary will also act as a throughline from one section of the piece to the next, enhancing the cohesion of the work.

How the final movement will look is still unknown to me, but I am interested in continuing to experiment with layering choreography on different dancers to create a dynamic work, as is shown in the work sample included later on this form: “too much/not enough.” This current work essentially layers seven solos on top of each other, each dancer experiencing time in a different

way, and an eighth dancer that represents time itself grounds the viewer with her controlled and almost imperceptible movement. While I am not sure if I will keep this short work in its current form for the longer work, it has given me a lot of material to play around with and pull from for extra experimentation. Seeds from the short work will provide an important springboard for developing the work into the longer piece I have described here.

In my choreography process, I aim to create a rehearsal environment built on the idea of collaboration and community. I want my dancers to always feel welcome to share their ideas and play to their movement strengths. I think this is the best way to create a healthy environment that dancers want to come back to every time for rehearsal. I don't ever want to take their time or their energy for granted, and I want them to feel comfortable and confident in the movement they are performing. As a happy coincidence, I find that collaborative processes can result in stronger finished pieces.