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## Choreographing intimacy: The making of '[they] slipped briskly into an intimacy from which they never recovered' – a dance film

Antonio Rinaldi  
*Edith Cowan University*

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# Choreographing intimacy: The making of ‘[they] slipped briskly into an intimacy from which they never recovered’ – a dance film.

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment for the degree of

**Bachelor of Arts (Dance) Honours**

Antonio Rinaldi

Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts

Edith Cowan University

2016

## Abstract

In this investigation, I have utilised a practice-led research methodology to capture 'intimacy' in film, specifically, the medium of dance film. The exegetical work is divided into the written research with an accompanied dance film component; however they should be viewed as an integrated thesis. The aim of my research was to develop my choreographic practice through a film that is a sensory and evocative exploration of intimacy. I argue that the film components of dance film (directing, cinematography, editing and the like) uniquely capture an intangibility of dance and the complexities of human intimacy in a manner that is different from live performance.

I do not explicitly depict any sexual act in the choreographic work or the dance film, instead I abstract the concept of the 'human sexual response cycle' as an analogical depiction of intimacy for choreographic inspiration and the premise for a dance film. In this sense, the notion of *bareness* is embraced as a way to unpack the complexity of intimacy. The research investigated my practice as a choreographer in synergy with the dancers and film crew arguing that each stage of the process was an act of dance making in and of itself. Furthermore, this project comprehensively analyses the act and the art of making the dance film, *[they] slipped briskly into an intimacy from which they never recovered*, and the ways notions of intimacy are able to be captured in choreography and filmic imagery. I have been able to choreograph the final work through the investigation of texts and film in conjunction with studio time where I choreographed partly on myself and afterwards on the dancers and reflections on the filming process make up the whole thesis. I do not see these processes as separate components to the choreographic process but a rather unique marriage which is captured in the finished film.

## Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the Bachelor of Honours Dance Degree at the Edith Cowan University of Western Australia.

It has not been submitted prior to, for any other degree or examination in another university.

Name of candidate: Antonio Rinaldi BA Hons

Signature:

Date: 03.11.2016

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# Table of Contents

1.	ABSTRACT.....	ii
2.	DECLARATION.....	iii
3.	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
4.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
5.	RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	3
6.	SIGNIFICANCE.....	5
7.	METHODOLOGY AND METHODS (PROCESSES OF CONCEPTION).....	6
8.	CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND.....	10
9.	REFLECTIONS ON REHEARSALS.....	18
	9.1 IMAGERY.....	21
	9.2 COLLABORATION.....	24
	9.3 CREATING THE AESTHETIC.....	27
10.	CONCLUSION.....	29
11.	APPENDIX.....	29
	11.1 Appendix 1: <i>[they] slipped briskly into an intimacy from which they never recovered</i> (refer to attached usb)	
	11.2 Appendix 2: clip#1 (refer to attached usb)	
	11.3 Appendix 3: clip#2 (refer to attached usb)	
	11.4 Appendix 4: clip#3 (refer to attached usb)	
	11.5 Appendix 5: clip#4 (refer to attached usb)	

11.6	Appendix 6: interview with Sue Healey.....	35
11.7	Appendix 7: timetable of rehearsals and shoot.....	36
11.8	Appendix 8: photos of shoot location (Chrissie Parrott Art Space).....	37
11.9	Appendix 9: photos of email correspondence with author Hanne Blank (Grenadine).....	39
11.10	Appendix 10: photos of email correspondence with DJ musician Paul White ('Where You Gonna Go?').....	40
12.	REFERENCES.....	43





# Introduction

“Dance film is a visual art that involves movement, strength and physical awareness. What better field for a dancer?” – Evann E. Siebens (Mitoma, 2002, p. 223)

Dance film is one of several mediums used to express a particular statement, narrative, or even a method in which to portray movement for whatever the purpose of the choreographer is (be it abstract or literal.) Rising popularity of dance film may in fact have something to do with the personalisation and perhaps intimate experience afforded for the director behind the camera and the choreographer of the movement (if in fact they are not one and the same); afforded also for the spectator watching. But also, dance film pushes once more dance's infinite capacity to question its own boundaries and limits. I am enthralled with grasping the medium of film, which can be used to create a sensorial exploration of intimacy through the movement of the camera and the choreographic movement of actual, physical bodies.

Interestingly enough movement and film first intersected during the 1880's when Etienne Jules Marey and Eadweard James Muybridge began to experiment with animal motion and sequential photography whilst by 1894, Thomas Edison filmed Ruth Denis (later known as Ruth St. Denis) performing a skirt dance in an open courtyard with the aid of a kinetoscope (Bremer). Dance makers and dancers use film for various reasons: according to Judy Mitoma, dancers use the camera as “research tools, to study technique, to review and analyse choreography and to build performance skills” (2002, p. xxxi). Mitoma continues that both a director and choreographer go beyond the “constraints of the body” and that as such “the recorded moving image has forever changed the way we perceive and experience dance” (2002, p. xxxi). There is a proximity and an intimacy that only film and the photographic image can capture principally because of the functions of the camera and the relationship of the camera to other film elements such as editing, lights and sound.

Sydney-based choreographer Sue Healey states in an interview (Appendix 6) “the camera has of course, incredible powers to get us close to a person, closer than is usually possible in a performance, so therefore (you) find a different intensity to intimacy” (2016). Healey reflects that the beginnings of her interest in dance film developed from a desire to capture that which cannot be captured in live performance (the intangible) hence making it tangible through the very optic, sonic and neural understanding of a camera lens and it’s profoundly captivating scope. The camera is unforgiving: it is both bewitching, and contemplative; it entices and eludes, there is room to breathe but simultaneously, there is affliction in the creating, in the doing. Healey responds to the challenges of being both the movement maker and the physical director behind the lens when she talks of the many issues involved: “in movement, gesture, emotional nuance (the right blend of action, emotion and energy)– and then in relation to the camera (the right partnership between camera and mover)” (2016).

In a 2005 interview with Dance Forum, Healey suggests dance film as a “seductive medium”(pp. 10–11). Through Healey’s participation in this research as an interviewee, I have been able to negotiate, and perhaps somewhat resolve, the sensory in dance with the sensory of film to enhance the intimate, and create an interesting tension between the tangible and the intangible. This dissertation details the practice-led methodology process of choreographing firstly on myself, then in the studio on a group of dancers and then in the making of *[they] slipped briskly into an intimacy from which they never recovered*. The dissertation contextualises the film, and my process and practice, in relation to dance scholarship more broadly. It is recommended that the reader watch the film in its entirety (Appendix 1: whole film – *[they] slipped briskly into an intimacy from which they never recovered* refer to usb) and then read the remainder of the exegesis.

## Research Questions

I understand intimacy to transpire through movement; the movement of bodies, of camera movement and the movement of editing techniques. I have taken inspiration for movement generation for the film via two particular sources: *Unruly Appetites: erotic stories* by Hanne Blank (2003) and *Human Sexual Response* by William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson (1966). Masters and Johnson pioneered theories of the human sexual response cycle when in the preface to the aforementioned book they (Masters and Johnson) write “this text represents the first, a faltering step at best, but at least a first step toward an open-door policy. The door of investigative objectivity must not be closed again” (regarding the investigation into sexual physiology) (p. vii). The aim of this research is to investigate how to capture intimacy without objectification or titillation. The spectator is implicated to a certain degree, in watching this intimacy, but I am more interested in how I might develop my choreographic practice by utilising film to push the boundaries and barriers of the evocative and the provocative, to tell more stories of the human condition.

Though there is the specific contextual background in the form of ‘Human Sexual Response’ (Masters & Johnson, 1966) Sue Healey raises some thought-provoking questions in relation to ‘intimacy’ and the camera: “Is it two people and the camera or a single person and the camera? Is it “performed” intimacy between two people? Can one authentically “perform” intimacy?” (Healey, 2016, p. 1) In ‘Envisioning Dance on Film and Video’ (2002), choreographer Evann E. Siebens states that “it (the camera) represents a synergy between the dancer and the film-maker that is crucial in (my) work. When I am familiar with the choreography of the piece I am filming, or when it is my own choreography, I am able to move with the camera along the dancers, which produces a magical sense of kinaesthetic movement” – (Siebens as cited in Mitoma, 2002, p. 221).

Similarly in regards to my dance film, this statement further confirms and synthesizes the idea that the camera is co-choreographer, revealing the consequence of that ‘kinaesthetic magic.’ It is with this notion of synergy that Siebens talks of that I sought

to investigate the skin of the film: how does one evoke the senses through sensuous imagery? This is generally in reference to something called ‘haptic cinema.’ In a theoretical but highly interesting analytical read, blog author Catherine Grant questions the idea of ‘touching’ film as a fantasy and asks “do videographers actually touch or handle the real *matter* of the film? Or are (they) only ever able to *touch upon the film experience? Their* film experiences?” (2011). This led me to ask what does haptic visuality look like? Laura U. Marks defines haptic visuality as:

Containing some of the following formal and textual qualities: grainy, unclear images; sensuous imagery that evokes memory of the senses (i.e. water, nature); the depiction of characters in acute states of sensory activity (smelling, sniffing, tasting, etc.); close-to-the-body camera positions and panning across the surface of objects; changes in focus, under- and overexposure (as cited in (Totaro, 2002, p. 8).

This research took several directions including self-reflection on the experience of making the choreographic pieces on myself and the experiences of the dancers when this work was transferred onto them. Furthermore, I was keenly interested in the extent to which cinematography and editing aligned with my choreographic intentions. For example: will focus on the human sexual response cycle’s physiological aspects (hands crunching, feet curling, necks and backs arching) captured in a close up frame humanise or de-humanise the experience of the viewer? Am I watching body parts being assembled, like the creation of man? Is it a sensual or sensorial experience? Are the close-up shots an extension of what I, as the choreographer, would like the audience to pay close attention to?

These curiosities eventually led to a central research question: how might choreographic choices interwoven with film technique capture intimacy in the medium of dance film? Along with this notion of haptic visuality, I have been able to investigate the notion of what it means for the “eyes themselves to function as ‘organs of touch’” (Totaro, 2002) in that the subject of depicting intimacy through dance film has lent itself quite organically toward haptic cinema as well as this idea of capturing the intangibility of live performance on camera.

## Significance

The significance of this project is in the collaboration of the artefact itself – the original dance film – and the critical analysis of the process in making the work and my personal reflections on this in context with dance film more generally. In *Cinema and Sensation: French film and the art of transgression* Martine Beugnet (2007) quotes French film maker and screenwriter Bruno Dumont who states in relation to his interest in the senses as integral to cinema– “cinema is for bodies, cinema is for emotions”– (Dumont as cited in Beugnet, 2007, pp. 59–60). He describes his film making practice as a medium of the senses by suggesting that film has a particular awareness of the capacity to capture and stimulate the senses which is both impactful and transgressive (pp. 59–60).

It is this notion of film as a stimulation of the senses that I was interested in developing, both in form/appearance and content for the dance film, and how this might be transgressive. However, what is transgression? Is the use of nudity or bareness potentially objectifying, voyeuristic or titilating? Or can it be used in a way that is sensual, beautiful and honest? Is it transgressive to push social taboo or is this no longer possible? Cinema (in general) could be argued as a ‘theatre’ of sensation and in this space perhaps it is the questioning of identity and ‘otherness’ which is evoked and not merely in narrative and representational terms, but through the very texture of the film; “how it materialises in forms of ‘becoming’ and, ultimately, imprints itself in make-up and ‘in the flesh’ of the filmic body itself”(Beugnet, 2007, p. 125). Perhaps this notion of cinema in acts of becoming, is where transgression is made possible.

Through the course of this research I have aimed to imprint myself on the film as the choreographer, ‘in the flesh’ of the dance and the film itself. This notion is coupled with how I see myself, as a choreographer, emerging into the professional dance industry. This research is not only about generating intimacy via the medium of dance film; it is about texturing such a concept to attain that intimacy, it is, as described in the above quote, the film ‘becomes’ the intimacy itself. Significance in this instance does not necessarily require attaining wide-spread recognition (although the producers and I are

interested in the potential for future film festivals) but rather the development and extension of my practice and contribution to a wider discussion on the scholarship around dance film.

## Methodology and methods

### Processes of conception

The overall process for *[they] slipped briskly into an intimacy from which they never recovered* involved both experimental (in discipline) and personal exploration into various forms of research including movement creation, film technique and my personal experience of both. The creative discussions around this work were contextualized mostly through personal experience on the subject of intimacy of myself and the participating dancers, all personal discussions of which were not crude, rather informative to the work. This was in the sense that personal experience aided the overall physiological and psychological aesthetic to the work, which I will talk about in more depth in the following- Reflections on Rehearsals, Imagery and Creating the Aesthetic.

Shane Strange, of Deakin University cites Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, suggesting that “creative research discussions are often contextualised in terms of the fragmentation and multiplicity of knowledge – with creative practice being seen as a ‘production of knowledge’ that requires the ‘connection’ of theory and practice to validate itself as ‘scholarly research’” –(as cited in Strange, 2012, p. 2). Strange argues further that creative research attempts to go beyond its boundaries by “advocating for a knowledge-producing subjectivity that rejects the methodological positivism of so-called *real* research”(p. 4). I support this notion; it is within this specific research paradigm that I have been able to create based on personal subjectification or intuition, as well as synthesis with published texts.

Jen Webb et al adds – ‘the conduct of research in, or through, creative practice is associated with the acknowledgement of uncertainty and contingency-- a tolerance of complexity and confusion and both willingness and capacity to be led by the data rather than by a predetermined point of view’ as cited in (p. 3). Further, Paul Carter

suggests that it (creative-led research) involves ‘material thinking’, defining this type of research (noting that there is an ‘emergence’ of it) as a “discipline against ‘a research paradigm ... in which knowledge and creativity are conceived as mutually exclusive” – (Carter as cited in 2012, p. 3). It has been this way for me in the conception of the choreography first, and film, later (pre and post production), but that always there has been a synergy of creativity and knowledge creation, happening concurrently to one another.

This work was born from a fascination with visceral cinema, and from an interest in the science of the processes and stages of the physiology of sexual intercourse. However, the project did take on many other facets, including the important discovery of bareness as representative of what I understand as the vulnerability of the human condition. The question of nudity has always been prevalent in this process as has asking what significance is there in the every-day mundane act as a moment of intimacy. Similarly, how might the camera act as a choreographer? As I immersed myself in the research, I was quick to develop an action and response approach to dealing with new and explorative information. That being: find something as a point of inspiration and incorporate it into the studio, something that I (and we, the dancers) could play with and observe the outcome and where it might lead us next. I would attempt to always come back to the core questions of intimacy, and to find ways in which to depict a vision that embodied sensuality, poignancy, primitiveness, as well as the tangibility and intangibility, or seeming arbitrariness, of human interaction.

The entirety of the process was a fairly consistent conversation between me and myself and the dancers and myself. My dancers were Celina Hage, Lilly King, Ea Sulak and Alex Abbot and all have agreed to having their name used in this research and the final film. As I was working with a cast predominantly of females, I made every effort not to fall into the patriarchal trap of dictating their experience of their own bodies. As a male choreographer creating a work regarding the physical body I was aware of how precarious it was, how easy it would be to topple into the space of male domination, and that I had no right to dictate or demand anything from my dancers that they weren’t already in control of and this was always at the forefront of my mind as I crafted the work.



“A choreographer takes an idea into the studio – maybe a piece of music or text or just a vague concept – and starts moving through space” – (Kelly Hargraves as cited in Mitoma, 2002, p. 163). Initially I went into the studio armed with research on visceral cinema and the human sexual response cycle and when my research ethics was approved, I immediately made a launch towards generating material. I had at least two sessions of self-creation where I developed the early stages of the male solo at the end of the film (refractory) and some of the duet material (which ended up being a part of the field duet (plateau))(Appendix 2: clip #1 – *plateau phase secondary* with (Tia and Antonio) refer to usb).

Ultimately the vast majority of the research was a collaborative process, in the studio with my dancers and later where I worked with Taihra Swaine and Robert Bremner to direct, produce and edit the final film. Danus Yates composed at least eight minutes of original music with the added incorporation of a song by English DJ artist, Paul White, for which I have obtained the rights. Conversations were had over the course of several months, largely spread out due to the varied timetables of all the participants (who were volunteering their time and skills). I was constantly moving to and fro with all the collaborators discussing everything from the use of nudity, the overall aesthetic, the usability or look of a particular location, whether to shoot at night or during the day, the financials, the costume, and so on.

In ‘Dance Makers Portfolio’, Nigerian choreographer Peter Badejo writes about his collaborative experiences as often ‘a bit difficult’ because where decisions were normally made unilaterally, “with collaboration, consideration was given to others’ opinions and conclusions were thus not easy to arrive at” (Badejo as cited in Butterworth & Clarke, 1998, p. 9). In my situation, collaboration was mostly effective in terms of allowing a creative flow with decision making which I talk about further later in the thesis. Badejo goes on to say that (they) “did not define movement or decisions in isolation (until they saw them) in the context of the piece”(p. 9). In our scenario, particularly when Taihra, Robert and I were meeting on a more regular basis, I would bring documentation of choreography filmed in the studio so that the film crew could watch

the work on screen and decide on ways to work the camera, the lights, as well as locations and other important details to consider when making a film.

Badejo states that during the process of a work called “Sisi Agbe Aye”, he either “taught pre-choreographed pieces or gave improvisational exercises using the various concepts in the theme as stimuli” (p. 9). I am quite similar in this manner, in that whilst I had intentions of self-tasking, I generally work more efficiently in an environment where I can manipulate the body in the space myself– and thus I give myself the title of a ‘hands-on’ choreographer. I most definitely feel like I need to get into the ‘role’ of the dancer in order to understand exactly what it is I want from them or myself. Whether I gave them task material based on text, memory or emotion (again, detailed further in Reflections on Rehearsals) or later when they provided me with their task outcomes, I would keep what I felt compelled to keep by its aesthetic value in relation to my personal interest in the subject matter. It (the task material) was also kept if I deemed it fitting to concept or possible evolution of movement refinement.

Interestingly, upon reflection, the material that was used in the film was generated mainly from working very quickly in offering material on the spot rather than in movement generated through tasking. The largest amount of material I kept (task-based) came from dancers Lilly and Celina in one of the initial rehearsals together to form the ‘club’ duet (excitement 1.2). The plateau duet I created in three non-consecutive nights with Ea– standing in for an absent Alex (Appendix 4) and the quartet (orgasm) was created over several rehearsals and was subject to copious changes over time. Both the male and female solo pieces that open and close (excitement and resolution) were developed in three and two sessions respectively. The female solo actually changed quite drastically to what it was eventually on film (Appendix 3: clip #2 – *initial female solo excitement phase* with (Celina) refer to usb) and the male solo was comprised of a self-creation improvisation and then a creation/improvisation on dancer, Alex Abbot.

The dual kitchen scenes that intercut these two solos (excitement and resolution) (with the orange and pomegranate) were more about capturing the ‘moment’, a natural rather every-day action that could be understood as something completely other to that and

thus were not choreographed but rather, the shot was staged (under deliberate setting and lighting conditions) and we just filmed the image. I created a shared online resource between the dancers and myself to account for rehearsal notes, procedures and timetabling, as well as video relaying (of rehearsal outcomes) and sharing of any other information (Appendix 7: table).

## Conceptual Background

The human sexual response cycle is divided into four stages, each module examining a particular human sexual response, in which Masters and Johnson document and analyse the physiological sexual reactions of humans: the excitement phase (initial arousal), plateau phase (at full arousal, but not yet at orgasm), orgasm phase and resolution phase (after orgasm, referred to as 'refractory' phase for males (1966, p. 283)). Linked to this indirectly is a segment of the short story, 'Grenadine' by Hanne Blank:

And then the sharp splatter, the instant of resistance followed by a bursting liquid half second, the pressure of her thumb on his chest once, then twice, three times, pomegranate seeds she'd hidden in the palm of her other hand crushed one by one against his body. (Blank, 2003, p. 68)

I was introduced by a friend to Blank and was immediately touched by the evocative description of a seemingly mundane act of eating a piece of fruit as being sensual and intimate. The story involves a woman persuading a man to try for the first time, a pomegranate, depicted as a remarkably exotic and erotic fruit. The excerpt is taken from the final moments of the story, which I understand in relation to Masters and Johnson and the human sexual response cycle, serves as a linguistically charged orgasm – the words are the paroxysm of ecstasy one might parallel with orgasm. What attracted me to this particular text was the potential for destabilising taboo and how in fact the cycle might be represented in a non-literal way that could in some manner wrestle with an implied reference to sex and intimacy. The explorations of these core texts has informed

much of this film and exegetical writing in order to contextualise the bulk of how part of the creative research came about.

A pedestrian act such as eating fruit (though interestingly pomegranates are part of ancient aphrodisiac lore) exhibits the metaphorical impetus of the work as well as a departure point for choreographing the male/female duet that demonstrates an abstraction on Masters & Johnson's 'plateau' phase. According to the plateau phase – in the *Human sexual response*– breathing and heart rate increase (from the previous excitement phase), muscular spasms begin in the feet, face and hands and muscular tension intensifies (1966). Although I have not explicitly recreated this phase, the cycle has been utilised as creative impetus, as an allegorical depiction, to develop this notion of intimacy through choreography on film, in which I have also drawn from the physiological aspects (exemplified in part above) to generate movement. Even setting proves to be critical in this duet (plateau)– having used an external landscape in the form of a field– thus further abstracting the piece away from the classical 'home' setting (bedroom, den, kitchen, bath) in which intimacy between two people might take place. Evidently, the cycle is at the very core of the inspiration for the movement and my investigation into the possibilities for abstracting this, like the pomegranate from the text above, was to ultimately produce a sensual depiction of intimacy that coordinates setting with movement choreography, camera movement and editing techniques.

Inspired in part by the self-titled dance piece *Jérôme Bel* (1995) wherein the setting of the piece was described by performance scholar Andre Lepecki as "the working space it actually is--- a not-so-charming, dusty, rough, grey space"(Lepecki, 1999, p. 131)– my interest is in allowing the bodies to make the space, the choreography to mark out the setting and to strip away 'theatrics' (as Lepecki calls it-- loud and busy colours, heavy textures or cluttered scenic atmosphere). Such an idea in turn nicely mirrors the bareness of the dancers' attire and moreover it falls in place with part of my research to see exactly how far this depletion of theatrics impacts on my choreographic process, the work, and the creative decision-making (Appendix 8: images of film location – Chrissie Parrott Art Space, Sussex St Maylands).

Additionally, my concern with nudity (which according to an interview with Sue Healey is 'age old' (personal communication, 20th September, Healey, 2016) went far beyond the typical reaction or response of seeing something in nakedness as 'uncomfortable'. I was far more interested in exposed skin, *bare* skin, rather than *nudity*. I was curious as to the impact of representing flesh, bareness, vulnerability, of the primal and of the erotic. Though the cycle acts as a major departure point, the image of two bodies in a coldly desolate space suggests something greater than skin, flesh or muscle but rather resonates the bareness of the human condition and the struggle to understand how it is we exist and how it is we understand ourselves in the world. The existential battle is in the vulnerability of intimacy: we are all naked in the pursuit of intimacy. With this featuring of bare skin comes a duality to my work: the bareness, the vulnerability, of what it means to be human and the primitive nakedness that comes from points of genuine connection between bodies in space.

Though I do not gratuitously depict flesh or nakedness I want to acknowledge that nudity is an accepted and common practice in dance and dance making, suffice to say, it is an element of human life that is so often touched on in film, literature, dance, music and visual art. Part of my research included locating discussions on nudity in dance and the social and cultural stigma attached to skin, body and flesh and how nudity is or is not socially acceptable or taboo in certain places. Europe has a long tradition of nudity and nakedness in dance. However, Roland Huesca, Maude Davey and Deborah Hay (among others) do note that more recently censorship of nudity and nakedness in dance has been occurring more and more:

While artists have been and are censored for supposedly hurting moral sensibilities in relation to a range of legal offences, such as sedition, blasphemy, obscenity, and defamation, cases of late involving censorship and outrage have all been centred around the nude human body-(Conquet as cited in Huesca et al., 2014, p. 3).

Conquet goes on to discuss how in dance, and more generally the performing arts, the naked form is a familiar thing since the 1960s and that attention, (certainly at that time, and perhaps even more so now) wasn't in the nakedness itself but what the body was saying, and what sign systems came with this nudity (p. 3). When drawing on the usage of bare flesh in dance, Andre Lepecki discusses the human body in its most

purest form, describing nakedness as a “reduction in dance” (1999, p. 1)– which I understand to be not a criticism but rather a refinement in the form of dance to its core– and he indicates this as being a particular European contemporary dance tradition (1999). He questions the dance maker and the dance spectator by asking “what can be inferred from this increasing display of the bare body in contemporary dance?” (Lepecki, 1999). I continue this with what can be said for the backlash to nakedness and nudity too?

Lepecki challenges the reader by asking how might nakedness pull back on (what he understands as) theatrics and further to this, describing the work of French dancer and choreographer Jérôme Bel as containing “no lighting design, no sound system, no costumes, no set” (Lepecki, 1999, p. 3). How does this extend the limits (or limitlessness) of what is or can be dance? I don’t take this to be a criticism of the work either, rather a critical analysis of nakedness and the body in the space during a dance work reduced to its *barest* minimum of theatricality (lights, sound etc.). However in Australia, where nudity is not as ‘de rigueur’ as it seems in Europe, by the latter half of the 1980’s and beyond, Australian choreographers such as Graeme Murphy, Graeme Watson, Douglas Wright, Sue-Ellen Koehler, Garry Stewart and Jim Hughes were certainly not afraid to use nudity in their choreography. Nonetheless the challenge I set myself was not in whether I would utilise nudity but how it could be portrayed on film so that not only my dancers were completely comfortable and in control but also that it would never appear as redundant or untenable. In fact, I wanted any type of nakedness to be understood as utterly necessary in depicting my portrayal of intimacy and sensuality. The resolution was in the notion of *bareness*: *bareness* of the space, the *bareness* of the facial expression, the *bareness* of colour (or hinting to specific colours instead of reducing all colour).

*Bareness* and the significance of bare skin is ultimately about communicating the sensory and the sensuous of dance, and film, and largely of dance on or in film. Representing *bareness* allows the choreography to have scope to entertain the notion of an arresting sexuality that may confront and challenge an audience to ask ‘what is this body communicating to me?’ What might the glimpse of a side rib, drops of sweat on a shoulder blade or the sharpness of the collarbone say about the movement of the body

and bodies through space, captured through the proximity of film? How might these aspects of *bareness* shape an audience's capacity to read intimacy in the film?

With this notion of bareness I was inspired to move beyond nudity (which I no longer thought of as a challenge or even taboo) and thought – how might intimacy be captured in the everyday? What might the simple act of a woman sitting at a table peeling a piece of fruit say or evoke? I will discuss bareness, simple gesture and mundane acts as erotic play, later in *Reflections on Rehearsals and Imagery*.

The camera, cinematographic tools and the editing suite are effectively as much the choreographer as the physical embodiment of the person who generates the material in the space beforehand. This is where splicing, accumulation and de-accumulation of material occurs; and this is where I was able to hone in on what the film would ultimately become – an abstraction of the human sexual response cycle and the skin and body movement depicting intimacy and sensuousness. The editing and camera work are a type of choreography; the camera enacts a dance as it moves in and around, from wide angle to close up, in or out of focus and the edit can vary the pace of the film creating tension (drawing a connection to the physiological stages/symptoms of, for example, orgasm) and assisting in critical moments of the piece. It can also conclude, sharpen, distill or repeat a moment to narrate the abstraction of the intimacy as characters appear and disappear, or scenes begin and end.

The whole process of watching is different. On film you can show details you couldn't see on stage. On camera, every movement must be made to tell. With editing and the grammar of film, entrances and exits disappear; with a cut, you can be anywhere (Bob Lockyer as cited in Mitoma, 2002, pp. 159–160)

However dancer and film-maker Eiko Otake takes a slightly different approach when discussing her experience of transitioning between dancer and director saying that “a camera cannot see what a human can see, and therefore, filming needs special considerations...what happens on stage is only half of what happens in a theatre” and that the audience “complete the work by receiving and reacting to it” which she argues

is impossible to allow in film, because film “completes the work for the audience by depicting all things” (Otake as cited in Mitoma, 2002, p. 82).

As a participant interviewee with Sue Healey as part of this research as well as being privy to her method of choreography when I was a dancer for her in 2015, I have become more and more interested in recording what might normally only be witnessed as live performance, and capturing that which is missed by the ‘human’ eye to be more thoroughly and deftly depicted through the intimate lens of a camera. Filmmaker (in particular dance on film) Bob Lockyer argues that “on film you can show details you couldn’t see on stage. You can also intercut from character to character to get reactions and tell stories” and that “the choreographed moves of eyebrows and fingers can be as important as pirouettes and grand jetees, or even more important”(pp. 159–160). However this dilemma that Otake has is certainly an interesting one, and when dealing with the dynamic between the live and the recorded, Sue Healey’s thoughts correspond with both remarks by Otake and Lockyer:

The main difference, I think, is that the camera can become a voyeur – or an accomplice in the act of experiencing something intimate. The camera (or the filmmaker) therefore has the power to control what is being seen and experienced, with more accuracy than in a live situation. The close-up is of course all powerful, as is changing scale and perspective of the shots (2016).

This research explored the important *moves* in dance film, not only detailing the physiological responses as part of the choreographic process, but more significantly, the editing and camera work. Healey attests to this by describing the camera and computer (for editing) as “pragmatic tools in a choreographer’s tool box”(2005) and that in effect, her negotiation of space and time during live performance is generally greater in detail and sometimes shorter in sequence. I suspect this to be because of the intimacy a camera lens can afford especially in how it, the lens, is able to track what intimacy can derive from subtlety and the finer detail in any given movement.

Otake personifies the actions of a camera (thus giving camera reason to act as part choreographer) by recounting a challenge where a camera was to be placed at an ‘extremely low angle, so it would “crawl” on the floor’ (as cited in Mitoma, 2002, pp. 83–84). Immediately she personifies the verb of ‘crawl’— it is a human physicality.



Using this technique, I was interested in exploring how I might utilise the camera to illustrate the 'solo' stages of the cycle in the excitement phase and refractory phase: how might the camera be so 'up-close and personal' that the camera 'crawls' along the sand of the beach in these scenes? Does this thus offer an "exclusively (intimate) duet"(p. 83) between camera and physical body? As it occurs in the first and last scenes of the film, how might the camera appear to crawl alongside beach sand to trigger a 'haptic' response, a sensory evocation of what it feels like to have sand underneath the flesh of one's palm?

Erin Brannigan, author of 'Dancefilm: Choreography and the Moving Image' talks about the close-up in dance films. She suggests that understanding the work of Hungarian film theorist Béla Balázs in relation to the film theory of Gilles Deleuze "provides a framework for considering the corporeal micro-choreographies found in films, offering an alternative model of the cinematic close-up traditionally theorized in relation to the face" (Brannigan, 2011).

Melanie Kloetzel, who references Brannigan, writes how such filmmakers 'de-hierarchize' the body, "placing equal dramatic emphasis on fingers, elbows and toes as Hollywood did on the face" (Kloetzel, 2015, p. 5). Kloetzel continues referencing Brannigan, who synthesizes the theories of Gilles Deleuze with her own, arguing that the close-up in dance films can "produce a 'deterritorialization' of the body so that any part of the corporeal whole can operate as a site for dance and, thus, meaning production and expression" (as cited in Kloetzel, 2015, p. 5).

According to Kloetzel (2015, p. 5) this 'deterritorialization' (in this case, and according to Deleuzian analysis, an eradication of cultural formula/practice from its native place/origin) is evident in films like Jonathan Burrows and Adam Roberts' *'Hands'* (1995), apparently in which the dancers' hands are the sole visible landscape and thus the sole governor of the film's definition or concept, which is essentially what Brannigan is referring to with "framework for corporeal micro-choreographies". Similarly in Hilary Harris' *'Nine Variations'* (1966), "where moments of extreme close-up of knees, hips and feet show a level of sensuousness and expression that may stir even the most stoic viewer" (Kloetzel, 2015, p. 5) (exemplified below in two stills)



**Figure 1:** Detail of hand. Hillary Harris (1966) **Figure 2:** Detail of torso/shoulder  
Hillary Harris (1966)

The final conceptual point to raise was that of gender. I was interested to see what could evolve from a duet between two women and the duet between a male and female dancer and who might drive the movement phrasing. In *Dance, culture, and popular film* Jane Boyd argues that while “there are many exceptions, traditional Western dance forms also emphasize and perpetuate bourgeois, heterosexual, sexist gender roles in which women are encouraged to be, and are represented as, less physical than, and subordinate to, their male partners” (2004, p. 70). During my experiences in Europe on tour in June and July 2016, I went to a three hour performance in Montpellier called *‘Passion’*.

This performance was curated by eleven individual choreographers made up of raw dance moments connecting the sexualisation and objectification of women by men, and in fact to a certain extent, of men by women. In a twenty minute duet between a male and a female there was nudity, albeit very brief. But this wasn’t what was interesting to me. On the contrary, what fascinated me was the dynamic between a petite-framed woman and a tall, brusque man curiously playing out what appeared to be a cat and mouse type game, and yet the power differential of who was pursuing who continually shifted. He dexterously ‘manhandled’ her from the waist line of her jeans in the beginning, lifting her with such indelible and effortless strength, as if she were a bag to

be disposed of or thrown across the space while at other times she had moments of complete dominance – a woman of her stature and frame defying this magnificent beastly man, pouncing all over him and quite literally, relentlessly pursuing him to the point of exhaustion. Gender politics notwithstanding, and a proper analysis of this performance from the perspective of whether it reinforced or subverted notions of gendered oppression or sexual violence against women is beyond the scope of this exegesis, however this performance played an integral part in me considering how I might understand gender and power in my choreography. I was interested in using the duets to inspire a sense of ambivalence; of power, of relationship, of sexuality and the like.

By doing this we do not necessarily know how we feel about what it is we are seeing happen between these couples. I was curious about this notion of the gendered power dynamic in dance and investigating how I might encourage a shift in control, in particular the control and direction of movement, between bodies and between genders (this is somewhat displayed in the dominating persona Ea embodies over Alex in the field duet that is coupled with the plateau phase in the final film. However, a sense of power struggle was also established in the initial creation stages for the plateau duet) (Appendix 4: clip #3 – *initial creation of plateau duet* with (Ea and Antonio) refer to usb)

## Reflections on Rehearsals

At our first rehearsal in the beginning of August 2016 I shared with the dancers my personal experiences of intimacy in relation to the senses. For example, an **associated scent** (musk), **associated texture** (slippery) **associated colour** (grey w. tinges of red) **associated (part) of the body to be touched by somebody (intimately or non-intimately)** (the lateral border of the armpit). The dancers were then encouraged to think on their own relationship to the senses however, for almost the entire creation process, I made it a point to not know their associations until the end (filming). I felt

if I did, it would both precept how and what I created: similarly, the dancers were not always privy to the majority of thoughts running through my mind.

In doing so, I was making sure that by not sharing every point of inspiration, for them or for me, the movement execution would come from a place of intimacy with self, an honesty that was truly theirs and theirs alone. It was only in the last couple of weeks of rehearsals that I sat with the dancers and discussed certain decisions behind the movement, the location, the scenery and the costumes. For example, the reasoning behind the emotionless state in the female duet (excitement) and the echo of this state in collaboration with the bare scenery of the space used (in both plateau, orgasm and excitement phases of the film) is depicting the *bareness* and vulnerability of the human condition or why in the female/male duet (plateau) there are moments of almost violent dynamic shifts to accentuate that intimacy is not always gentle. This was not in relation to the actual physiological stage, rather a creative movement impetus I worked with based on familiarity and perception of this personalized dynamic apropos of intimacy (this is partly where subjection in the paradigm of creative research implements itself).

By the end of this rehearsal process, the dancers were comfortable in talking to me about their personal relationship to intimacy and to expand on a real sense of understanding within my own mind how they were viewing and incorporating a part of themselves into the work. They offered colours which they identified with:

(coincidentally) grey with red (Celina), electric blue (Lilly), yellow-white (Ea) and teal-blue with purple/pink (Alex). Their scents were personalized to specific people but not specifically 'flavoursome' or 'descriptive' other than belonging to the memory or person. Their textures were sandpaper (Ea), freshly shaven skin (Alex), fibre cloth (Lilly) and cotton (Celina.) Their specific self-body areas that they associated with intimacy included the nape of the neck (in turn affecting the small of the lower back) (Ea), across the ribs (Lilly), ear lobes (Celina) and biceps/ scalp (Alex). Other body parts included general upper torso (Celina), thighs and glutes (Alex), general neck area (Lilly) and general stomach area (Ea).

For the most part, they viewed these personal details as the creative context behind the emotional/psychological aspects of the work and the movement facilitation. In example, if

they envisioned the space bathed in their specific colour, what did that do to their sight and how they see themselves and/or others in that moment? Likewise; if they touch somebody physically with the thought of that specific body part that meant something to them then how did that affect their delivery of the material? The opening solo on Celina was created in a task-based improvisation using a sliver of text by William Faulkner from 'As I lay dying': "then I would wait until they all went to sleep so I could lie with my shirt-tail up, hearing them asleep, feeling myself without touching myself, feeling the cool silence" (1935, p. 7).

Using text such as this as movement inspiration allowed me to hand over creative ingenuity to them in the overall process, so that I did not merely conduct their journey for them but instead work as a director to shape the movement generated. In relation to the first solo, I began by offering the text to Celina and with the thirty seconds of choreography made, I developed the material. In the final film, we only see perhaps seven or eight second's worth of the original task-based movement. The initial idea was to gain knowledge of how she moved according to the literature as impetus, hence I could then develop what I perceived as her movement quality, to further elaborate on the phrase. Coupled with this is the dual segment of the solo, where Celina sits at a table peeling an orange. In the film, it is the spray of the citrus, the almost sensual, almost familiar manner in which she peels the layers of the fruit (again quite a mundane act like the contextualized pomegranate from 'Grenadine'). The hair style reminiscent of Audrey Hepburn with under-done make up and clad almost head to toe in black allows for our attention to be entirely taken by the movement of the fingers masterfully working away to peel the orange/s.

Perhaps the most lewd elements of the film are in the close ups of her mouth, with her seemingly insatiable appetite for the orange juice that she has just squeezed. In fact it is testament to the powers of post-production and the editing suite where scenes like this are brought to life. I consider this scene in particular to be sensuously *haptic* because of the texture of the fruit, the peeling of the layers, the mouth and lips and so on to reveal the relationship of the physical movement as touch and the touch of the camera as the haptic nakedness of humanity. Sue Healey said "we all construct layers to our identity, even invisible ones – it is how we choose to reveal the essence that is

important – I think you can still do this through layers of clothing” (personal communication, 20th September, Healey, 2016, p. 2).

To assist with the movement I knew we needed, which was improvised, we devised a way to shoot from the camera – and with the lighting and setting – to bring this mundane act to life was finally put to the test by Robert, Taihra and myself. Rosemary Lee, a choreographer of site-specific works and several ‘Dance for the Camera’ projects, remarks “the ‘real choreography’ takes place in the edit suite” (as cited in Mitoma, 2002).

## Imagery

I began the process of the first duet with Lilly and Celina with the words feverish, bloom, beneath, aware, primal, fragility, ignition and connected. Eventually, and because I was influenced quite heavily from my experiences in Europe, these words were reduced to feverish, ignition and connected. The initial duet we created together (Lilly, Celina and myself) was extremely different from the final product (Appendix 5: clip #3 – *initial female duet excitement phase 1.2* with (Celina and Lilly) refer to usb). In part, a recent tour to Montpellier saw me further analyse how to depict for example, the excitement phase, where a creation by European choreographer Christian Rizzo regarding nightclub culture inspired me to undertake the female duet in a particular way (excitement phase 1.2). Aesthetically, I was able to generate movement based on the ideas surrounding the excitement phase within the narrative set up of a darkened room with the glow of a LED light, similar to, but not literally, a nightclub (although the glow of the exit sign seen in this section of the film could argue otherwise).

I was able to further capitalize on taking the intimacy of the situation/concept away from the generic ‘home’ idea, furthermore, I find the nightclub culture mystifying; particularly in a sense the desire to connect with another human being. This is where the notion of the human condition somewhat plausibly inserted itself into the film: two human beings

reaching into the darkness, finding an indisputable connection, a silent agreement and the beginning of an understanding.

I understand nightclubbing to be a release for most people: a chance to have a dance, to discharge the pressures of mundanity, and not at all least, to meet people – to make connections, random and spontaneous but nonetheless meaningful and significant, even in its meaninglessness. When Lilly, Celina and I had finished working on the movement generation it became clear to me that the duet explored the ways that two bodies in space could reach out and connect without actual tactility at every moment, tension brimming with meaning. This emotionless state of being became a representation of how I perceived my interpretation of the human condition to be.

For this duet (excitement 1.2), the not-feeling was a colossal component to the creation: it a duet of such tremendous significance – devoid of much emotion, vacant and almost with ‘cold’ demeanour. In my mind and specifically in reference to the work I’ve created, that is what lies beneath all of us, our bodily conduits – a blank canvas. The layering on that (in relation to nightclubbing, although daily life could also be argued) is the excessive drinking, the drugs, the sex; the bodies and the gestures are speaking the actual state (excitement) whilst the faces are at the core of what I and the two dancers understand as the flawed ‘human condition’, to reach out for points of human connection but to not entirely connect at all.

In *‘Passion’*, an entourage of five dancers presented a minimalistic, fully-clothed work regarding intimacy, in fact, an orgy. With this I made mental notes as to how this piece made me feel, how it might influence my choreographic process and the film making. I was particularly taken aback by this quintet because it was so obviously sexual and yet completely devoid of bare skin, the women were draped in non-erotic or non-exposed dresses and the men clad in shirts and pants. This made me wonder if this piece was speaking to the sexualisation of formal attire and how evocative this might be. I began to think that clothing, and in fact formal wear, could play an important part in depicting the plateau phase of the human sexual response cycle.

*'Passion'* was also remarkable because it toyed with the notion of a group activity in a literal manner; the movement was two-dimensional but literal (hips swaying, tender fondling of the face and neck, pelvic regions in close quarters, boldly romantic gestures in the form of tango positions, partnered back bends or arches going backwards)—and thus in the filmic process, this would permit me to have a broader scope creatively, in addition to abstractions but also the absorbing of the literality in some moments too. In turn, it allowed for more of a comprehensive grandiose or idealistic outlook when directing the camera: it *is* a piece about intimacy, I can focus on more than the physiological aspects of the cycle, I can focus on the expression of the face rather than just the neck tensing, the corner of the eyes squeezing shut etc. After each time we shot the dance sequences, whether it was quartet (orgasm) or male/female duet (plateau), we (myself, the dancers and the crew) would collectively watch the take back and to really ascertain how the nudity, in particular, appeared. Each time the group noted that the nudity in frame did not detract from the movement, in fact it enhanced the movement.

The body does not seem to be sexualized despite its profound intimate connotations; the ripple of Alex's abdominal muscles as Ea's hands slide down the rib area and across the stomach to the hips in the plateau duet or the glistening of skin against skin whilst the clothing is provocatively, almost ritualistically placed over the faces in a manner that could very well allude to the sadomasochism and bondage scene in the quartet (orgasm). Yet this doesn't appear to affront an audience in its representation of the male or female body or cause an anomaly of sorts. Australian Burlesque performer Maude Davey argues for nudity in performance by saying "The body speaks with directness, without disguise, without artifice. It speaks of vulnerability and of power, of pleasure and suffering, of innocence and knowingness. It tells the truth. It cannot do otherwise" (as cited in Huesca et al., 2014, p. 8).

I built the solo work for Alex (refractory/resolution phase) based on the imagery of a vine spreading from the upper abdomen to the chest and out along the neck and shoulders. The insight came from the information of the male sex flush. As described by Masters and Johnson (it) "arises from the epigastrium and spreads over the anterior chest wall. The neck, face and forehead progressively are involved" also noting that its



appearance is 'measle-like' (1966, p. 172). Initially, I made a small amount of material to give to Alex beforehand and at the last moment, decided to take only one aspect of it rather than the actual choreography. I wanted him, as I have wanted my dancers in the entire process, to still be able to offer himself to the movement, even though I remained idealistic in many of my rehearsals and perceptions on how movement should be. The movement 'idea' that I kept from this initial self-solo, was an impression of entrapment (which details itself in the form of being trapped behind the outfit (the blue tee shirt he wears)).

I gave Alex the impetus in the studio to move from a place of growth (growth as in moving from a place of expansion; movement to have a sense of breadth to it, as if feeling his fingers trudge through the air and essentially creating texture and imagery). It was as if this purported vine leaf were spreading from his centre place upwards and outwards. In my mind, it was almost akin to that of a physical, visibly-tangible virus spreading, and by extension, I perceived a sense of entanglement and deformity. To contrast what I saw as a negative aspect I tasked him with the word 'thaw' as if breaking through some magnificent difficulty (in this sense, the ever-growing vine) which in turn, actually permitted moments of indomitable physical beauty where the body is actually deploying itself in the area. As opposed to continually letting the vine spread, the imagery of thawing comes to us in a breather moment where we can appreciate the strength of this dancer, for example, when Alex goes upside down in a head stand and suspends this before flipping over; this could be suggestive of a 'break' in the vine.

## Collaboration

Collaboration with other artists was an important part of the research process.

Collaborating with composer Danus Yates, and cinematographer/producers Taihra Swaine and Robert Bremner, all highly proficient artists in their craft, allowed me to realize the endgame of *[they] slipped briskly into an intimacy from which they never recovered*; however the

process was not without its compromises of vision due to financial lack and time-efficiency.

During the entirety of the pre-production and post-production I worked toward understanding a flexibly creative working environment so that the film team could individually create works of art in their own visions, and the collaborative and well-working relationships with all three would allow me to further synthesize their ideas with my own. In our mutual processes, I made it heavily apparent on communicating my aesthetic ideas and creative choices, the stimulation behind these choices and my ambition/s as well as my changes, which were sometimes constant in a small frame of time (including responses to my European discoveries/inspirations). I frequently reminded them and gave them constructive feedback as the process went on and as they continued to refine.

From the initial inspirations, to the conversations about not subjecting the body (and the use of nudity), to conversations about the aesthetical choices and the difficulties regarding some of these, to conversations about the collaborative experience, to conversations about the work as a whole- we were open to exploring and talking honestly in order to fully understand the work we were creating together.

During filming, there were several opportune moments for me to actually get behind the physical camera in order to ascertain what it was that I wanted. As mentioned earlier on page 3 (Research Questions), when Siebens talks of the synergy between camera and movement, and how he is able to move along with the camera when he knows the work implicitly- it was much the same for myself. I was able to - quite literally - push Robert around in a wheelie-chair as the dancers moved in and out of frame, up and down, to and fro etc. This created an unavoidable outcome to the questioning of merging choreographer and cinematographer/director together: consequently, I was fortunate enough to eradicate any other plausible outcomes and truly achieve that "magical sense of kinaesthetic movement" I had been working toward (2002, p. 221).

In one moment of the quartet (orgasm) I was able to hold the camera and move in the midst of the dancers where they were constantly attaching and detaching from one

another; this is another small example in which I was able to create that synergy by being both cinematographer (in the literal physical body sense) and choreographer. It was very exhilarating and inwardly as well as outwardly challenging, particularly because whilst the camera and direction is not my forte, this entire project is (in part) reason to improve my choreographic practice, and by extension, the camera work is applicable.

Whilst music was important, it had no monumental bearing on the choreographic process. The creation of the music was assisted by utilizing text (from which I have permission from the author- see Appendix 9: images) and forms of 'noise' generating. I was able to personally contribute to the 'crackle' effect heard in the final films 'plateau phase' duet between Alex Abbot and Ea Sulak. This was done by crinkling empty tablet packets together, rubbing beer bottle caps against glass, blowing lightly into the microphone, scrunching paper, tearing paper and flicking a lighter's switch on and off. Behind these sound generations lay this magnificent audible discord; in a way it, (the sounds) become second nature to the movement occurring- these generations came from physical attributes (rubbing, blowing, scrunching, tearing, flicking), and I saw this as a fitting revelation of intimacy when coupled with the film. The sounds are so unconventional yet personified by the methods from which they were made.

The song used for the duet between Celina Hage and Lilly King (excitement 1.2) was called 'Where You Gonna Go?' by British DJ, Paul White. This track came to me when I was in the process of trying to find a sound that could emulate something sensual and 'club-like.' It is, in my mind, a very transcendental song and the title (of which the song's lyrics are solely also) became the ideal complement to my movement and creative design on the 'human condition.' The title/lyrics are also a question: they suggest a sort of innocuousness, especially with the actual tone of the voice in the song. It is as if the viewer is being questioned by the song, forcing them to ask themselves what their opinion is on genuine human connection, as they watch these two women (Celina and Lilly- highly seductive-looking but nonetheless ambiguous) move through the darkness in a state of 'nothing', but reaching for each other to determine that connection. I was granted permission of this song via APRA AMCOS on a gratis basis as well as personal permission by Paul White himself (Appendix 10: image).

## Creating the Aesthetic

The relationship between a space and a dancer is sacred; in the scholarship of dance film, it is even more so. With such attention to this constantly oscillating relationship, it is worth noting that perhaps an embodied or personalized view is encouraged by the seeing-eye to what is occurring before them on the screen. Melanie Kloetzel writes about how the location in screen dance shouldn't be seen as merely 'backdrop' but in fact a very intimate collaborator and protagonist to the film: "By crafting a mise-en-scène that de-hierarchizes the dancer-location relationship, dance film and dance filmmakers demonstrate the active intimacy that can occur between humans and their surroundings" (Kloetzel, 2015, p. 3).

It was always my intention to take the intimacy out of the studio setting and place it amongst a varied array of locations that I thought would sit well narrative wise, and contextualise and support the choreographic vision and that would also resonate with me on a more personal level, for example, the beach corresponding with my personal choice of texture which was slippery. The overall factor? That each location was maintained by way of utilizing textural surroundings/surfaces; sand at the beach, wood on the table surrounded by a field of tall flora and so on. This is exhibited below in two stills from different takes in the film (the plateau and refractory phases accordingly)

<sup>11</sup>**Figure 3:** plateau phase duet (Alex Abbot and Ea Sulak) (Bremner, 2016)



<sup>iii</sup> **Figure 4:** refractory phase solo (Alex Abbot) (Bremner, 2016)



It has been my examination of the film in its early editing stages that the locations demonstrated in this film integrate a tactility (as described briefly above) that is both observational (or optically haptic) and emblematic of what I subconsciously associate intimacy to be textured as: grainy, malleable, slippery, durable, aqueous.

In 'Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media' Laura U. Marks, describes this sort of impression as "haptic *perception*." Whereas 'haptic *visuality*' (briefly touched upon earlier in Research Questions and Conceptual Background) acts as though the eyes function like organs, (they acquire a certain sense of 'tactility' to them in the same way that a body in haptic perception would experience a moment of hands sliding across a table at a very close angle on a screen) – haptic perception is "usually defined as the combination of tactile, kinaesthetic and proprioceptive functions, the way we experience touch both on the surface of and inside our bodies" (2002, p. 2).

In regards to *[they] slipped briskly into an intimacy from which they never recovered*, the softness of the wind in the field juxtaposes the rigidity of the wooden table and the affirmation of the hands slamming down against the surface as they move in and out of their gestural manoeuvres; the grain of the sand as the hands dig underneath its compelling surface, seeking out the involvement of the viewer's inclination as they are submitted to a moment of multisensory intimacy.

## Conclusion

I believe that my work has offered a further contribution to the scholarship surrounding dance film in that I have manifested a new perspective in which to show intimacy in choreography and film technique. In the making of a new and original dance film, the research has affirmed my joy as a dance maker, supporting me with further knowledge of the field from which I have borrowed and assisted in, through film making. In this process, I have been able to further capitalize on my practice: being a dance maker (or choreographer) and equally a choreographer of the camera.

I am provoked in part by what I see as appealing conceptual areas for choreography and dance film in relation to transgression and taboo and view this research as being part of that conversation on what is intimacy and how it might be captured in dance and in film. I view the final film as an effigy of my art form, both as a dancer and a choreographer – a perpetual frame of mind frozen in time, able to be viewed in the coming years and be questioned (and perhaps inspired by) about that everlasting inquisition: how might choreographic choices interwoven with film technique capture intimacy in the medium of dance film? This thesis as a whole demonstrates that my choreographic choices have allowed the nuances and subtleties of intimacy in dance to be captured through the intimate scope of a camera and the techniques afforded by film editing.

## Appendix

Appendix 1: whole film [they] slipped briskly into an intimacy from which they never recovered (refer to usb)

Appendix 2: clip #1 – *plateau phase secondary* with (Tia and Antonio) (refer to usb)

Appendix 3: clip #2 – *initial female solo excitement phase* with (Celina) (refer to usb)

Appendix 4: clip #3 – *initial creation of plateau duet* with (Ea and Antonio) (refer to usb)

Appendix 5: clip #4 – *initial female duet excitement phase 1.2* with (Celina and Lilly) (refer to usb)

Appendix 6: my interview with Sue Healey and a picture detailing her co-operation via email

**A– What specifically makes intimacy on camera different to live performance?**

**S–**Firstly I need you to define intimacy.

Do you mean ‘performed’ intimacy between 2 people?

One person and the camera?

2 people and the camera?

Can you authentically ‘perform’ intimacy?

The main difference, I think, is that the camera can become a voyeur – or an accomplice in the act of experiencing something intimate. The camera (or the filmmaker) therefore has the power to control what is being seen and experienced, with more accuracy than in a live situation. The close-up is of course all powerful, as is changing scale and perspective of the shots.

**A– What are the most challenging aspect as both a choreographer and a film maker during the choreographic making process and the editing of the film?**

**S–**It is a mine-field of issues! Making sure the idea is captured and rendered successfully; in movement, gesture, emotional nuance (the right blend of action, emotion and energy) – and then in relation to the camera (the right partnership between camera and mover) and then finally in the construction of the edit (the right mix of elements in space and through time.)

So many possibilities that can go awry.

Another key issue is creating the right context for the work to be seen in.

**A- Have you ever worked with bare flesh (or nudity of any kind)?**

**S-**Check out these interesting articles on the subject from Dancehouse recently! Should help a great deal!! They are very thought-provoking.

<http://www.dancehousediary.com.au/?cat=189>

<http://www.dancehousediary.com.au/?p=1902>

Nakedness is a process not a state

By Alice Heyward

**A- What are your thoughts on the long relationship bw dance and nudity?**

**S-**This is an age-old problem in dance and performance, which I have chosen mostly not to address – too many other pressing ideas – you cannot take it all on!

When I create dance, I want to be able to see the body clearly without obstructive costuming – but nudity is equally as problematic in that it can become sensationalist, politically wrought, difficult. Of course there are times when the idea demands the body to be unclothed – and I have gone there, but never made emphasized it as a ‘thing’. I really like what Angela Conquet says in her article here:

...”the nude body, when (re)presented in the public domain, is exclusively a question of the viewer’s gaze.

There is a clear distinction between nudity and nakedness. Nudity is a kind of performed nakedness. Nudity is less corporeal than representational, inasmuch as it is a vehicle of signification imposed upon the body’s reality (bare nakedness). This is what brings spectatorship to the foreground in these matters. What the eyes of the beholder do is another story. From the naked body to pornography, there is only a very fine line, particularly when our time has no time for nuance.

I do think we as a culture have become alarmingly predictable in how we view the body – whether it is clothed or naked. The media forces us into viewing in certain ways – I am trying to find ways to expand perceptions in how the body is seen.



I focus on finding an authenticity to the images I create – what is emotionally and physically truthful – through nuance and great care in choreographing the action.

**A– Is bare skin and/or nudity necessary in developing a sense of intimacy?**

S–No I don't think so at all.

We all construct layers to our identity, even invisible ones – it is how we choose to reveal the essence that is important – I think you can still do this through layers of clothing...

**A– How can the broad scope of a camera lens assist in developing intimacy on film?**

S–Hah, now you are onto something! The camera has of course incredible powers to get us close to a person, closer than is usually possible in a performance, so therefore find a different intensity to intimacy.

Just how the camera does this, requires the camera person to be very skilled in shaping what they see through the lens – and interacting with all the filmic elements – especially light and space.

**A– How can the camera develop a sensory or sensorial feeling in film?**

S–Do some reading on haptic cinema.

Here is a good analysis! Quite theoretical but interesting read.

<http://filmanalytical.blogspot.com.au/2011/08/touching-film-object-notes-on-haptic-in.html>

**A– Are there any stand-out dance films you are able to appoint me in the direction of and in particular dance films that look at intimacy?**

S–Hmmm –

Vivarium by

Mahalya Middlemist with Sue-Ellen Kohler is an extraordinary work – solo nude dancer...but I'm not sure how you can access it?

I cannot find anything else that is relevant!

Strange!

A- You quote the editing process of a dance film in a 2005 interview as a 'pragmatic tool' in a choreographer's toolbox. Can you elaborate on this?

S-Editing teaches you many things about choreography.

It makes you pay attention to visual information – framing, shaping, crafting movement in time and space.

It makes you fine-tune your aesthetic judgement on many levels – from the minute to the global.

It demands you get rid of unnecessary clutter.

It opens your eyes to composition in all forms.

It teaches you about the infinite possibilities of the recombination of moving images.

It makes you play.



Appendix 7: a comprehensive timetable detailing the amount of rehearsal time I accumulated over the course of August and September before film shooting commenced at the end of September, 2016. The pre-production process was relatively efficient to manage because the work was chronological with all four dancers not in every segment together bar the quartet (orgasm).

Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> August	Tia, Antonio	Table/field duet (plateau)
Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> August	Celina, Lilly, Antonio	Excitement solo, excitement duet 1.2
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> August	Antonio	Self-solo creation (refractory)
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> August	Antonio, Ea	Plateau duet Creation
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> August	Celina, Lilly, Antonio	Excitement duet 1.2 Creation
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> August	Celina, Lilly, Alex, Ea, Ea, Antonio	Orgasm quartet Creation
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> August	Ea, Antonio	Plateau duet further Creation
Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> August	Ea, Antonio	Plateau duet further Creation
Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> August	Celina, Lilly, Antonio	Excitement duet 1.2

		further creation
Wednesday 31 <sup>st</sup> August	Alex, Ea, Antonio	Plateau duet  (catching Alex up)
Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September	Celina, Lilly, Alex,  Ea, Antonio	Orgasm quartet  further creation
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> September	Celina, Lilly, Antonio	Excitement duet  further creation
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> September	Celina, Antonio	Excitement solo  further creation
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> September	Alex, Ea, Antonio	Plateau duet  Refining
Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> September	Celina, Lilly, Alex,  Ea, Antonio	Orgasm quartet  further creation
Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> September	Alex, Antonio	Refractory solo  Creation
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> September	Celina, Lilly, Antonio	Excitement 1.2 duet  Refining
Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> September	Alex, Ea, Antonio	Plateau duet  Refining
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> September	Celina, Alex, Antonio	Excitement solo/  refractory solo refining
Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> September	Celina, Lilly, Alex,  Ea, Antonio	Orgasm quartet +  All (refining)
Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> September	Celina, Lilly, Alex, Ea	All (run + film for

	Antonio, Tai, Rob	directors)
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> September	Celina, Lilly, Antonio	Excitement 1.2 duet further refining
Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> September	Alex, Ea, Antonio	Plateau duet further refining
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September	Celina, Alex, Ea, Antonio	All (+ further refining)
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> September	Celina, Alex, Antonio, Tai, Rob	(DAY 1 FILMING) kitchen dual scenes (fruit)
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Celina, Alex, Ea, Antonio, Tai, Rob	(DAY 2 FILMING) field duet, excitement + refractory solos (beach)
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> October	Celina, Lilly, Alex, Ea Antonio, Tai, Rob	(DAY 3 FILMING: WRAP) plateau duet, orgasm quartet, excitement duet 1.2 (CPAS)

Appendix 8: two images of Chrissie Parrott's Art Space, the 'dusty, rough, grey (work) space' (Lepecki). These images were taken by myself and were the core filmic location for the two duos and the quartet (excitement 1.2, plateau, and orgasm) (pictures next page)

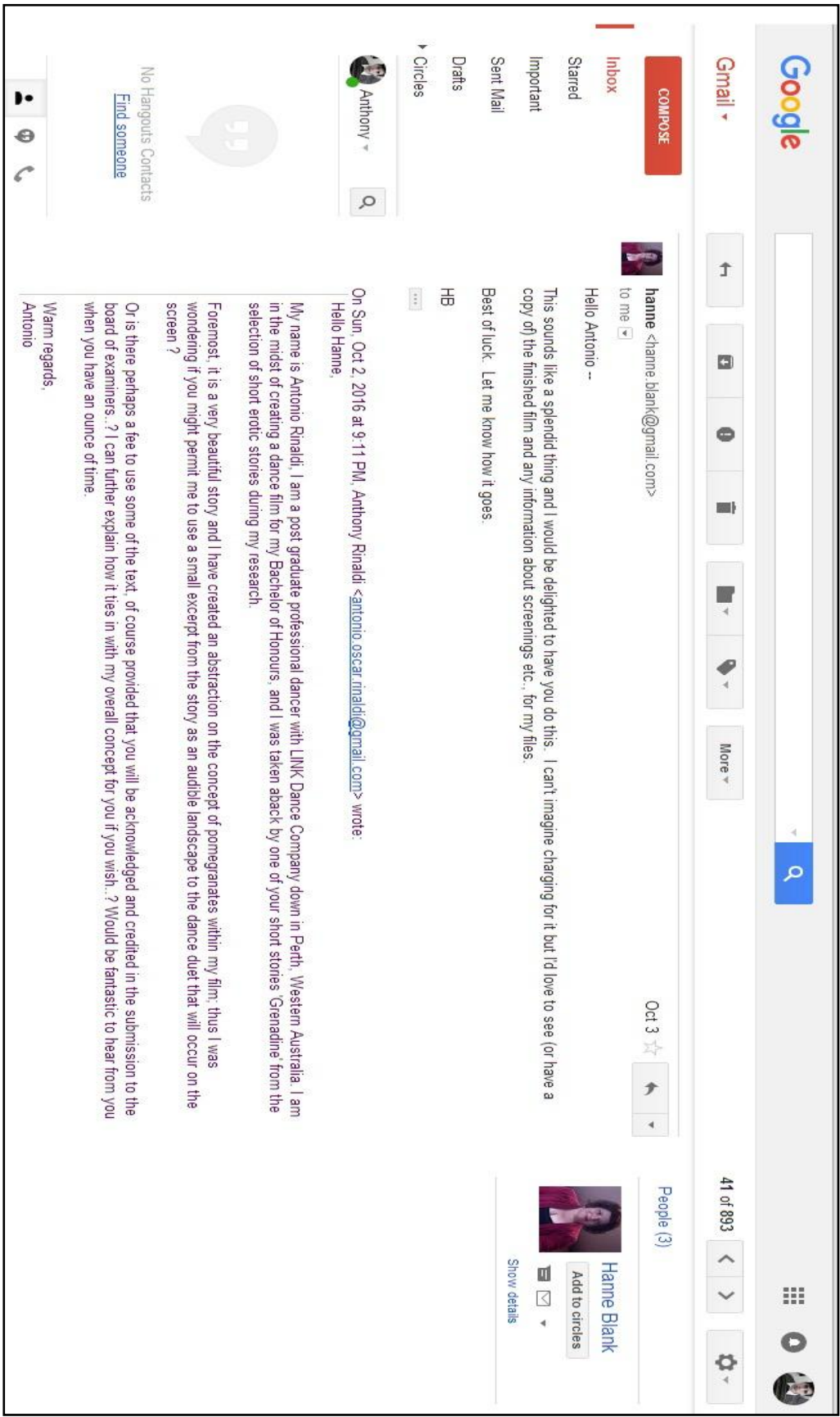


Figure 5: Chrissie Parrott Art Space (Rinaldi, 2016)



Figure 6 : Chrissie Parrott Art Space (Rinaldi, 2016)

Appendix 9: The email to author Hanne Blank and response, requesting permission to use the text of 'Grenadine' from 'Unruly Appetites: erotic stories' (2003)





Appendix 10: The email to British DJ Paul White and response, requesting permission to use original song 'Where You Gonna Go?' (Picture/s on following page due to scale of photo.)

(Formatted for email due to original contact via social media as email was unavailable to me at the time.)



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More

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COMPOSE

Honours Exegesis Film



Inbox

X



Inbox

Starred

Important

Sent Mail

Drafts (1)

Circles



Anthony Rinaldi <antonio.oscar.rinaldi@gmail.com>  
to me

5:51 PM (6 minutes ago)



October 14th, 11:52 am

Hello Paul,

My name is Antonio Rinaldi- I am a post-graduate professional dancer with LINK Dance Company down in Perth, Western Australia. I am in the midst of creating a dance film for my Bachelor of Honours, and I was quite taken to your song "Where You Gonna Go?" during my research.

Foremost, it is a phenomenal track and I have been working with it as the impetus for a segment about the human condition within my film; thus I was wondering if you might permit me to use an excerpt as an audible landscape to one of the duets that will occur on the screen?

Or is there perhaps a fee I can pay? I was looking to acquire the rights but at the moment, I'm on a gratis basis (for the sake of examination). I am currently not in the position to get a student loan, although I have in mind that I would love to submit it (the final film) to future film festivals, of course provided that you will be acknowledged and credited in it's submission.

I just thought it might be best to personally ask you on the off chance that you would permit me to use part of the track. I can further explain how it ties in with my overall concept for you if you wish? I can even send you a snippet of what I have utilised it with (I have a link) I think you would really dig it. Would be fantastic to hear from you when you have an ounce of time.

Warm regards,

Antonio

No Hangouts Contacts

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Anthony





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Circles



**Anthony Rinaldi** <antonio.oscar.rinaldi@gmail.com>  
to me ▾

October 20th, 3:40 am

Hi Antonio, good to meet you dude!!

Thanks for your lovely message!! Dude it would be an honour for you to use my track Where You Guna Go in your project!! I love dance and would love to do more music to movement so yes please go ahead and use it!! As long as it isn't being used commercially it's fine, if you did want to use it commercially let me know as I'll have to get in touch with my label and publishers and all that blah blah!

Means a lot you like the track and want to work with it!!

All the best with it!! Would love to see something one day!! 🙌🔥

Paul (paulwhitebeats@gmail.com)



Anthony ▾



5:54 PM (4 minutes ago) ☆



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<sup>i</sup> Hilary Harris '9 Variations (on a dance theme)' (1966) close up stills

<sup>ii</sup> Alexander Abbot (dancer) still shot of dance film solo (2016)

<sup>iii</sup> Alexander Abbot and Ea Sulak (dancers) still shot of dance film duet (2016)