

Renay Aumiller

Artist Statement

As a practice-based, process-oriented artist, and scholar, I am curious about how a simple idea can manifest into physical changes in the body and movement. I understand the world in terms of a nexus in which everything connects in a complex web of cause, effect, observation, and response. This natural order of interconnectivity is juxtaposed with a culture that increasingly values control, power, and binary thinking. It exemplifies how I structure and view information and, in turn, reveals the innate foundation of my choreographic interests. It is why I choreograph. Dance provides a visual representation of ideas that cannot always be experienced verbally. My aim as a choreographer is to highlight the effects of systemic limitations, social responsibility, and spatial justice to bring awareness to the grey areas between binary views to offer a poignant yet often hidden quality of human frailty.

I approach a new creative process through metaphor and spatial meaning-making. As a certified Franklin Method Educator with expertise in dynamic imagery, I locate ideas within metaphors as an entrance into somatic discovery. My images often first appear as disjointed and are contra-contextual in form. I use the rehearsal process to make sense of images and how they relate to social constructs. For example, *Fragile: Handle with Care* is a dance with eight performers confined to a 17-foot box that was initially going to be a snow globe. I envisioned the dancers to exist within the container to illustrate "snowflakes" and the fragility associated with female-identified bodies. My aim with imagery-based dance-making is to start the process with incongruous elements that seamlessly morph and develop as the dance progresses, depending on who is in the room.

I see choreography as a proposal for organizing life in space. Spatial meaning-making is the way I understand space design and experience-shaping. Dance has a unique ability to observe, construct, and re-imagine how different areas are lived and inhabited. I recently created a solo working derived from the prompt, *release me*, where I made a 20-foot-long skirt of plastic bags. I invited the audience to hold the ends of my skirt and to move it however they wanted. They collectively, without verbalizing their intent, decided to move the skirt in a parachute-like wave, of which I then moved underneath the skirt so that movement was only visible when they lifted the plastic bag skirt. I joined the audience around the outskirts of the performance space, decentering my role as the "performer" and invited them to dance underneath the skirt. "Forever Young" by Alphaville played in the background as a means to guide audiences to a nostalgic reminiscence of innocence. In conjunction with imagery-based inquiries and spatial meaning-making, my choreography questions how one perceives their life in space. Through my dance works, I seek to represent learned human behavior through an amalgam of classical beauty and ugly truths. My goal is to shift perspectives of familiarity by seeking movement as unique as the individual human anatomy. I experiment with the illusion of order amid chaotic movement. My aesthetic shifts between aggressive physicality and velveteen fluidity to accentuate spontaneity, absurdity, and social expectations of human existence.