

INTERVIEW WITH LILLIAN SKOVE

Interviewee: Lillian Skove (LS)
MFA Dance 2010 - The Ohio State University

Interviewer: Rashana Smith (RS)
MFA Dance 2012 - The Ohio State University

RS: What classes do you teach and where?

LS: Since being Vickie's TA a couple years ago I have taught in the Dance and Technology program at OSU teaching Dance for the Camera, Media & Performance, Dance Documentation, Repertory, Intro to Dance And Technology, and Video Editing courses, and recently taught choreography and technique at the Governor's Institute of Vermont for the Arts as well as a series of workshops on integrating choreography and the projected image at Lake Erie College.

RS: Do you teach or refer to Vickie's Weight Studies material in your classes?

LS: The Weight Studies materials are a constant companion in all of my teaching, even with my courses that are not in the studio but centered on video production and camera work. A good videographer needs to know where their weight is and transfer it effectively when you meld your body and camera into a single entity to capture dance movement. In my choreography classes I rely on weight studies to inform phrase making and the use of dynamic range and variation in the body as the key to building movement vocabulary.

RS: How did working with Vickie change or affect how you teach?

LS: Studying Vickie's precise and dedicated eye for the changes in a student's growth and physical demonstration of their understanding of the Weight Studies concepts and hearing how and when she delivered very powerful and clear feedback and really trusted in the viewer to see and feel the weight quality, is perhaps the most significant way Vickie has effected my teaching. I therefore spend a great deal more time providing frameworks in my courses for the students to give each other feedback, taking turns doing and watching.

RS: How did working with Vickie change or affect how you choreograph?

LS: I've always been choreographically interesting in weight and how the use of one's weight changes everything from phrasing to movement choices, but Vickie gave me the language to describe and draw out of the performer weight qualities in a powerful and direct way. Before Vickie I relied completely on metaphoric language to attempt to communicate what I was going after. I also started to really harness the weight qualities to lend context and meaning to my work from a place that came directly from the

body. In other words Vickie gave me the tools to make my concepts concrete, and a clear path of exploration in the body to feel my way closer to my ideas.

RS: How did working with Vickie change or affect how you perform?

LS: Feeling the weight qualities in my body unlocked a method of translation and understanding for me. When a choreographer presented me with a movement challenge or phrase I felt I had a "code" to decipher what it was she or he was after if I thought about their work in terms of the qualities. Also, the simple task of learning a phrase became clearer to me as I knew to always look for where his or her weight was and hook into the way the use of the weight affected the design of the material. Sometimes I would have to over-exaggerate the use of the weight to feel where it was affecting the material and then scale it back to a more nuanced level.

RS: What did you take from the experience of working with Vickie?

LS: I took away a method of understanding movement and a philosophy for how to communicate that understanding through clear and articulated concepts that I rely on in my own artistic practice and in my teaching. Vickie found words and ways of describing one of the most challenging and nonverbal areas of our practice----dynamics and the way dynamic shifts sculpt the body and the choreographic structure of the entire piece.

RS: Any anecdotes you'd like to share?

LS: Vickie instilled in me a deep trust in listening and honing the way I moved, not just the shapes of movements sequenced in time (often choreographic training limits itself to movement invention and doesn't explore the range of dynamics and that you can do the same movement and it can feel and be perceived completely differently because of how it is done). I feel extremely lucky to have had the chance to be her T.A., and I know that I will always carry her teachings into my own work.