

ARTISTIC FOCUS

The focus of my creative work is in choreography and performance in contemporary dance, with an emphasis on improvisation and collaboration, the integration of interactive technologies, and an interest in site-based work. My investigations have focused on the relationship between text, narrative forms and movement perception and, in collaboration, where combining disparate ways of perceiving and expressing lies at the heart. Performance in improvisation has been an ongoing practice and I have performed with many artists in a variety of locations including with Deborah Hay, Nina Martin, Barbara Dilley and the Lower Left Collective at the March 2 Marfa Performance Lab in Marfa, TX, in Yellow Springs, OH with Jill Becker and company, in solo performances with musician Terrence Karn, with veteran improvisers David Beadle and Karen Nelson in North Carolina, with International Butoh artist Katsura Kan, with contact improvisers Chris Aiken, Peter Bingham, KJ Holmes and Angie Hauser, and in concerts with dancer Rebecca Bryant and musician Don Nichols titled *Three in Two*, utilizing a live camera feed as yet another collaborative element. I have explored installation performance work in *Contained*, a collaborative work in which moveable screens of projected imagery are voice activated by the performer. My work in residencies at the Atlantic Center for the Arts and in France at the Camac Centre D'Art have focused on the integration of video images and textures, meticulously composed vignettes of body to environment with carefully prescribed movement scores for solo and trio. These works bring together prerecorded video with live camera feed in a performance. Weaving together site-inspired choreographic material, my work points to the past and present simultaneously. These three foci, improvisation, collaboration and media technology, are at the center of my artistic research and visibly present in my recent performance work.

SELECTED AWARDS AND INVITED ACTIVITIES

- 2017** Fulbright Scholar Award, US State Department, hosted by the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka
Resident Artist, Chulitna Lodge Artist Residency Program (August 2017), Lake Clark, AK
- 2016** Guest Artist, invited, Artist Talk, Master Class, University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Guest Artist, invited, Master Classes at Mesh Academy, Chitrasena Studio, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
- 2015** Guest Artist, invited to present *Merge Remastered* at Genesis, Mesh Dance, Colombo, Sri Lanka
- 2014** Guest Artist, presenting *I Am in Relation to You* at the International Nomad Express Festival, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Denison University Research Foundation grant (\$9000)
- 2013** Guest Artist, teaching/performance, (invited/curated show) Conduit Dance Guest Series (June 2013), Portland, OR
Selected to present *Swimming in Green* (juried) March 2013, at RAD (Regional Alternative Dance) Festival, Kalamazoo, MI
Semi-finalist, Headlands Center for the Arts, Artist Residency, 2013, CA
- 2012** Camac Centre D'Art, Artist Residency, Fondation Ténor grant, Marnay-sur-Seine, France
Hambidge Center for the Arts, Resident Fellow Award. GA
Performance/ Teaching Artist by application (3-day festival) Texas Dance Improvisation Festival, Fort Worth, TX
Pre-Formance, improvisation performance lab for dance professionals at Purdue University, IN
Denison University Research Foundation grant, (\$6800). OH
- 2011** Selected by application (18 artists selected), GVA Sessions, music and dance research lab. Geneva, Switzerland
Performance/ Teaching Residency, invited (1 week), Purdue University, IN
- 2010** Ohio Arts Council, Individual Excellence Award in Choreography (\$5000). OH
Atlantic Center for the Arts, Associate Artist in Residence, New Smyrna Beach, FL
Performance/ Teaching Residency by invitation (2.5 weeks), Grinnell College, IA
Performance/ Teaching Invited Artist (4-day festival) Texas Dance Improvisation Festival, Houston, TX
Teaching Residency, by invitation, (one day), University of Texas at El Paso, TX
- 2009** Mellon Foundation Grant, Career Enhancing Grant for VideoDanza/ Buenos Aires, Denison University. OH
- 2005** Venture Grant for Project CONTAINED, Denison University Research Foundation. OH
- 2003** Master Class /One Day Residency, Stavanger College Institute of Music and Dance, Stavanger, Norway
- 2001** Target Stores, Art in Education Grant. OH
John W. Alford Foundation for Service Learning (co-author). Denison University. OH
Vail Series (project funds) for production of *Habitats*, Denison University. OH
- 2000** Denison University Professional Development Grants – course development and workshops. OH
- 1999** Arts Midwest - Meet the Composer Fund. MN
Ohio Arts Council, Choreographic Project Grant. OH
- 1998** Denison University Research Foundation. OH
- 1997** Ohio Arts Council, Choreographic Project Grant. OH
- 1996** Ohio Arts Council – Individual Artist Fellowship – Choreography and Performance (\$5,000). OH
Denison University Research Foundation Grant. OH
Denison University Professional Development Grant – Artistic Activity/Research. OH
- 1994** Denison University Professional Development Grant – Artistic Activity/Research. OH
Greater Columbus Arts Council, Choreographic Project Grant. OH
- 1993** Greater Columbus Arts Council, Choreographic Project Grant. OH
Ohio Arts Council, Choreographic Project Grant. OH
Ohio Arts Council – Individual Artist Fellowship – Choreography and Performance (\$5,000). OH

CHOREOGRAPHY AND PERFORMANCE WORK – (2001-PRESENT)

Sandra Mathern performs in all works, unless indicated otherwise

2012-2016

TRACES (10 minutes)

Concept and Performance Drawing: Elizabeth Leister

Music: Live improvisation by violinist Kip Jones (ETHEL), and digital compositions by John Osburn

This is a collaborative performance/installation with Elizabeth Leister, a visual artist who works with digital media. Placing the dancer/mover at the center, it uses a live camera feed. I improvised with the musicians and in the space next to Leister, who was attempting to capture my figure in charcoal. My improvisations were simultaneously driven by composition choices in the live performance space and in the frame of the camera lens, forcing me to respond in multiple ways, through multiple perspectives.

Tiny Tutti Festival, Denison Museum Gallery, Denison University, Feb 2016

TOPOGRAPHIES (20 minutes)

9 student performers. Music: John Osburn. Costumes: Sandra Mathern This work draws inspiration from the physical contours of land, the change and momentum they provide as experience in the body. I imagine this embodiment as a metaphor for living: when your life changes in both drastic and subtle ways, it is as if the land around you shifts, and you have no choice but to respond. This work is created for audience members seated on all sides of the performance space, to be seen from these four different perspectives, each seat offering a unique point of view.

Department of Dance, Denison University, Nov 2016

MERGE REMASTERED (12 minutes)

Merge Remastered is a trio that defines the space alternately as a series of organized lines and borders, and as interconnected and complex intersections, using weight exchange and touch. This work explores the process of reimagining an improvisational work as a set choreography, much like a jazz musician might learn an improvised riff or solo through a recording. The dancers worked with video to learn and embody the improvised dance, originally performed and structured by two professional dancers and myself. Three students collaborated with Mathern to create this new work from video documentation, altering and redesigning it for the grand opening of Mesh Academy in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Guest Artist, Mesh Dance Academy, Genesis, Colombo, Sri Lanka, July 2015

WATCHING, WATCHING (15 minutes)

Performer, work by Bebe Miller/Roshana Smith, Taking Place is a choreographic residency and experiment in creative process that brings international choreographers to Columbus for the creation of new work with local dancers and a world-premiere concert event.

Taking Place Concert, Garden Theatre, Columbus, July 2014

I AM RELATIVE TO YOU (30 minutes)

Conceived by Mathern, she is joined by Erin Law and Megan Yankee, for this work with live music provided by John Osburn. Using prerecorded images, filmed on location, live video feed, and found branches as stage set, this work comments the dependent and relational interaction we have with each other and our environment. Video images are both referential and provide texture, color in thin moving lines of light, or swaths of horizontal natural imagery.

Guest Artist, Nomad Express International Festival, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, June 2014

SWIMMING IN GREEN – IN THREE PARTS (45 minutes)

Conceived by Mathern, joined in performance with Leslie Scates and Rebecca Bryant, this work is composed of three parts: Part 1: Waiting for the Day to Shift (solo), Part 2: We Are Here, (duets) and Part 3: We are Ready (trio). Poetic in nature, it utilizes video as narrative, as live feed, and finally as light and texture. Includes geometric compositional ideas, contact work, improvisation, relational ideas in abstract and dramatic form, text, image, branches as architectural component and live sound score by Don Nichols.

Guest Artist Series, Conduit Dance, Portland, OR, June 2013

MERGE (12 minutes)

Conceived by Mathern, joined in performance with Leslie Scates and Bethany Nelson, this trio explored geometric compositional ideas contrasted by contact work, working relational ideas in abstract and dramatic forms. Music by Michael Wall and Darren Morze.

Texas Dance Improvisation Festival, TCU, Fort Worth, TX. October 2012

Regional Alternative Dance Festival, Kalamazoo, MI, March 2013

SOLO/TRIO FOR CAMAC (10 minutes /20 minutes)

During a month-long residency at the Camac Centre D'Art I gave two public showings of my work, a 20 minute trio work-in-progress that utilized a backdrop of video projected images designed as light, texture and sound sources. Don Nichols created and performed the original sound score; Rebecca Bryant and Leslie Scates performed with me in this work in 5 parts. Concluding my residency I presented a solo work in which video footage I had gathered from the area played a significant part.

Camac Centre D'Art, Marnay-sur-Seine, France, August 2012

CHOREOGRAPHY AND PERFORMANCE WORK – (2001-PRESENT), CONTINUED

Sandra Mathern performs in all works, unless indicated otherwise

2007-2011

SWIMMING IN GREEN – PART ONE (15 minutes)

Conceived and developed by Mathern and joined by dancer/improvisers Rebecca Bryant and Leslie Scates, this work uses pre-recorded video imagery of each performer in iconic relation to the environment, arranged and designed for projection with Isadora (interactive software environment); found branches from local trees serve as a set design, moveable and creating an architecture in the space. This work investigates the dynamic relationship of the body to the environment transported to the theater stage space.

By a Committee of Style, Curated and Produced by Leslie Scates, Barnevelder Theater, Houston, TX, October 2011

THREE IN TWO, Improvisation/ Performance (40 minutes)

Joined by dancer/improviser Rebecca Bryant and musician/performer Don Nichols, this trio improvised with sound, movement and live manipulated video (via Isadora) as another visual component/backdrop to the work.

MIX Gallery, Denison University, Granville, OH, October 2009

Faulconer Gallery, Bucksbaum Center for the Arts, Grinnell College, Grinnell, IA, March 2010

Dance Program, Purdue University, Artist in Residence, February 2011

MARCH 2 MARFA, Performance, ensemble improvisation.

Evening-length public performance presented at culmination of workshop/performance lab on Ensemble Thinking, open by invitation/application only. Master Artists/ facilitators: Shelley Senter, Deborah Hay, Nina Martin and Barbara Dilley

Marfa Theater, Marfa, TX. March 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011

THE DAY I TURNED INTO AQUAMARINE, PERFORMANCE, ENSEMBLE IMPROVISATION (10 MINUTES)

This trio, collaboratively conceived, was performed at the 2nd annual Texas Dance Improvisation Festival in Houston, TX. Improvisers Rebecca Bryant and Leslie Scates joined me in this work performed to a spoken sound score by Andrew Wass.

Texas Dance Improvisation Festival, Houston, TX. October 2010

FINDING MYSELF IN A PLACE I'VE NEVER BEEN, PERFORMANCE WITH VIDEO IMAGERY (10 MINUTES)

This solo work in progress was developed during my residency at the Atlantic Center for the Arts. During my time there I focused primarily on filming the environment and my body situated within it. This footage was edited and compositionally arranged using Isadora. The performance utilized the night sounds of the environment, branches found there, and a single desk lamp to illuminate the floor space; the video projected large on the wall provided its own light.

Altantic Center for the Arts, New Smyrna Beach, FL. July 2010

LINGERING BETWEEN, Installation/ Performance with music by HyeKyung Lee (15 minutes in 3 5-minute loops)

Live performance and video manipulation was then recorded and edited to create a video montage presented on a large flat screen monitor in the gallery for the run of the show, hanging precisely in the location that the live streaming image had been projected. Using Isadora software environment the live performance was processed and projected both in front of and behind, during the performance; the performer sandwiched between images, the viewers saw the live and slightly delayed and manipulated video simultaneously. Music by composer/ pianist HyeKyung Lee was performed live.

Bryant Art Center, Gallery, Denison University, October 2009

SIXTY X SIXTY (60x60) (2 1-minute works for advanced student performers/ semi-professional)

IF MY BODY WERE A MAP (18 min.) Solo. Improvised. Music: composed, improvised and performed live by Terrence Karn.

Sixty one-minute music compositions are paired with 60 choreographers and presented in a one-hour performance in two separate concerts. I created two works, a duet and a quartet, for four advanced dancers.

Wallstreet Nightclub, Columbus, OH. October 2009

SPRING FLING (30 minutes)

Invited performer; Improviser/ choreographer Jill Becker organized and created this event of multiple sets of movement scores for varying numbers of performers accompanied by live music and performed outdoors for the Summer in the Springs Festival.

Train Station Lawn, Yellow Springs, OH. August 2009

CHOREOGRAPHY AND PERFORMANCE WORK – (2001-PRESENT), CONTINUED*Sandra Mathern performs in all works, unless indicated otherwise***2007-2011, continued****CONTAINED, Installation/ Performance with Improvisational solo (35 minutes)**

Collaboratively created by MIX (collaborative group of artists and performers interested in digital media and interactivity) this work investigates notions of containment. A portable rig was designed, custom-built to contain 5 computers, 4 projectors, servomotors, cameras, cables and screens. Projected images and mobile screens create a changing architecture in the space that is interactive and controlled via voice activation by the performer. Group MIX was invited to Dartington College, for the International Digital Resources in Humanities and the Arts conference and selected for the exhibit Re-Surfacing, curated from an international call.

Dartington College of the Arts, DRHA conference, Devon, England, September 2006

Denison University. Burke Black Box, February 2007

Technology Expanding the Landscape - A Reinterpretation and Investigation of the Landscape, Re-Surfacing Exhibit, Ohio State University, Department of Art and Technology, March 2007 (declined)

2001- 2006**FABLE IN TWO (50 minutes)**

Collaborative work created with World Dance Guest Artist and internationally known Butoh artist Katsura Kan, animation artist Kayo Kotoura and musician Brian Casey. This evening-length work was collaboratively created and performed with Katsura Kan, incorporating improvisation and set choreographed material.

Denison University, Doane Dance Performance Space, November 4,5, 2006

CONTAINED – PREVIEW/WORK IN PROGRESS, Installation/ Performance with Improvisational solo (35 minutes)

This work was a prototype work created by Group MIX (collaborative group of artists and performers interested in digital media and interactivity) investigating notions of containment and what is contained. It utilizes 4 mobile screens with projected images. Funded in part by a Venture Grant from the Denison University Research Foundation. This performance marked the culmination of a two-week intensive workshop session.

Denison University, Doane Dance Performance Space, September 2005

SOMEWHEREINBETWEEN, Improvisational work for duet, with Vail Guest Artist David Beadle (45 minutes)

This improvisational work was developed over a weeklong residency and included live music improvisation by Brian Casey and improvised light design by Jeffery Gress.

Denison University, Department of Dance, Doane Dance Performance Space, February 2005

COMPARABLE WORTH, IMPROVISATIONAL PERFORMANCE WITH DANCER IMPROVISERS CHRIS AIKEN, DAVID BEADLE, PETER BINGHAM, ANGIE HAUSER, K.J. HOLMES AND LIGHTING DESIGNER DAVID COVEY (1hour 30 minutes)

Improvisational evening of duet and group work as featured centerpiece to Perceiving Gender and Performance, a conference hosted by the Department of Dance and coordinated by Dr. Gill Wright Miller.

Denison University, Department of Dance, Doane Dance Performance Space. February 2004.

SENSATION, IMPROVISATIONAL PERFORMANCE WITH KAREN NELSON, DAVID BEADLE AND MEMBERS OF THE EVEN EXCHANGE DANCE COMPANY (40 minutes)

Improvisational work with live music performed at 8pm and 10pm.

Arts Together, Raleigh, North Carolina. Fall 2003.

Open Space (15 min.) Duet with improviser Karen Nelson. Improvised.

Guest Artist concert – Tuning, Denison University. Granville, OH. Friday, October 4, 2002

INSTINCT ENSEMBLE: IMPROVISATIONAL PERFORMANCE WITH CHRIS AIKEN, PETER BINGHAM, JEFF BARTLETT AND CLAUDIA HOWARD QUEEN. (50 minutes)

Improvisational work culminating guest residency (Aiken and Bingham) at Denison University.

Denison University, Department of Dance. Doane Dance Performance Space. February, 2001

HABITATS – A COLLABORATIVE IMPROVISATIONAL PERFORMANCE, with dance by Mathern-Smith and David Beadle, music by Claudia Howard Queen, visuals by Ronald Abram and lighting design by Greg Catellier. Duet and solo improvised work – 60 minutes.

Funded by grants from Target Stores, John W. Alford Foundation Denison University, Vail Series, with support from the Fine and Performing Arts Departments, Denison University. Ohio Arts Council, Denison University Research Foundation, Arts Midwest Meet the Composer Fund with support from Links Hall/Chicago, OSU Newark/COTC Campus Events and Ohio State University Dept. of Dance.

Performed in Chicago (Links Hall), Raleigh, NC (Meredith College), Columbus, (Sullivant Theater/ OSU & Capital Theater), Newark (LeFevre Hall/OSU Newark) and Granville, OH (Department of Dance) and in Burke Hall Black Box Theater, an intimate black box space, Vail Series 2000/2001, Denison University, February 2001

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS - PRESENTATIONS AND PARTICIPATION

Mellon Foundation Grant, Arts Across the Curriculum Workshop, panelist and participant, Denison University, May 2016.

Guest Editor with Mark Lomanno (St. John's University) and Jason Robinson (Amherst College), Special Edition of Critical Studies in Improvisation, "Improvisation and the Liberal Arts." Fall 2016

Facilitator (invited), Form in Question, ensemble improvisation symposium, NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Jan 2016

Improvisation, Interdisciplinarity and Liberal Arts, organizer/presenter, Association of American Liberal Arts Colleges, Amherst College, November 2014

Collaboration in the Arts: Building Artistic Interdisciplinarity at the Liberal Arts College Association of American Liberal Arts Colleges, Workshop participant, Carleton College, Northfield, MN, June 2013

Sherman-Fairchild Foundation Grant Workshop Series, participant, Video editing, Final Cut Pro; Photography and Graphic Design, Photoshop; Videography, Sony NEX V10 Camera; 3D printing; Web Design. Denison University, 2010-2014

Dance for Camera Workshop with Katrina McPherson, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT, October 2011

National Dance Association, Annual Pedagogy Conference, performer in Showcase Concert with Nina Martin and Lower Left, January 2010

Pensar la Videodanza, Thinking Videodance symposium in association with the International Videodanza Festival, Buenos Aires. Presented paper for publication Spring 2010: Videodance and Movement Practices: a multifaceted tool for teaching. Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 2009

National Dance Education Organization Annual Conference, New York City, June 2009

Isadora Live-I Workshop (software for interactive performance), Portland, OR, August 2010 & New York City, June 2008

OhioDance Festival panel member, modern dance class audition. Columbus, OH. 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011

EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts, Dance. Minor, Arts Administration. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, Wisconsin.
Bachelor of Arts, Liberal Arts and Science, Certificate in Dance, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon

CURRENT POSITION

PROFESSOR AND CHAIR OF DANCE, Denison University, Department of Dance. Granville, OH