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Proposal

Project Title: The Effects of the Postmodern Era on Contemporary Dance

Research question: Is postmodern dance contemporary dance?

Methodology: Choreographic analysis of Judson Dance Theater videos to contemporary dance videos

Theoretical framework: Dance studies (Postmodernism in literary and visual arts)

Thesis: The experimental approaches taken during the era of postmodern dance has resulted in lasting aesthetic effects on what is now considered contemporary dance.

The postmodern era of dance in America led to the practice of contact improvisation and experimental approaches to choreography and performance. Many of the practices developed during this era have set new standards for improvisation and namely, what is considered contemporary dance. I am interested in exploring how contemporary dance is defined and the role postmodern dance had on developing its aesthetics.

An effective research method would be the analysis of dance videos. By comparing and contrasting videos from the Judson Dance Theater era to videos labeled “contemporary dance,” I can distinguish similarities and differences in aesthetic principles and performance approaches. From here, movement vocabularies could be potentially created.

The chapter “Judson Rides Again!” written by Sally Banes is a clear example of how the Judson Dance Theater gave way to the postmodern dance era. This was the article that sparked my interest in postmodern dance in the first place. Relevant artists were clearly stated, movement

descriptions were insightful, and the structures that were questioned and experimented with were clearly stated.

The postmodern era of dance and its relation to the contemporary genre is extremely relevant for my classmates, and dance students in general. Practices such as contact improvisation and choreographer-dancer collaboration are techniques that were created or curated during this era, and are currently practiced in our own department of dance. I'm sure each of my classmates have had experience in one of these movement techniques. By giving my peers context on where these practices came from, they can be better informed on the movement aesthetics that they themselves take part in.

Bibliography

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