

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021

Dance & Oral History

Susan Koper, Ball State University

Registration Cap: 20

STUDENT-ONLY WORKSHOP

Workshop Overview:

This workshop will share information about the process of using oral history as inspiration for creating dance works and revealing stories through movement. The workshop will include a brief introduction to oral history and its use in the development of my work *I Can Turn The Sun Away*. My own personal strategies and devices for creating the work will be shared with participants as well as other possible approaches for developing personal histories into engaging works. Participants will then have an opportunity to conduct interviews with each other in breakout rooms and create short movement studies based upon information gathered in the session. The final session will include showing the studies and sharing approaches and strategies used to develop material. The sessions are outlined below:

Workshop Content:

Session 1: Introduction to oral history and the development of *I Can Turn The Sun Away*. (50 minutes)
Session 1 will begin with a brief introduction to oral history and discussions surrounding the possibilities of dance as more than entertainment. Questions we will consider include can dance do more than entertain? Can dance inform and enlighten? Are stories able to be communicated through movement? Can dance help provide insight into issues of social justice? Specific examples of dance used in this way will be discussed as well as a specific example of a work that was developed from the oral history of Dr. Sybil Jordan Hampton, the sole African American enrolled in her class at Little Rock Central High School from 1959 to 1962. This piece, *I Can Turn The Sun Away*, will be viewed and then specific choreographic strategies used to develop the work will be considered as well as other possible approaches for developing personal histories into engaging works.

Session 2: Interviews and movement investigation (90 minutes)
Session 2 will start with students being guided in several improvisational practices that provide insight into using language/story as a means to develop movement material with continued discussion/review/brainstorming of strategies for using movement to tell personal stories. Students will then be assigned a partner and move to breakout rooms with their partner. Each student will interview their partner about a personal story from their history, and then proceed to develop a short movement study based on the interview using the improvisational practices previously investigated.

Session 3: Sharing (75 minutes)
All participants will reconvene and share studies with the group. After each study, students will share process and how they approached developing movement material as well as reflect back on questions initially posed in the first session.

Schedule:

TIME—all times are in Eastern Time	SESSION
12:00-12:50 pm ET	Session 1: Introduction to oral history and the development of <i>I Can Turn The Sun Away</i>
12:50 – 1:00 pm ET	Break
1:00-2:30pm ET	Session 2: Interviews and movement investigation
2:30-2:45pm ET	Break
2:45-4:00pm	Session 3: Sharing

Space/ equipment requirements for participants:

Enough space to move comfortably

Presenter Bio:

Susan Koper cultivates her craft and artistry through her work in many different areas of dance. Early in her career, she was a member of Empire State Ballet in Buffalo, NY and later performed with the movement cooperative *z3 movement project*. She currently performs with her own dance ensemble sk|dancers as a solo artist and has shown work in regional, national, and international festivals including the Festival Internacional De Danza Contemporanea in Mexico City . Susan has been the recipient of an Indiana Individual Artist Grant and several ASPIRE Creative Arts Grants. She presented research on Ruth Page at the American Dance Festival while pursuing her MFA and has presented work at the Benjamin Cohen Peace Conference, the Diversity Symposium, the Oral History Association Annual Conference, and the National Dance Education Organization 2019 conference. Susan received her BA in American Studies from the University of Notre Dame and her MFA in Dance from Hollins University/ADF. Ms. Koper currently mentors and guides young artists as an Assistant Professor of Dance at Ball State University.
