

MARGARET WILLIAMS

1st May 2017

Teaching ***Dance for Camera*** for the Winter semester in the Department of World Arts and Culture | Dance at the University of California, Los Angeles

January 6th 2017 until March 29th 2017

I've been making dance films since 1989 and was delighted to be asked by my long term collaborator Victoria Marks, Professor of Choreography at UCLA, to teach a Dance for Camera course. The Lisa Ullman fund contributed to my airfare, which helped enormously in my being able to take up the teaching post.

Today, practically everyone working in dance and choreography uses video technology. My course gave students the basic understanding to make dance designed for camera. Students received information from my lectures, by viewing archive dance video material and feature films; read texts that relate to cinema, video production and ***Dance for Camera*** while receiving hands on experience with video cameras in practice based tasks in the studio and on location.

My eleven students discovered 'ways of seeing', developed ideas for their own short films, made storyboards and mood boards; wrote shot lists, shot with digital video cameras, acquired skills to edit on Adobe Premiere Pro and exported final films to Vimeo and YouTube accounts.

Primarily, this was a creative, visual course. Emphasis was on ideas, practice, theory and understanding through experimentation and play. Only three students had made dance films before - two examples are attached on a thumb drive. At the end of the quarter students had a deeper understanding of the history of ***Dance for Camera*** and its current profile worldwide and produced their own short films. I was able to invite Silvina Szperling who runs a Video Dance Festival in Buenos Aires, Argentina to talk to the class about film festivals worldwide. (She is an old friend and just happened to be in LA at the time).

I'm extremely happy with the work produced by my eleven students, their final films were the highlight of my trip.

One of my students, Pearl Marrill (her film is attached) visited London a couple of weeks ago. I took her to the The Place to see Fevered Sleep's production, 'Men & Girls Dance'. This was valuable opportunity to discuss the work in terms of the contrast between US and UK dance making. Pearl didn't feel it would be possible to make or show work like 'Men & Girls Dance' in the US.

There is a diverse cultural life happening in LA which I felt very fortunate to be able to attend – whether a Tom Adès concert at the Disney Hall, Split Britches at the Kirball Centre or seeing a performance of a Kyle Abraham choreography in an evening of work by the Alvin Ailey Company.

Kyle is based in New York but had the office next to mine as he was teaching choreography at UCLA in the same semester as me. We exchanged ideas and held a joint evening of work by the students, 'Culture Crossing'. He showcased the students' choreography and I showed a selection of the final films.

In the past, I have only given week long Master Classes, so spending a semester - 3 months, allowed me time to think about my own practice and bring my research into dance film up to date. Having extended 'thinking' time was a joy. I felt it was a great privilege to be asked to teach, and I must say I enjoyed every minute.

I've been invited back to teach the same semester next year. I hope to collaborate again with Kyle on another 'Culture Crossing', as he is returning for the same semester. I also hope to collaborate with Bob Een in the Music Department. Victoria Marks will take up a new position as Associate Dean at UCLA in the fall. I have graciously accepted the offer and look forward to it immensely.

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