


Spring 2023

Wilde Bühne: An Exploration into the Revolutionary Potential of Art

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Bard College

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Wilde Bühne:
An Exploration into the Revolutionary Potential of Art

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts of Bard College

by
Antonia Marie Ponessa Salathé

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2023

Dedication

*Dedicated to my grandmother, Linda Domina,
for your kindred spirit and continuing support in my dance journey.*

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my advisors, Jean Churchill, Maria Simpson, and Yebel Gallegos, for your wisdom and vivacity.

Thank you to my parents for your unconditional love and support and for putting up with my “creative process.” Thank you to my grandparents for being my role models.

Thank you to my sister Helena for always checking in on me and sharing inside jokes. Thank you to my Aunt Elizabeth for always cheering me on, whether from near or far.

Thank you to my roommates Rose, Jamie, and Gabe, for being my home for these last three semesters and for sharing your cats Earl and Vlad with me.

Thank you to all the dancers and musicians who I have performed and collaborated with: Cynthia, Julia, Hannah, Chi-Chi, Georgia, Ursula, Zara, Rose, Eliana, Scotty, Tessa, Zeke, Sam, Itzel, Justine, and Elsa. Do what you love, trust in yourself, and visit me in Europe.

Thank you to the entire Production Team at LUMA, and especially to Jean-Luc, Maureen, Jess, Jen, Daniel, Josh, and Brian for making my artistic dreams come true.

Lastly, thank you to Nora for inspiring me everyday. Du bist so mein Licht.

I have only love and gratitude for you all.

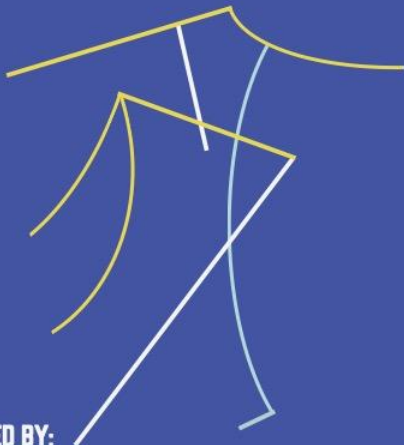

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Concert Poster

Designed in collaboration with Itzel Herrera Garcia



**BARD COLLEGE DANCE PROGRAM PRESENTS:
A SENIOR DANCE CONCERT**



**CHOREOGRAPHED BY:
ANTONIA SALATHE
& ITZEL HERRERA GARCIA**

**INTANGIBLE
FIGURES**

MAY 11 AT 7:30PM
MAY 12 AT 7:30PM
MAY 13 AT 2PM
AND 7:30PM



**AT THE LUMA THEATER,
FISHER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS**

**RESERVATIONS SUGGESTED:
FISHERCENTER.BARD.EDU**

Concert Program

Wilde Bühne¹**Choreographed By** Antonia Salathé**Composed By** Sam Mutter and Zeke Morgan**Performed By and In Collaboration With...**

Antonia Salathé - Flutist & Dancer

Georgia Nichoson - Dancer

Rose Maskati - Dancer

Sam Mutter - Pianist, Flutist, & Performer

Scotty Hindy - Dancer

Tessa Whiteley - Dancer

Ursula Wolfe - Dancer

Zara Boss - Dancer

Zeke Morgan - Violinist & Performer

Costumes Designed by Jean-Luc DeLadurantaye**Lighting Designed by** Brian Aldous

¹ The title of my piece, *Wilde Bühne* (translated to *Wild Stage* in english), is a reference to a Weimar-era (1918-1939) literary cabaret in Berlin.

Choreographic Score

Wilde Bühne

ACT I: Those Late Early Hours

Scene 1: An Offering

Scene 2: The Yawning Flutes

Scene 3: The Heroine

Scene 4: Take My Weight & I'll Take Yours

ACT II: The Play's the Thing

Scene 1: The Tin Can Telephone Duet

Scene 2: The Building Blocks of Chaos

Scene 3: Lime Time

Scene 4: Guten Nacht

Artist Statement

You will often hear it said that art does not belong in the space of the political. Politics is practical, and yet we cry over legislative losses and march in the streets when we are seared by flames of indignation. We paint murals over boarded-up windows, film history as it happens, and go to the club after a long day at work. We sketch lovingly the faces of those lost senselessly, we sing to the rooftops when all hope seems lost, and we speak poems like pounding hammers when no one is willing to listen. We scratch verses into foam cups to pass between prison cells when our voices are gone too.

You will often hear it said that art is a powerless deviation from reality. And yet, reality is manifested by our belief in it. We create hegemonic norms and ideologies that have come to constitute reality. We art-makers embody the capacity to cut through such sputtering categorizations and distinctions to reveal something more essential, that is, the ebbing and flowing fluidity through which time passes, space transforms, and humanity creates and recreates itself. Imagination is actualized by the same method reality is upheld: Our belief in an imaginary world constitutes the potentiality for transformation and creation.

As an art-maker and choreographer I am led to inquire: *What is the revolutionary potential of performance art? And furthermore, How can I combine a devotion to radical political change with my choreographic practice?* My choreographic work attempts to answer these questions, drawing on my own life experiences, my choreography, and the work of contemporary artists and

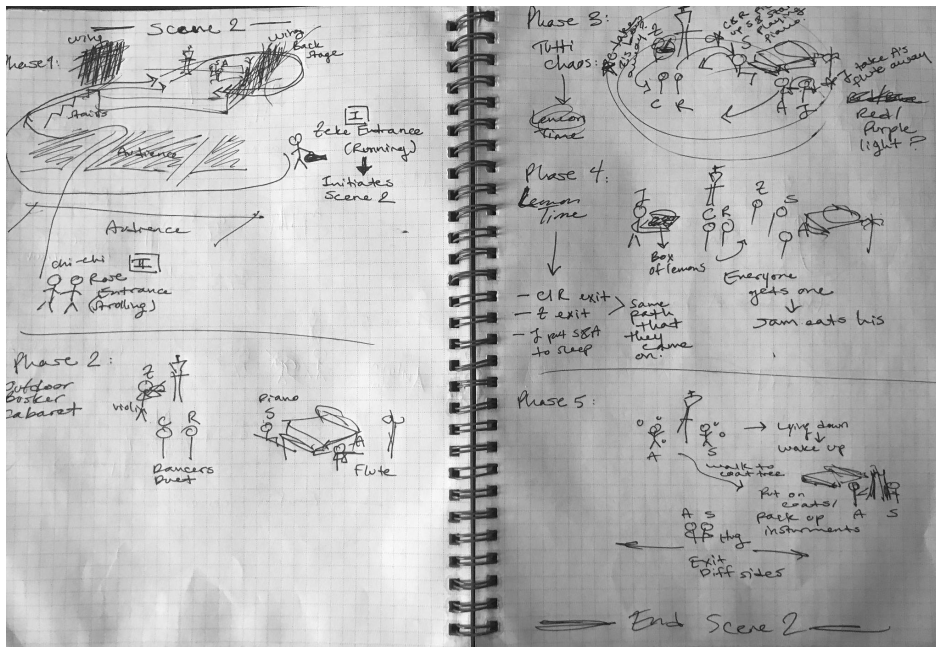
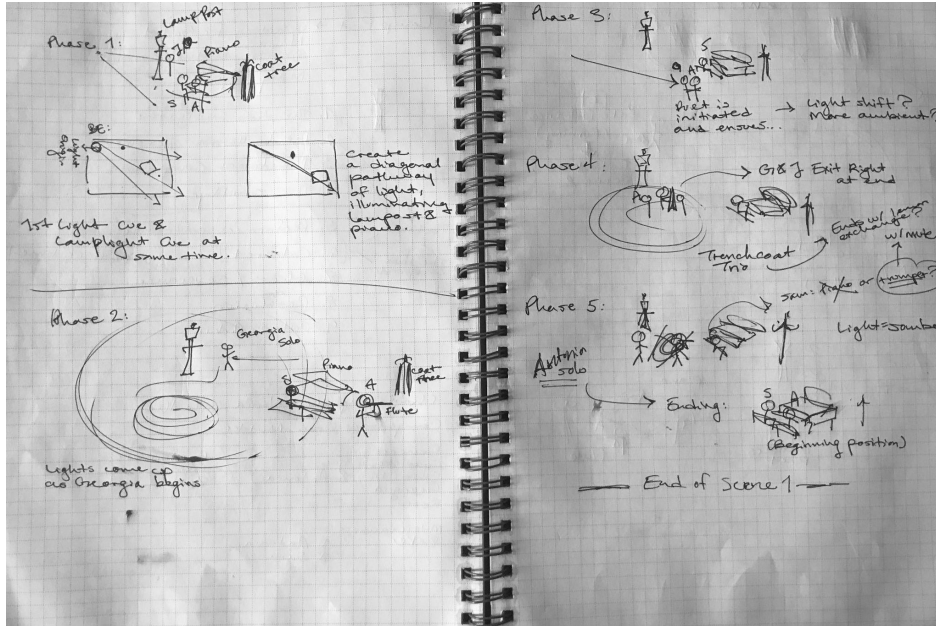
thinkers. I define revolution as societal transformation, spearheaded by the collective power of the people. I define performance art as a rigorous creation process that utilizes the medium most original to humanity: our own bodies. Performance art is closest to revolutionary potential insofar as it is closest to physical, tangible, collective power. My life has been consistently informed by performance art through the lens of choreography. I choreograph to grapple with my emotions, my experiences, and contemporary political problems that seep into my life and my consciousness. The revolutionary potential of performance art and my personal place in it lies in the creative process itself, which holds the power to bridge the gap between imagination and reality, carrying our imagined hopes and dreams for the future into the tangible world.

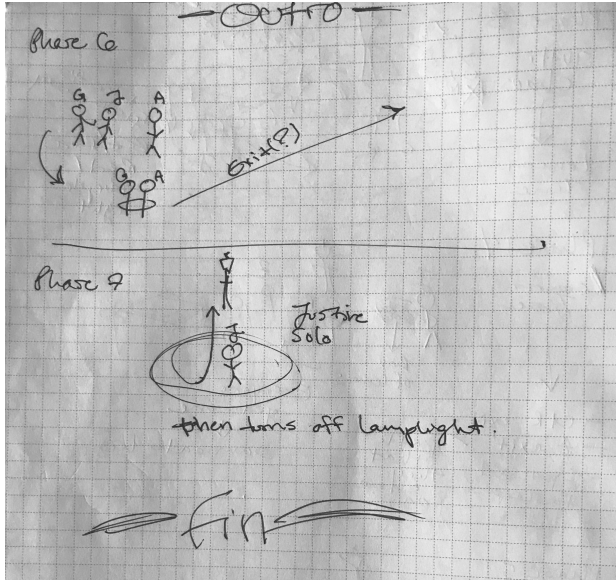
In ruminating on performance art's revolutionary potential, I have developed six choreographic concepts which I explore throughout my piece, *Wilde Bühne*. These six concepts are as follows: (I) The process of crafting stories in relation to the teachings of choreographer Johannes Wieland as a way to bridge the gap between imagination and reality and between the self and the other. Through choreographing and dancing with others, I seek to demonstrate the negotiations and empathy required to manifest collective power. (II) A discussion of performance art in relation to Augusto Boal's *Theater of the Oppressed*. In this text, Boal develops mechanisms to break down the divide between actor and spectator, with the intention of using theater to explore political issues and channel novel solutions. I seek to follow this strategy by inviting the audience to change their societal perspective in viewing and interacting with my work. (III) My interpretation of the significance of literary cabaret culture during Weimar Berlin as a novel anti-facist art form utilizing satire and absurdity to gain a semblance of personal control during

the rise of the Nazi party. I seek to draw on this historical movement to use performance art as a unique opportunity for subtle resistance. (IV) An analysis of Gloria Anzaldúa's theories of *nepantla* and *nepantlera* which reveal the spaces between dualities as the trailhead for healing, transformation, and revolution. I constantly inhabit *nepantla* in my own life both in my personal identity and disciplinarily. I believe we all inhabit a middle ground and that choreography is uniquely positioned to channel this quality by balancing between time and space. (V) A deep dive into the fear and process of failure, based on the teachings of the movement collective *Ferus Animi // Terra Nova*. Softening our relationship to failure allows for adaptation to change and transformation of reality, both personally and societally. This process can be demonstrated on stage through pushing our physicality to extremes and exploring meditative and child-like states of being. (VI) I will discuss Gloria Anzaldúa's interpretation of the Aztec goddess *Coyolxauhqui* as an imperative for individual and collective healing. This trajectory is significant in crafting a choreographically revolutionary dialogue that emphasizes the necessity of togetherness in formulating a collective power strong enough to transform our global political structures. I could not be a choreographer if it were not for those who have inspired, guided, and carried me as an artist. I could not be a choreographer if it were not for my fellow performers who manifest my imagination as a tangible creation. This is my middle ground and this is where our collective power begins.

Figure Gallery

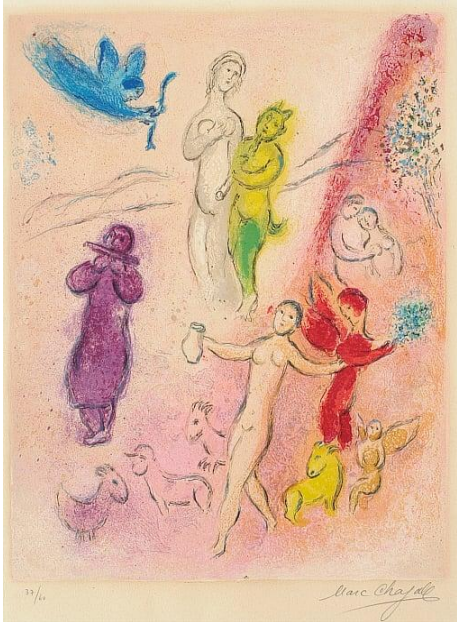
Score Drafts and Notes:





<p>Lamp: Passage of time Association Setting</p>	<p>} Time</p>	<p>Lamp: Life chapter, Endings/ Beginnings</p>
<p>Coats: Coming & Going Change of place Outside vs. inside</p>		<p>Coat: Travel → Moving, Long distance Change "Goodbyes" vs. "See you later."</p>
<p>Tin Can: Distance & Space Communication Translation Restriction Travel / Passage</p>	<p>} Space</p>	<p>Tin Can: Long distance Communication (of difficult things)</p>
<p>Limes: Timeless / Spaceless Unknown Curiosity / Wonder Impenetrability (of truth) Playfulness / Kindness Whimsy Childlike</p>		<p>Limes: Capacity for wonder & curiosity Acceptance (of joy) Possibility</p>
		<p>Fear of (Change) / Passage of time Distance Miscommunication Failure</p>
		<p>Strength in wonder & gratitude Self-Acceptance Acceptance of change Kindness Distance Passage of time</p>
		<p>Interaction w/ my fears → Overcoming them by finding power in the absurd.</p>
		<p>Cabaret: Expressing something real & dark through something absurd & light Reflection of reality Meaningfulness vs. Absurdity of truth More real.</p>
		<p>Absurdity as the antithesis of truth reality. Absurdity as more truthful than reality.</p>
		<p>When absurdity becomes darker & darker reality is revealed in a way more essential than prescription of reality outside the stage. → Chaos is revealed Breaks free into wonder & acceptance.</p>

Costume Inspiration:



(1) Chagall, Marc. "The Syrinx Fable" from "Daphnis and Chloe." 1961, Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA.



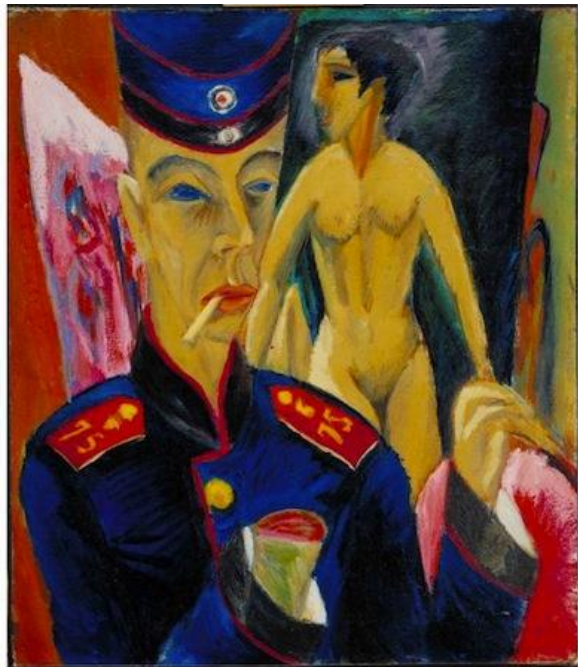
(2) Chagall, Marc. "Banquet de Pan" from "Daphnis et Chloe." 1961, Fine Arts Gallery, Palo Alto, CA.



(3) Chagall, Marc. "The Green Violinist." 1923-1924. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY.



(4) Dix, Otto. "Portrait of the Journalist Sylvia von Harden." 1926. Centre Pompidou, Paris, France.



(5) Kirchner, Ernst Ludwig. "Self Portrait as a Soldier." 1915, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, OH.



(6) Magritte, René. "The Son of Man." 1946, private collection.



(7) Magritte, René. "La Décalcomanie." 1966, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France.

Set Inspiration:



(1) Kirchner, Ernst Ludwig. "Berlin Street Scene." 1913, Neue Galerie, New York City, NY.



(2) Kirchner, Ernst Ludwig. "Potsdamer Platz." 1914, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany.



(3) Kirchner, Ernst Ludwig. "Street Scene." 1913, private gallery.



(4) Dix, Otto. "Metropolis." 1928. Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany.

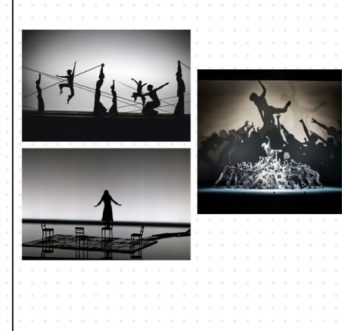
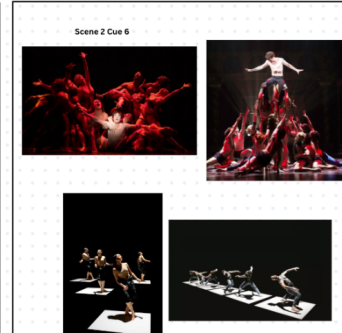
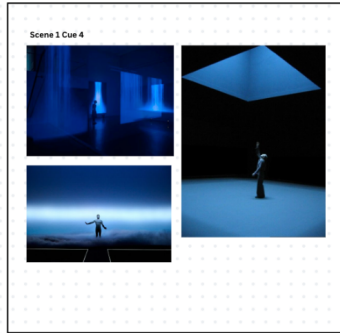
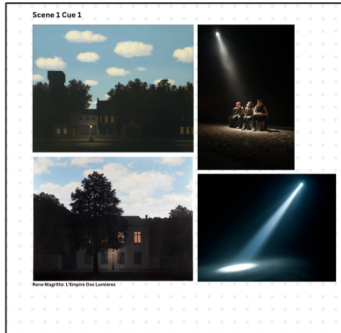


(5) Magritte, René. "L'Empire Des Lumières." 1961, The Gillion Crowet Collection, Brussels, Belgium.

Lighting Board:

Wilde Bühne
Lighting Inspiration

Antonia Salathé Senior Project in Dance



Bibliography

Anzaldúa, Gloria, and AnaLouise Keating. *Light in the Dark / Luz En Lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.

Maffie, James. "Pre-Columbian Philosophies." *A Companion to Latin American Philosophy*, pp. 7–22.

Boal, Augusto. *Theater of the Oppressed*. Translated by Charles A McBride and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride. New York, NY: Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 1979.