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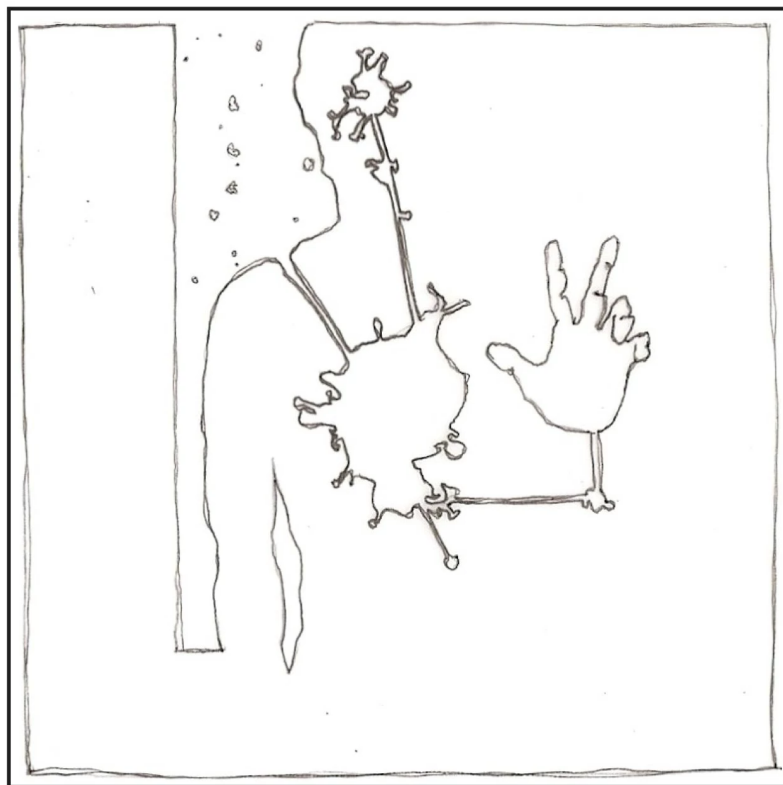
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The Evidence of an Interview

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APR 11, 2013 by BUCK WANNER in DANCE



This is the result of an interview I had with Jesse Zaritt and Jumatatu Poe. regarding their **studio**

series at NYLA this week (Friday and Saturday, 6pm, \$5). The owner of words is indicated in the text styling as follows:

Buck **Jesse Juma**

Illustrations by **Jo Morris**

This is a puzzle. What Jesse Zaritt and Jumatatu Poe have embarked upon is an encounter with strangeness. How do the pieces fit together? They decided to make a piece together, with one premise being to make something with a someone they didn't know—*two strangers developing a relationship through this process.*

Jumatatu initially proposed the piece, and reached out to Jesse, *someone who I only knew from afar.* They began a dialogue over email, **in which it shifted from being Juma's**

This is a puddle. I spoke with two dance artists—Jumatatu Poe and Jesse Zaritt—who are collaborating on a piece together, and the conversation managed to remain almost entirely abstract. The meanings of their statements seemed to melt and mix together.

Yet, I still got some impression of the work they are co-creating, at least in thematic terms. Some of the investigations guiding the work include **questions of heroism, and**

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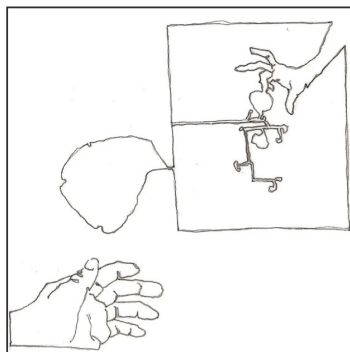


work to something we decided to co-author. That was over a year ago. They showed a sketch at **Scratch Night** in Philadelphia February 2012, and last week had a short residency and showing at Bard College.

It was incredibly interesting to hear the two of them articulate their uncertainty to each other. They seem to be on the same page about “what” they are investigating, but less concerned to agree on the conclusions of the investigation. One will often turn to the other and ask something like: **right? Would you say that’s what it is?** *Yeah, I think that’s generally true.*

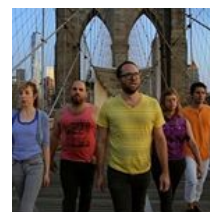
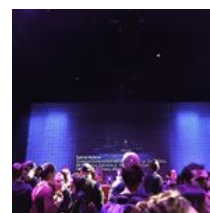
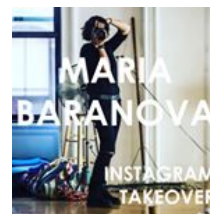
And the different “whys” for the same “whats” seems to **come out in how**

queerness. Also *chosen-ness*, which they may have *been talking about before heroism*, or vice versa.



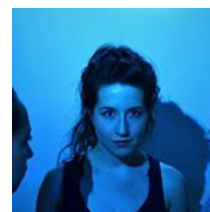
A lot of what they had to say was dealing with how they didn’t really know how the other would answer a question I put to both of them—there were a lot of *I’m curious what you’ll say* moments; **that might just be me** was another common refrain.

They met as strangers, but as that was more than a year ago, I wondered how the aspect of “being strangers” stayed in the piece. **The way we embody**



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our bodies relate to each other. That, while *the ven-diagrams of our interests almost entirely overlap, they connect in different planes. Our shared interests have different foundations. I don't feel this piece is about us. I feel it's about me in relation to you, and you in relation to me. I feel it's about how an individual meets an "other". Jumatatu related how *in my immediate family, our class, our education, is significantly different than outside my immediate family,* and that this led him to think about *chosen-ness in terms of socio-economic class. I was thinking about it in notions of identities chosen from the margins.* Jesse's position on chosen-ness came out of a Jewish identity, **the idea of***

movement is so different, that neither one of us wanted to spend time trying to get us to dance the same. *We weren't interested in exploring the mechanics of becoming the same body.* They also come at most of their topics from different standpoints, even if they share an interest in the topic. **Juma is interested in the anti-hero winning, and I'm interested in the hero failing.** Jesse compares it with another duet **he worked on, You're Me** by Faye Driscoll, **where there are two people but one author. The strangeness leaves at a certain point and you're left with a relationship that is clearly authored.** In this piece, since they continue to have different approaches to the same questions, the

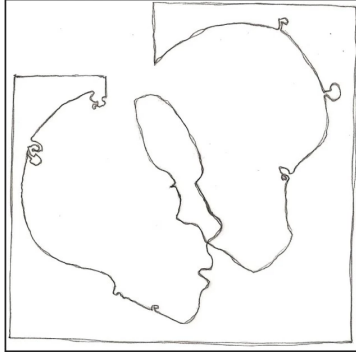


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the “chosen people”, and how this has developed an idea of a certain body being a “chosen body”.



Jumatatu also mentions references to fantasy, and to pop icons, *David Bowie or Iggy Pop music videos, where they created deity-like images of themselves. I feel there is something celestial about the relationship we are crafting between one another and ourselves—that we don’t need to be limited to our physical bodies.*

Yeah, I like that. The piece feels very extended. We’re

strangeness resides in the very structure of the work.

The work is very much still in process, and currently has no title. While certain things are starting to become clear, they are again in different places regarding how far along they feel in the work. **I don’t know if I can take responsibility for the movement, and for the associations and reactions people are going to have. I don’t know if I’m ready to own that. I feel I’m pretty ready to own it. It feels like I’m starting to understand the system of relationships that are available.**

We’re working with a kind of artifice. If nature were in the piece, we’d have to do something with it. I like how you put that just now: it’s as

extending our bodies, augmenting our bodies. They do agree, on some things.

that just now. It's as though we're inventing new naturals.

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