

Forward: Sit Like a Lady; Finding Voice in a Crowded Room

Allow yourself to see, feel, evolve, transform, touch, taste, question, understand, thrive, and be. I am a mover. I have moved through life with grace, trepidation, flight, fall, elation, and plight. Movement fuels my soul and people fuel my movement. The world around graces us with an existence that only lasts a lifetime, standing still during that blink of an eye would be wasteful.

This is a story of transformation. This is a story of arrival. This is my story, my practice, my visions, my explorations, and my truths. I ask many questions in this book. These questions are what have fueled me to understand my practice of art. I have often felt these questions flow through my being but felt uncomfortable with answering them. 'What if my answers were wrong?' The correct answers. Why are we as a society so consumed with the correct answers? Being right. Not failing. Isn't failure a precursor to our own personal success? Can't we find meaning in failure? Can't we learn from that failure and evolve into success or maybe another failure that informs us as a society to seek the correct answers through a much more significant place? If we know this to be true why do we play it safe? Why do we seek the 'easier road' to ensure a smooth journey?

These questions plague us or should plague us. We, as artists, should understand that success is not stumbled upon but created. And what is this word success? What does it mean and why are we consumed with finding it? I used to teach at an institution whose tagline is, 'Your Success is Our Business.' What does that mean? I as your teacher will make it my business to find you all the riches in the world or I as your teacher will help you find the tools to create your own personal definition of success? Unfortunately I believe the first option might have held more truth, but that's another book!

If we do not fail will we ever truly know success? As Halberstein suggests in the book, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 'The dream of an alternate way of being is often confused with utopian thinking and then dismissed as naïve, simplistic, or a blatant misunderstanding of the nature and power of modernity.' Essentially, if we do not make choices with success in mind or the 'norm' in mind we are dismissed. At one time, this way of thinking harassed me as an artist and educator. What good is it to follow the lines of successors before us if we do not use our voice to develop new ways of thinking and presenting?

In a sense I believe my fear of answering questions came from a worry about telling my story and that fear came with a stronger fear of telling the wrong story or creating a story with the wrong answers. Fear had the power to hinder and hold me back for many years. I have transformed my fears through an exploration of self and the development of an art practice that invites people to examine their own needs and identifiers through creative work that engages mind, body, and soul. . Through this development I recognized my own need for the very methods I was creating to mentor others to stronger personal identification. I am a movement artist. I work with movement to create stories of the heart.