

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Love: Best Student Film of Dare to Dance in Public Film Fest

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, March 7th, 2018

It's rare to find a young person who has the courage, or in fact reason at all, to face the subject of mortality. And it may be more rare still for such a young person to take this untimely subject, and find both courage and reason to channel them creatively. Such was the case with this year's **Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival's** first Best Student Film Award for the short entitled **Love**.

Love, is a sensitively directed, filmed, and edited short by Talia Koylass. The very moving answers Talia gave to our questions provide additional context to the film itself, fleshing it out further, and giving it enhanced meaning overall. Her thoughts as well about the genre and power of dance on film are equally insightful and sensitive:

SE: How did you come to make this film? What were the inspirations for, and/or ideas behind it?

TK: *"Love" is an excerpt from a longer film "The Human Experience." Although titled the human experience, the film was truly inspired by a very personal experience. In 2015, I lost my younger brother to brain cancer. The film was created from my emotions and experiences during his fatal illness as well as what I observed my parents going through. Love, specifically, is about my mother and brother's relationship and the journey I watched her go through with him; trying to help, thinking things were getting better, and eventually realizing that she had to let go.*



A dancer walks into the ocean in "Love"

SE: Tell us a little about your history and background with dance and/or film, and which medium you are most involved in.

TK: *I started working with dance on film about a year and a half ago. My background is in dance. I've been dancing since I was 14 and recently graduated from the Ailey/Fordham BFA program.*

SE: Do you follow Screen Dance as a genre?

TK: *Yes! The genre is definitely one that is new to me. It was not something that I had a huge interest in prior to making my first film. However, what I'm really interested in is finding ways to incorporate concert dance into the commercial world in the form of music videos and even feature films.*

SE: Is this your first dance film?

TK: *Yes! This film was created my senior year of college as my independent study project. While I have an extensive dance background I had no experience in film. I'm very thankful for my cinematographer, Luke Momo. He really helped me with this process even though he himself is not a dancer. I didn't know any technical terms but would explain how I wanted something to look or the direction I thought it should be shot from and Luke would always make it happen. He's a very talented cinematographer and it was a blessing to work with him on my first project.*



Dancers with arms open wide in "Love"

SE: When you approach a dance film project, do you have a pre-existing idea for a form, or do you let the footage shape the project? How much of your project is shaped in editing?

TK: *It really differs from film to film. Even within one film, it differs from section to section. Sometimes I have a very strong idea about all the shots I want, which part I want to show a close up on, when I want the videographer to follow the movement versus being stable. But for a lot of projects it really does come down to editing, seeing what footage I've gotten and what conveys my message most clearly and strongly and then using editing to turn that footage into something that tells a story.*

SE: What moves and inspires you most about the intersections of dance and film?

TK: *Putting dance on film allows me to combine strong choreographic ideas with all the different tools that film allows us. Film allows me to pick and choose exactly what I want the audience to see. Do I want them to see the bigger picture by means of a wide shot or to only focus on the expression of the dancer by using a close up? Can I use fast and circular camera movements in combination with fast and circular choreography to create and enhance the sense of chaos? I think film and dance are two mediums that can convey emotion really well, so when we intersect the two the possibilities for creating extremely powerful content are endless.*



Facing the sky in "Love"

SE: What are your plans for festivals and/or distribution with this film?

TK: *I've submitted "The Human Experience" to a few film festivals and am still waiting to hear from some, so fingers crossed! However, entering into 2018 I'm really starting to focus on projects with a bigger crew and budget that will have more possibilities for distribution.*

SE: What kind of audience reactions has your film received?

TK: *The audience reaction was greater than I ever imagined it would be. People really were able to take something away from the film, which is what I had hoped for but the extent to which people could see their own stories in mine amazed me.*

SE: Is there anything else you would like to share?

TK: *As a dance film maker, I work to create powerful images that draw my audience in and holds them the entire time... images that create narratives, convey emotions, ask questions, inspire thinking and challenge us in our everyday lives.*

Talia's film and her thoughtful answers, give us hope for the future of Screen Dance. Take a moment to watch her short film **Love** below. The full-length version of "The Human Experience" can be viewed on Talia's Vimeo page: **Vimeo.com/TaliaGrace**

Enjoy!

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