



SEASON 43  
DANCE DISCUSSIONS

# THE SKY WAS DIFFERENT

Jonathan Fredrickson, choreographer & director  
Tobin Del Cuore, editor & director  
Oleg Stepanov, composer

As part our virtual presentation of Season 43, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago presents Jonathan Frederickson's work, The Sky Was Different, premiering online December 3, 2020 and as a student matinee December 9-18, 2020. To accompany this work, we have created a series of multi-media study guides, with a new topic each week. These guides are designed for middle and high school students and contain videos, discussion questions, and lesson prompts.

# LET'S DIVE IN!



TODAY'S  
AGENDA



1

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

2

EXPLORING SURREALISM

3

WATCH THE FILM - THE SKY WAS DIFFERENT

4

THE CREATIVE PROCESS - BEHIND THE SCENES

5

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

6

JOIN US - MAKE YOUR OWN DANCE FILM

# BEFORE THE FILM



Take a moment to familiarize yourself with the concepts of surrealism in preparation for seeing *The Sky Was Different*.

# SURREALISM

Surrealism is an art based on the unconscious - those hidden corners of our minds that affect our behaviors and emotions without us being aware of it. While the word "Surrealist" was first coined in 1903 by the French avant-garde poet Guillaume Apollinaire, it was the French writer André Breton who, in his first *Surrealist Manifesto* (1924) defined the form as "pure psychic automatism, by which one proposes to express, either verbally, in writing, or by any other manner, the real functioning of thought." Surrealist subject matter often pulls its imagery and ideas from dreams and fantasies.

## \* Figurative

- Many figurative surrealist works incorporate everyday objects or images with a fantastical twist. This can be used to create symbols or make the audience think about old things from a new point of view.
- Think of the melting clocks in Salvador Dali's *The Persistence of Memory* or the train jutting from the fireplace in Rene Magritte's *Time Transfixed*.

## \* Abstract

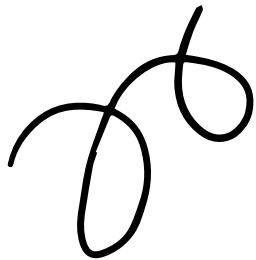
- Another school of surrealists, the abstract surrealists, chose to use more organic imagery
- inspired by nature or their own imagination. Rounded biomorphic shapes and organisms
- appear in works by Jean Arp, Joan Miró, and Yves Tanguy. Many drew on their experiences in World War I or other conflicts for reoccurring themes in their work.

## \* Unconscious

- Our mind is divided into the conscious, when we are fully aware of what we are doing and thinking, and the unconscious, when our mind is not directly aware of what's going on.
- Surrealists used the unconscious as a creative tool to produce art. As a result, we have bizarre and dreamy paintings since they reflect a state of mind that is not logical.



# SURREALISM IN THE ARTS



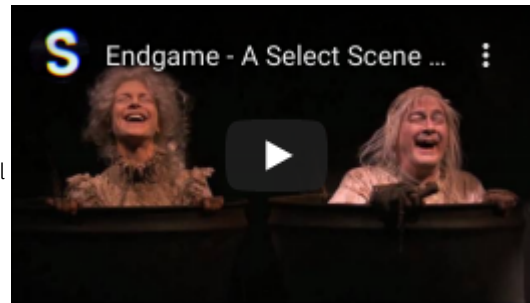
## Visual Art

*Carnival of Harlequin* is an abstract surrealist painting inspired by Joan Miró's hunger-induced hallucinations. Notice the twisting of familiar objects into something more dreamlike, contrasted against abstract shapes. You can learn more about Miró and his work [here](#).



## Theater

A scene from Samuel Beckett's play, *Endgame*. Beckett was one of the lynchpins behind the French theatrical movement called the Theatre of the Absurd. The Absurdists took a page from Existentialist philosophy, believing that life was absurd, beyond human rationality, meaningless, a sentiment to which *Endgame* subscribes, with its conception of circularity and non-meaning. You can learn more about the play, and Beckett, [here](#).



## Opera

In this surreal opera, *The Nose*, by Dmitri Shostakovich, Protagonist Kovalyov Yakovlevich wakes up to discover his nose is missing from his face, and embarks on the surreal journey of trying to find it. You can learn more about this opera [here](#).



# SURREALISM AND DANCE

Let's examine the following surrealist elements. After you view the film, come back and look for these in the specified sections.

## NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE

01

A narrative technique where events are portrayed out of chronological order or in other ways where the narrative does not follow the direct causality pattern of the events featured, such as parallel distinctive plot lines, dream immersions or narrating another story inside the main plot-line. It is often used to mimic the structure and recall of human memory, but has been applied for other reasons as well. Once you've watched the film, go back and look at the section at 24:14 for an example of this in action.



## PERSPECTIVE

02

A camera and its operator can capture different viewpoints of both the dancer in space and can also show a viewpoint from the dancer themselves. This can change the understanding of perspective from both the audience and the performer. Surrealists used untraditional ideas and perspectives as a way to investigate the hidden psychology within our minds. Look at section 11:05 and ask yourself - Who is really in the room?



## REPETITION

03

As discussed in the previous discussion guide, the choreographic concept of repetition creates visual connection. When used in a surreal film, it often challenges that idea, making us question how things are connected. A film editor can slice and piece together a dance performed in different environments but when edited together, it can feel like a continuous sequence or phrase of movement. Examine the moments at 14:38 and 20:11 and ask yourself which space is the dancer really in and which is reality?



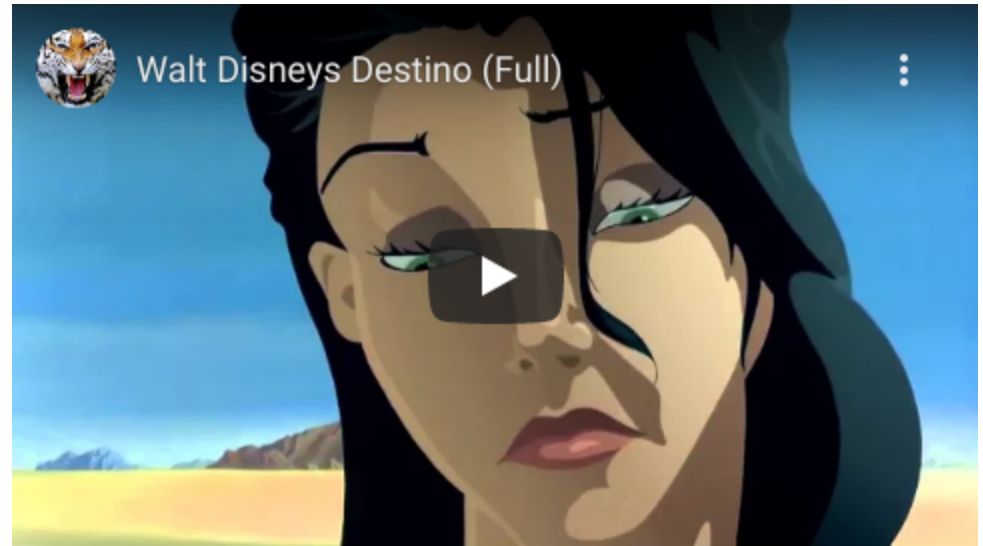
## TEMPO

04

Have you ever had a dream where everything seemed to be happening in either slow motion or warp speed? Or have you ever noticed what happens to your heart when you get nervous or excited? A film editor can use editing tools to speed up what is happening on film in a way that feels both unreal and familiar. Look at section 40:42 to see both acceleration and repetition of the dancer's movement created by the editing process.



# SALVADOR DALI AND WALT DISNEY



## Destino

Salvador Dalí and Walt Disney's *Destino* features the tragic love story of Chronos, the personification of time, and a mortal woman as they seek each other out across surreal landscapes. Begun in 1945, it was not finished until 2003 due to budget issues in the original production.

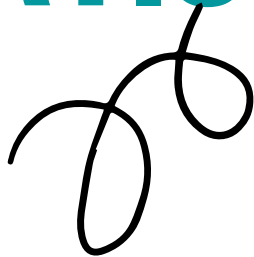
# *THE SKY WAS DIFFERENT*



[Watch the film here](#) and then we'll dive into the creative process -  
the inspiration, details, and artists behind this work.



# MEET THE ARTISTS



## Jonathan Fredrickson Choreographer

Jonathan Fredrickson was born in Corpus Christi, TX. He attended California Institute of the Arts where he received his BFA in Dance Performance and Choreography. Jonathan danced with the Limon Dance Company from 2006-2011 and created two works on the company during his time there. In 2010, he was a winner of Hubbard Street's National Choreographic Competition and was also honored as one of Dance Magazine's "25 To Watch." He then danced with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago from 2011 - 2015, where he was commissioned to create two new works on the company. His work has been shown in festivals such as Hong Kong Dance Festival, Reverb Dance Festival, and White Wave, and he has created for school programs like California Institute of the Arts, CalState Fullerton, Limon Institute, and Sundance/Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre. He joined Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch in 2015, where he has been performing her work internationally, and creating for the company's choreographic platform UNDERGROUND.

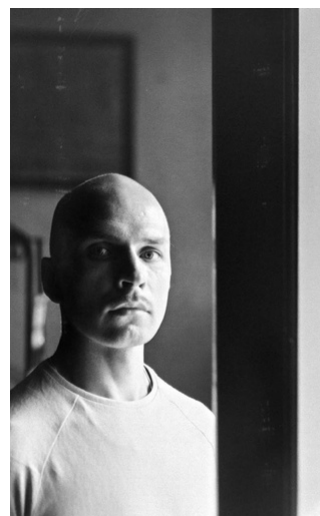


## Tobin Del Cuore Filmmaker

A native of Maine, Tobin Del Cuore began his training at the Walnut Hill School in Natick, Massachusetts. He attended The Juilliard School under the direction of Benjamin Harkavy, graduating in 2001 with a BFA. Upon graduating, Del Cuore joined the artists of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, where he danced for six years. Del Cuore has since danced for Azure Barton & Artists, The Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, The Metropolitan Opera, BalletX, Alessandra Ferri Dance, Houston Grand Opera, The Lyric Opera of Chicago, and SFDanceworks. Today, Del Cuore works closely with Azure Barton, assisting in new creations, staging existing work, and creating video projections. Del Cuore also stages work for Lar Lubovitch and Alejandro Cerrudo and recently was associate choreographer for the US National Tour of Dirty Dancing - The Classic Story On Stage. In 2011 Del Cuore founded his production company, Imagination + Muscle, where he has produced and directed numerous music videos, commercials, promos, dance films, and multi-camera live performance captures.

## Oleg Stepanov Composer

Oleg Stepanov was born in Ural, Russia, and currently lives in Wuppertal, Germany. Oleg began his career as an engineer, but since 2008 he has been a dance and video artist. He was engaged in Gothenburg Dance Company for three years, and since 2016 he has been part of Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch. Parallel to this, Oleg started to experiment with sound and music making. To date, he has released two full albums, In Search of Something Elusive and Lost Contours of Memory Shine, and is currently working on the new release. He's inspired to create music that would make you move, literally or figuratively. His music spans a spectrum from reflective and intimate to spatial and disturbing. His work often refers to the theme of time, memory, and its distortion.



# THE CREATIVE PROCESS

LET'S GO!



Let's go behind the scenes and see how everything started.

# THE CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS

## BRAINSTORM

Brainstorming is the time to try out different ideas - it's a time of experimentation! To find an idea and create material choreographers may start with a question and ask dancers to respond through movement, memory, or other art.



## CREATE A DRAFT

Similar to the writing process, a choreographer uses their brainstorm to create a first draft of their choreography. A first draft in choreography is often made up of movement ideas or improvisations that can be pieced together into longer movement sequences called phrases.



01

## REVISE AND REFINE

Once the choreographer has created a draft of their work, they begin to revise, edit, and clarify what it is they want to say or express through the movement. This often requires input from an outside eye such as the dancers performing the work, a producer, or an artistic collaborator. As they reives and refine, the choreographer starts to see places where they could create more detail, or take out anything that doesn't serve the vision of the work.



## PERFORM

It is easy to think that a performance requires only those who are performing the work - in this case, the dancers! However, there are a lot of folks behind the scenes that make a performance successful. In the case of a dance film, you have the camera operator, lighting designer and operators, sound engineer, and editor, and director.



03

04



# Looking for Inspiration

Early in the process, Jonathan asked the dancers to respond to the prompt, "How are you?" Some dancers created drawings from material drawn from this prompt. These drawings were incorporated into the final work in various ways. Did you notice any of these symbols, movement choices, or characters when you viewed the film?



# CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

## Things I Like About Elephants

Elephants Are Big  
Elephants have Teeth  
Elephants are wrinkly  
Elephants are pregnant for two years  
Elephants are gray  
Elephants have tusks  
Elephants like water  
Elephants dream  
Elephants are always hungry  
Elephants have huge ears

## Brainstorming

Dancer Kevin Shannon wrote this in response to choreographer Frederickson's prompt, "Things I Like About Elephants." This began the process of creating his character for the film.



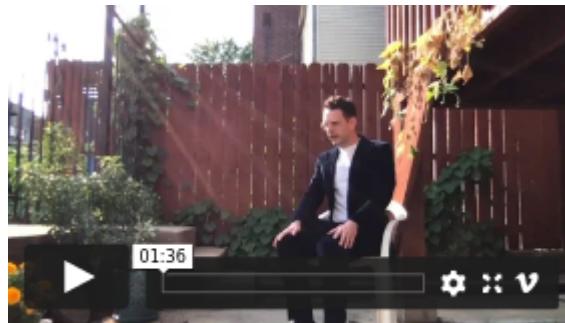
## Movement Concepts

Working together remotely, the choreographer directed several movement prompts for the dancers.



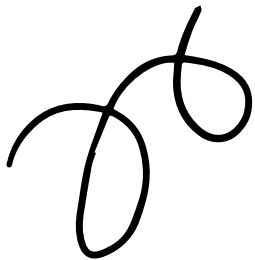
## Character Concepts

After the initial work, dancers created concept trailers, exploring character development. This video shows Kevin Shannon's character development from the initial poem.



From poem to film - how did each of these elements contribute to this scene?

# ELEMENTS OF NARRATIVE



## Setting

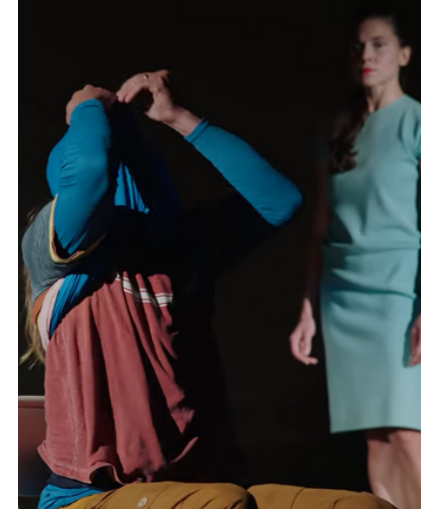
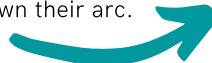
This film relies heavily on setting to develop both the narrative structure and individual characters. Pay attention to when the setting changes. What might each location represent? What changes when we revisit a place or character?



## Character

*The Sky Was Different* gives us glimpses into a large cast of characters. These characters are built through both independent moments and interaction with others. After watching the film, try picking one character to focus on and break down their arc.

...



## Conflict

Many different conflicts appear in the film. Characters conflict with each other, themselves, and the environment around them. How are these conflicts developed? How are they resolved, if at all?

...



# FROM SCRIPT TO SCREEN

Preparing choreography for film requires a script to share staging, movement, and text directions. Let's look at how this section of script comes to life in the film.

Transition: We see Kevin come out from bedroom down the hall and enter the bathroom.

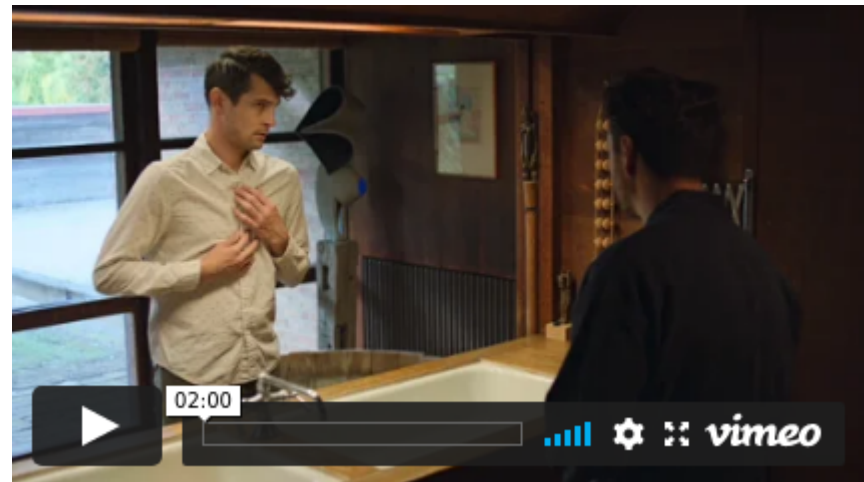
Camera rushes down hallway to see what he is doing.  
MIRRORLESS BATHROOM AND OPPOSITE JAPANESE TUB ROOM  
(interior)

w/Craig, Kevin, Adam

Camera is in the sink room. Craig has a movement exploration in the "mirror". He turns and faces the mirror. Kevin from the opposite side walks into the frame to become Craig's mirror image. They have two subtle mirrored movements and then reach for each other to embrace and dance over the sink. Somehow Kevin moves to same side of sink with Craig. Camera pans around to tub side of room to find Craig and Kevin are gone.

Camera turns to bathtub to find Adam in bathtub as a praying mantis. Then camera pans back to sink to see Kevin on the other side washing clay from his face.

Transition: Jac comes from the down the hall to runs into the Chalkboard Bedroom (hides or exits outside). Camera follows to pick up action in bedroom.



# LET'S DISCUSS AND ANALYZE



QUESTION



What is familiar to you about the first clip that might be showcased in an unfamiliar way? Does this bring to mind any other stories?

01

QUESTION



What film elements do you notice (list film elements) and how did they contribute to your understanding? Were they listed in the script?

02

QUESTION



How did the filmed scene evolve from the script? What stayed the same? What was different?

03

# CREATE YOUR OWN DANCE FILM



Join Hubbard Street Faculty member Layzabeth Gonzalez to create your own dance film. Use the prompts and choreography in these videos or build a film from your imagination! [Find all four Dance as Film lessons here.](#)

## Share your work!

Share your dance film with Hubbard Street. Tag us on [Instagram](#) @hubbardstreetdance or [upload to flipgrid](#). Let's dance together!



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# STANDARDS

## National Core Arts Standards

DA:Cr2.1.3b Develop a dance phrase that expresses and communicates an idea or feeling. Discuss the effect of the movement choices.  
DA:Cr2.1.4b Develop a dance study that expresses and communicates a main idea. Discuss the reasons and effectiveness of the movement choices.  
DA:Cr2.1.5b Develop a dance study by selecting a specific movement vocabulary to communicate a main idea. Discuss how the dance communicates nonverbally.  
TH:Cr1.1.3c Collaborate to determine how characters might move and speak to support the story and given circumstances in drama/theatre work.  
TH:Cr1.1.4c Imagine how a character might move to support the story and given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.  
TH:Cr1.1.5c Imagine how a character's inner thoughts impact the story and given circumstances in a drama/ theatre work.  
MU:Pr4.2.3 Demonstrate understanding of the structure in music selected for performance.  
MU:Pr4.2.4 Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, and form ) in music selected for performance.  
MU:Pr4.2.5 Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony ) in music selected for performance.

## Common Core Standards

ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.  
ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events  
ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.5 Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.  
ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.  
ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.  
ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).  
ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.5 Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.  
ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.  
ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.  
ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).  
ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.



THANK YOU!

Join us next week for a new dance  
discussion!







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