

CHOREOGRAPHIC MAJOR

MOTIVATION LETTER

I am interested in what remains when artifice falls away: the **simplicity** and fragility of being **human**, in all its absurdity and rawness.

It is very concrete to me to start with these notions since I get as an artist very touched when simplicity becomes concrete and subtle enough to feel personal and human.

I'm very curious and open to see this statement develop and change and so the Choreographic Major program is for me the best opportunity to make it possible.

It appears also as an exciting opportunity for me to make choreographic practice a **central part of my artistic practice**. I have, done so by creating in collaboration with others, which has also made me clearly understand the importance of creation in my practice and training. However, it was difficult for me to devote my free time to creation on my own, not because of a lack of inspiration, but simply because I lacked a framework and clarity regarding my ambitions. I see these past two years more as a period of understanding and refining my individuality as a performance artist, and now I want to move on to refining my **individuality** as a **creative artist**.

However, I won't be able to give up performing and, in fact, that's not even a personal option right now, but I find it hard to see myself as merely a performer. As a creative individual, it's important to me to take **responsibility** for bringing my own touch and vision to today's world. I cannot remain a spectator or mere recipient of choreographic works; it is important to me to be actively involved and to let my imagination do its work so that I can move forward and bring to the stage what I believe is important to highlight today.

A key point for me is to **collaborate** with people, and in the case of CM, with the performers. I can see myself having a collective and collaborative work later, and it is in fact because I met in SEAD some artists, creators and performers that I connected a lot with and with whom I already know I will pursue the work together later.

The chance that I will have with CM is to understand better myself and how to direct a process, how to place my inputs, how to be understood by the group so that I can communicate my vision of the work. And so, to learn this role to then be able to know better how to create with many people, and to commit to a creation process for a long period of time, with compromises, with communication and trust in myself and others.

Therefore, I'm really interested by the opportunity, as a CM1, to work with a group, that didn't have so many creation processes yet, for a long period of time. It is for me a chance to meet new people and artists. I feel really open to be surprised and challenged by them, but also inspired. I look forward to engaging with **different artistic perspectives**; even within the same class, the differences between us are incredibly enriching, so working with a group I haven't met yet can only elevate the creative process and make it more **authentic** and surprising, in my opinion. In fact, I don't want to limit myself to working only with artists who are, so to speak, similar to me, since discussion

and compromise wouldn't be possible under those circumstances, and therefore no surprises would be expected.

The project class would be, I feel, a very interesting tool for me. It would help me so much to have clarity on my choices, artistic vision and the way I manage a group. I like the idea of talking to someone else than a friend or a classmate. And from what I saw last year, there was a big diversity between the people doing the project class, a diversity in the artistic vision and also in management (of time, of the space or also of a group...). And this would be the way for me to have a **framework** and a duty to **clarity** and **comprehension** of my own work process.

Obviously, I would also get to learn to deal with a busy schedule, as I still be involved and committed to my program and in classes even with a very exciting process after class. I see it as a chance to find **balance** between **performing**, with its program, and **creating**, as a CM. I will refine my creative individuality, without letting go of the work I did those past two years.

I believe that this program would help me to open myself and to not put boundaries to my work, to not have limits settled in.

As for my **actual artistic vision**, to go deeper in what I started this letter with : I'm certainly attached to the **humanity** as a subject of research and movement. The very fact of existing has for me already enough depth, within its own drama and irony. Playing on this depth is one of my main interest. There is everything that interests me in the humanity, however the **fragility** of it would be very important, through its success, fails, the repetition of an attempt without any glorious end, or having a glorious end for an insignificant attempt, and so on... all the variations of random actions that can have a human when they're not being watched, but the choice of putting them on stage, so vulnerable. I also include in this the mediocrity of humanity, in all its innocence and **out of any artifices**.

Therefore, I believe that we can touch people feelings by not impressing them with a gigantic and disproportionate production. I love as an audience for sure to be impressed and to not be able to believe what I'm seeing on stage as something possible and real. But I feel touched and seen when it's actually true. A single person, on stage or not, singing their favorite song with everything they have inside of them fascinates me and I would want for the whole world to see this person and this vulnerability. The work of Maguy Marin, for instance her most famous piece from 1981 *May B*, brought clearly this idea on stage of the human as it is. She represented bodies that no one ever wanted to see on stage, or even in our society. Although, it does not fall under the category of explicit or polemical activism, this seminal work of dance theater transforms the body into a space of resistance, vulnerability, and a challenge to power dynamics. It certainly inspires me deeply, for its theatricality, absurdity, realism, simplicity, composition, rhythm and so on...

In relation to it, I may also want to explore the **political aspect of choreography**, aspect that I see part of the humanity research. I see it part of this research because politics are around us all the time and we can't ignore that our life, decisions, preferences... are political. But I'd like to research it in a subtle way, for the audience to realize for themselves that what they are watching is political.

And so, I think that exploring humanity and simplicity strip away ornate **theatricality** to focus on raw physical truth, breath, and basic human connection. I really do have the wish to pursue my interest for theater and to push further my knowledge of it. However, it would be **in addition to the elaborateness of movement**, that I'm too attached to.

Moreover, a big part of my formation as a dancer was **composition** of the movement, logic, precision and mathematics. Indeed, my teachers in France were very influenced by Rosas and the composition systems of Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker, so I feel that I have an attach to this way of working too. I really enjoyed this last year of Locating a lot of composition propositions and tasks that we had, for example I was fascinated in creation with Matteo Fargion and after even more by the propositions of his work partner Jonathan Burrows. It always gives an unexpected touch when the choice is made for a choreography to be ran by chance and randomness, or by any intern mathematic system. I would take for instance the games that were using the Judson Church Memorial Theater to compose. I believe that it can really brings surprises and originality in a piece, choices made by chance can't be influenced and inspired from the work of someone else and so it brings, to me, authenticity. The randomness can also add a touch of humor and it is a path that I choose to research.

Absurdity is another key aspect to my artistic vision. I believe that through absurdity everyone is able of making their own meaning. Indeed, I don't want to explain what I'm doing on stage or what I'm proposing and it's actually what I appreciate as an audience. When you feel that the artist has enough trust in its audience to let their mind find their sense and own explanation. It's important to me that there is less importance to the pedantic artist and more to the audience, as I will develop later on.

Between **realism** and **surrealism**, I would like people to identify and at the same time that the universe of the piece could seem from another planet, through the absurdity to still be able to connect and to feel deeply what is happening. I think I do like to make people feel deep emotions and to understand that what is happening on stage is not always pretty, but without taking any dramatic direction, and I believe that the absurdity, the surrealism and the logic of composition are really important in my toolkit, on this specific purpose.

However, I still need a certain **rythme** in this whole toolkit. I want to explore variations and surprises, for the audience but also as a performer I really enjoy being challenged by the opposition in the intensities.

As for my interest and direction I want to pursue in contemporary art,

I have always been really attached to the concept of **democratization of the contemporary art**, and this would be ideally one of my projects as a creative artist. I had the chance to grow up dancing in a collective, « Le morceau de sucre » created by Amélie Boblin, proposing classes all week and to different kind of **public** and social classes, making the contemporary dance **accessible** for everyone. It was a honest proposition sharing time for technique, creation and improvisation, even as a kid. Moreover, they were making shows of dance and theater touring in the French festivals, as street shows, with homemade set ups representing sometimes a kitchen, a bedroom, a street bench and so on... It was storytellings in which the audience could identify and connect, without paying a theater ticket to witness a performance.

So, it is for me beautiful and important to touch not only the privileged part of the culture today, and also to give to the children a place to dream. Because today it is a sociological reality that the audience of contemporary art is becoming older and rather bourgeois, so then to sustain our visibility we should find solutions and touch a more diverse group of people.

Therefore, I also do think than going **anti elitism** is to step away sometimes from the serious and pedantic aspect of contemporary dance and art, however it is still a personal wondering for me to picture exactly how to do it. I wouldn't want to serve on a tray all my answers to the audience, meaning not explaining to the audience what we're doing, by admitting they're smart enough to get their own stories and that it's also the beauty of art **to let people develop their own imagination**. But at the same time, not necessarily proposing an abstraction that would close the gates between the artist and their audience.

This question would really be one of my main interest in research in creation.

While I still really have the will to be a performer, I deeply feel the need to have an impact as a **creator**, that my voice and my vision resonates with other artistic individuals and with the world. Ideally, I aim for an art that transcends the pre-existing limits and affiliations, reaching towards a **sensitive universal**.

I mostly ended up convinced by an experience, a shared process or an art piece when within it what I would have expected doesn't happen and its direction feels surprising and refreshing.

Therefore, I strive to stay open to a large **diversity** of ideas, on a **big humanity scale** and to keep being inspired by the **arts**, by **literature** and by all forms of **thinking the pre-existing thoughts**.

Thank you for reading me,

Elia Robertson