

This summer, I worked with Minneapolis-based choreographer Chris Schlichting to research the social, cultural, and political relationships dance has to where it is created, who it is performed by and for, and its content. My work centered around the questions:

- How do choreographers make abstract dance that responds to and challenges its location in physical and sociopolitical geographies?
- How can abstract dance creation and performance facilitate conversations that complement the complexity of the issues choreographers want to address?

This project was composed of two interwoven parts, the premier of Chris's newest work, *Period*, in New York City, and a blog examining my research questions.

My blog, Dialoguing Dance (<https://toribreen.wixsite.com/dialoguingdance>), documented my independent research and my experiences with *Period* in NYC. Given the multi-faceted nature of my research goals and questions, the blog format felt natural. It enabled me to join seemingly disparate ideas, experiences, and research, forming connections at a deeper level instead of necessitating one steadfast conclusion. I am thankful for the opportunity to spend two weeks in July working with Chris and the rest of the *Period* team in the Chocolate Factory Theater in Queens, NY. During this time, I fulfilled several roles, including understudying for a dancer who couldn't be at initial tech rehearsals, taking rehearsal notes, running errands, and contributing compositional ideas. This hands-on experience not only aided my personal growth as a production assistant, choreographer, and dancer, it shaped my research as part of this project. I was able to explore tangibly many of the ideas I was processing in my blog, including representation and inclusion, cultivating healthy rehearsal spaces, conceptions of home and space, and crediting artistic sources. The convergence of reading, writing, dancing, and observing proved to be rich and valuable.

At the conclusion of this research project, I continue to have questions about dance and about the world, and while part of me is sad about this, because I crave answers, a larger part of me is proud, because maybe if I knew the answers, the dance work would become superfluous. My research has informed my thinking in exciting ways and given me a clearer sense of what I value in dance work, and the project as a whole has enriched my relationship to dance research. I feel affirmed in the importance of dance, and I feel affirmed in my dedication to this field. I am excited to incorporate what I have learned into my practices as a scholar, a dancer, and a choreographer.

I hope to continue my questioning, with you. Please ask me anything, and feel free to use the questions on the floor as a starting point. If there is anything you would like to share later on, email me at breen104@umn.edu.