

UArts  SCHOOL
OF DANCE

This Is Not Front

This Is Not Front

Spiral As Code



Courtney Henry

Shayla Vie-Jenkins & Alonzo
King, Thinking Partners

In partial fulfillment of the re-
quirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts, Dance
2022



“We do not grow absolutely, chronologically.

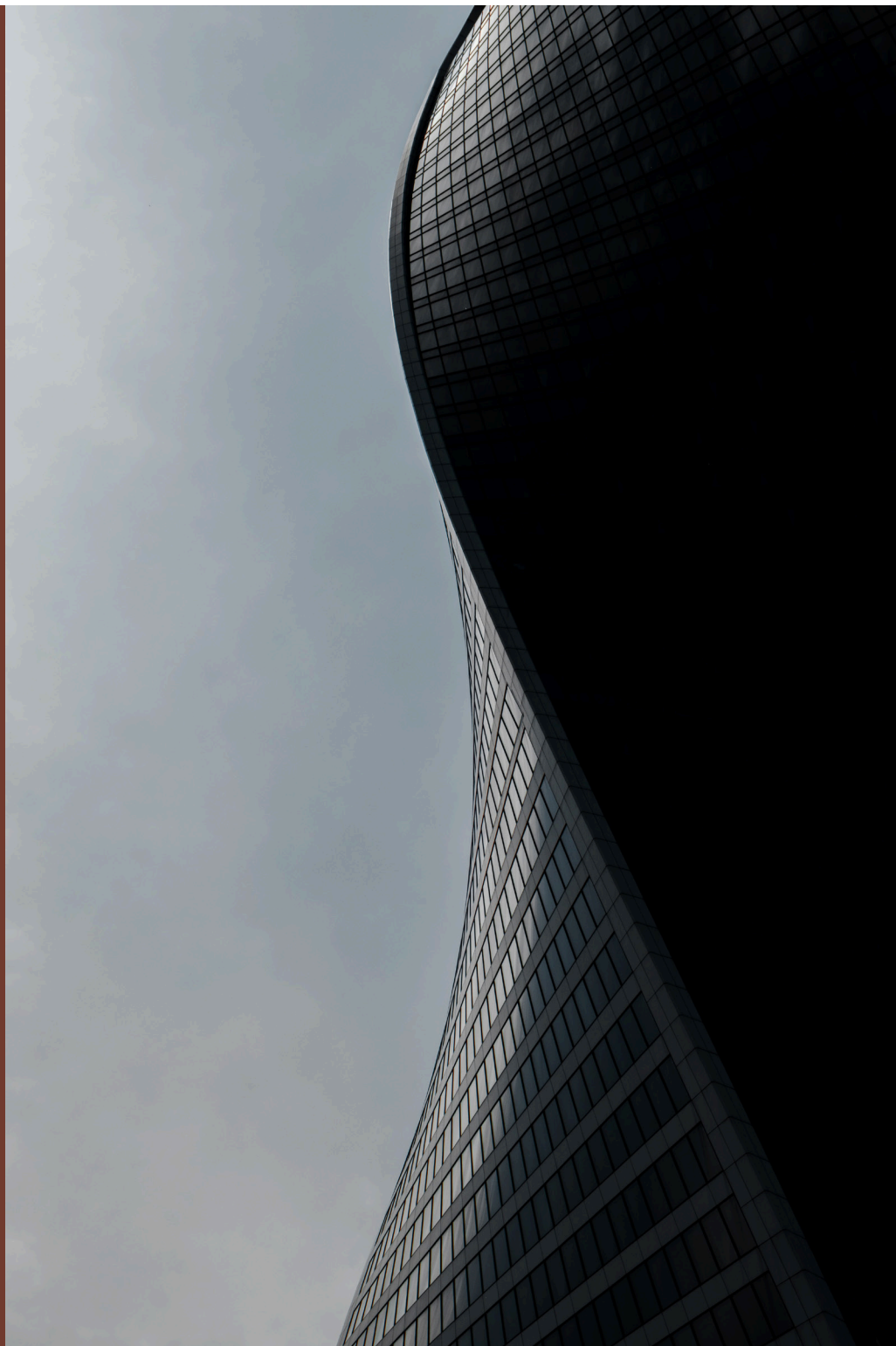
*We grow sometimes in one dimension, and not
in another; unevenly. We grow partially. We are
relative. We are mature in one realm, childish in
another. The past, present, and future mingle and
pull us backward, forward, or fix us in the present.
We are made up of layers, cells, constellations.”*

–Anais Nin

“The circle, is religious, theological; the spiral, like a infinity, is dialectical: on the spiral, things recur, but there is a return in difference, not repetition in identity [the spiral], we are not constrained to believe: everything nothing has been said, but rather: nothing is first, yet

–Roland Barthes, “The Responsibility Of Form”¹

*circle distended to
at another level:
tity. Thanks to [the
has been said, or:
t everything is new.*





As Paulo Freire and Bell Hooks argue, indigenous knowledge is a rich social resource for any justice-related attempt to bring about social change. My aim is to soak myself in this knowledge...assimilate the feelings, the sensitivity of epistemologies that move in ways unimagined by most Western academic impulses.



MAP OF JOURNEY

Intro of sorts.

Black Is Beautiful, Black is Vast, Black is Divine.

Spiral As The Poetics Of Journey

Spiral As Sacred Pattern

Spiral As Indigenous Way Of Learning

Meditations on Arabesque.

African Fractals: A Sacred Symmetry

Re-Landscaping The Body: Fine-Tuning for Horizon Work

New Pathways For 7 Old Dances

Whirring Words & Worlds



I wound up here as my original entryway was freedom and flight. Sovereign song and dance and how the definition of it has changed drastically for myself since motherhood.

Unlocking spiral is bringing me back to the root of my core which is growth. I've always been addicted to it. The transformation, the mythos of the journey.

Maybe it's the double portion of fire in me who is unafraid to burn and burn again as I have risen from the ashes every time.

Pattern.

Just as we are a reflection of the cosmos, the milky ways, the first crustacean life in water, our muscles spiral around our bones, the bones turn within the joints, our blood pumps through in an organized spiral system the same way that water flows and always finds the path of least resistance.

Ease.

In its beauty, in its pure mathematics, in its genius there is efficiency and ease.

Spiral is a repairing system when life's nature gets off course. Because it always does. As opposed to a closed circle, nature's technique of spiral allows for new pathways to open up and out. For better or worse, to transform.

How do we tap into what is already there? There. Double helixed within the DNA and an impetus found within every dance form.

Yes, including the b word...

A word that is drenched in hypocrisy, tainted by white supremacy, and has been transmitted through shame, insecurity, and anti-blackness. Plainly put...lies.

Lies of its origin, lies of its function, lies of how a body CAN move through its science.

I'm referring to my dear friend, ballet. A form that I love enough, I respect enough, that my 9yr old self adores enough, to ask it to do better.

In the words of the brilliant Jasmine Hearn:





“Dear ballet, open wider please”

Open wider from front to back.

side to side.

Can you unravel?

Can you unravel a little bit more? Can you hold?

Can you make a basket from all

all

aLL

All

ALL of the materials that you hold? Can you hold a

little wider please?

Dear ballet.

Dear ballet, can you listen a little bit longer? A little bit

more deeply.

Dear ballet, who are you?

Who made you? Who made you? Who made you?

Who made you who you are right now, today?²



As a result of the years of this love affair I am well past the honeymoon stage. I'm no longer interested in the obsession of the “line” of the body but rather, how can I revolutionize what is inside the line?

My quest is through a non-linear indigenous approach.

Perhaps the interdisciplinary code of spiral?

A pedagogy who's intuitive reckoning starts from a seed of

everlasting wholeness.

W-H-O-L-E-N-E-S-S

NOT an empty cup.

An approach to the ancient symbols,³ to the science of ballet that is rooted in its connectedness to nature and anatomical genius.⁴

Can this unraveling help to unlearn and re-orient a student within its form?

Alchemizing routes back to roots. Finding new pathways in old dances.

Sankofa.

Return. Radical imagery starting in the mind and heart before spiraling out into grand shapes.

Spiral as the poetics of journey.

Spiral as an indigenous way of learning.


Spiral as sacred architecture.

The willingness to begin.

again.

And again.

And again...



This vastness is intimidating in the way it holds everything yet at the surface can be perceived as nothingness.

Majesty & Misery. The complexity of the BLACK experience.

Human beings whose ancestors were dragged to this land. Bound, restricted, treated as objects are in the forever process of gaining what was stolen – the freedom and autonomy that is a human birthright. Healing is ongoing. Systematic racism which holds white as the standard by which all else is measured is still an ongoing disease that plagues us all.

Vastness and freedom are our birthright. When it is taken from one person, we all suffer. No one gains. To regain and heal that loss is important and necessary and takes time. May we be free. May we recover and reveal our vastness.

BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL. BLACK IS VAST. BLACK IS

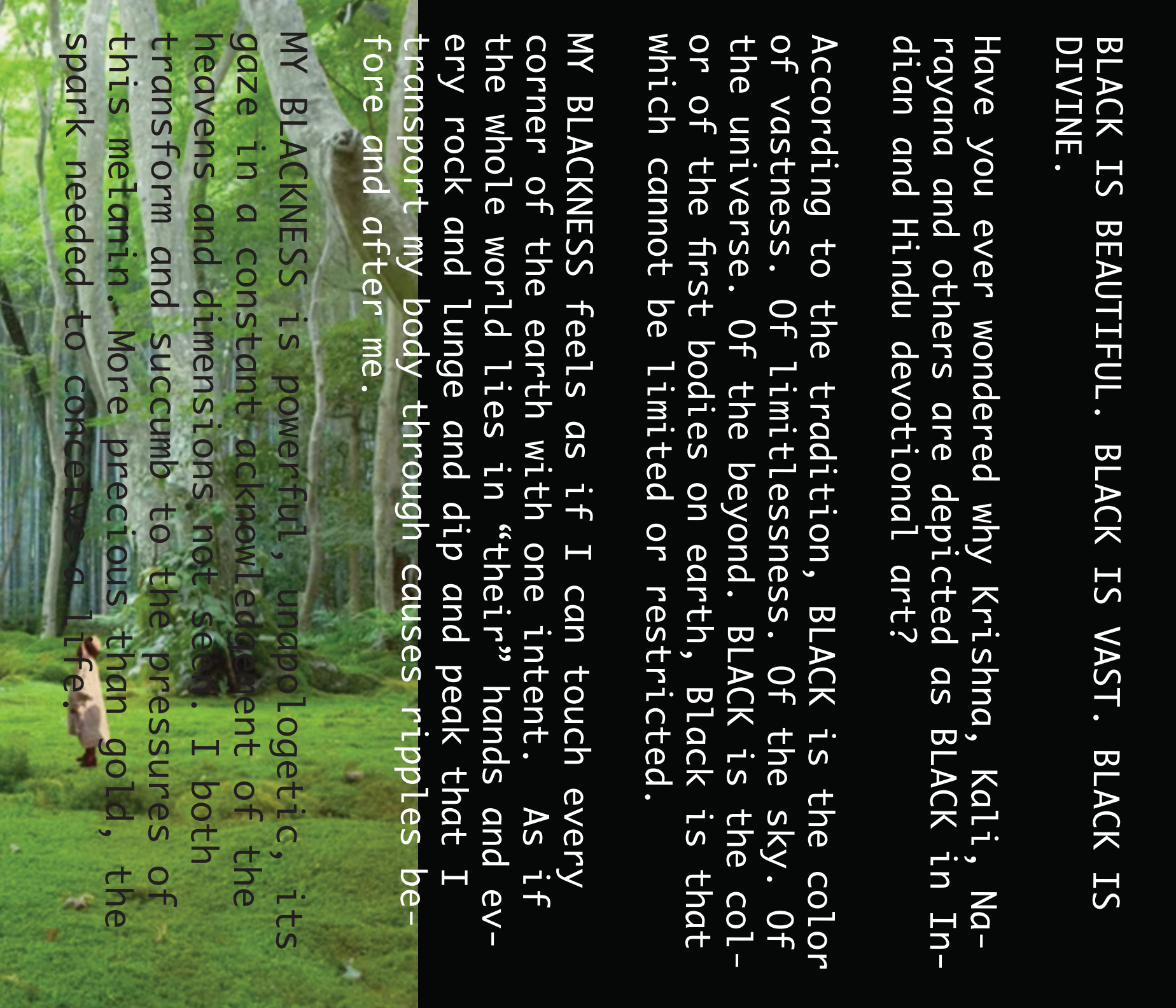
BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL. BLACK IS VAST. BLACK IS DIVINE.

Have you ever wondered why Krishna, Kali, Narayana and others are depicted as BLACK in Indian and Hindu devotional art?

According to the tradition, BLACK is the color of vastness. Of limitlessness. Of the sky. Of the universe. Of the beyond. BLACK is the color of the first bodies on earth, Black is that which cannot be limited or restricted.

MY BLACKNESS feels as if I can touch every corner of the earth with one intent. As if the whole world lies in “their” hands and every rock and lunge and dip and peak that I transport my body through causes ripples before and after me.

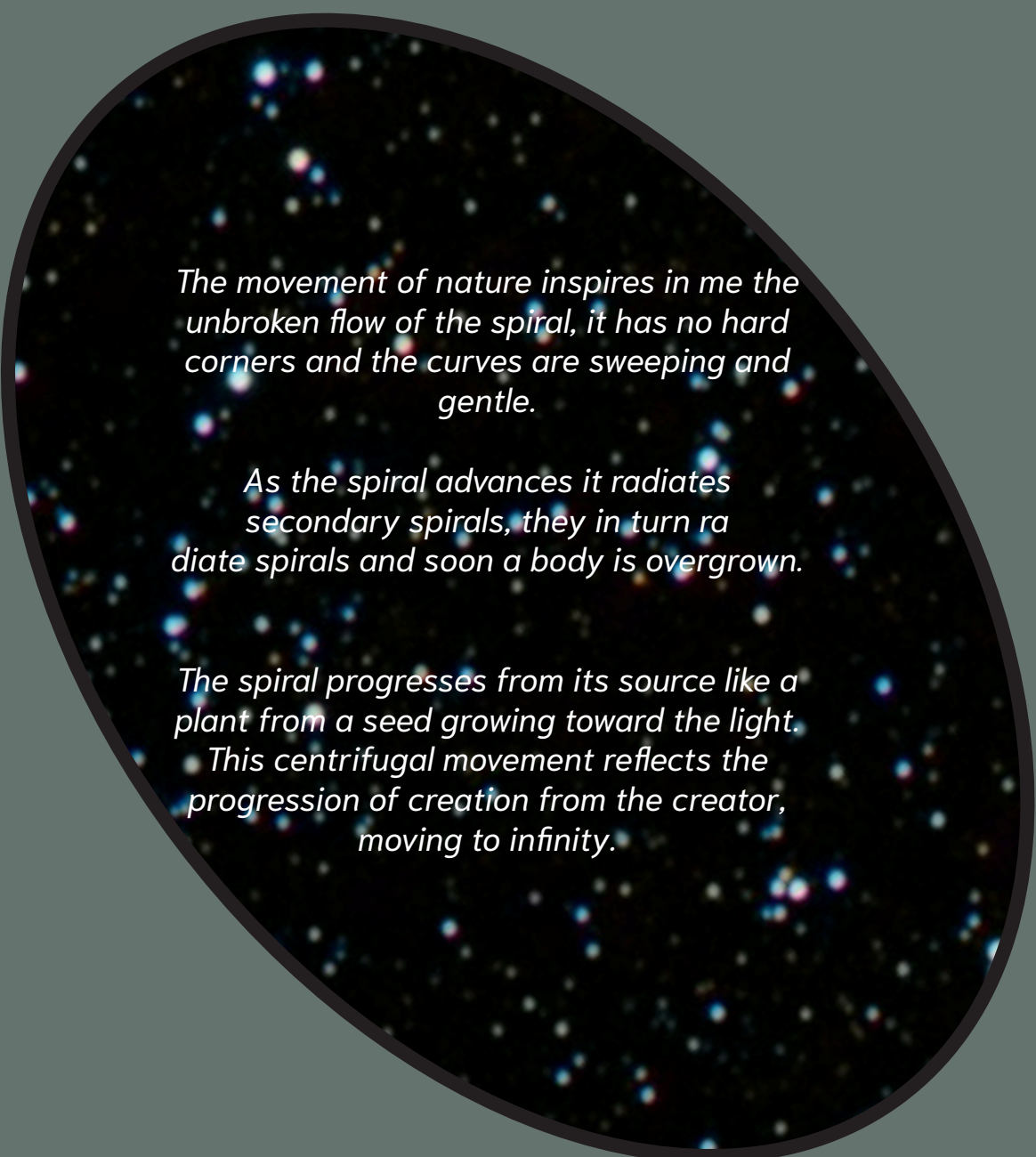
MY BLACKNESS is powerful, unapologetic, its gaze in a constant acknowledgement of the heavens and dimensions not seen. I both transform and succumb to the pressures of this melanin. More precious than gold, the spark needed to conceive a life.



Intro of sorts. Black Is Beautiful, Black is Vast, Black is Divine.Spiral As The Poetics Of Journey.Spiral As Sacred Pattern.Spiral As In

New Pathways For
Whirring Words

SPIRAL AS THE
POETICS OF
JOURNEY



*The movement of nature inspires in me the
unbroken flow of the spiral, it has no hard
corners and the curves are sweeping and
gentle.*

*As the spiral advances it radiates
secondary spirals, they in turn ra
diate spirals and soon a body is overgrown.*

*The spiral progresses from its source like a
plant from a seed growing toward the light.
This centrifugal movement reflects the
progression of creation from the creator,
moving to infinity.*

Opening
no bridges here, one must fly.

ur roots want not fall.

side your ears. Deep within your throat and under your left scapula.

he woods you've tarried.

ou sew is only seen from here.

als unravel.

t mother's belly.

ken, there are old rhythms pulsing newly through ancient

cliff there are

Come, come jump with me. O

Bring your seeds with.

Tuck them into the backs of your knees and in

As they slip along the way look back and marvel at t

Each step compounded from the one before. The pattern y

Come.

Lick the horizon with the tips of your wings. Chuckle as vertic

All the kings horses and all the kings men lie prostrate a

The axis has shifted. The banquet table has bro
pathways.

D i s / o r i e n t .

What does it mean to be on a path with no linear Direction?

Horizon melts into multi-dimensions and I am everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

the compass whirs, I'm seeing red now. Space swept up in the storm of wind and flesh.

I don't need to know my front because I trust I will come back around again.

Bended arrows lead me exactly where I need to be. I follow the Rope

of my spine and the Sleeping Snake That rattles me into motion.

New eyes from these no eyes listening out to find my way.

I nestled into the losses. trying to dig at something already planted there long ago.

Turning on, shutting off. My logic aims to steer. This time I allow the flow to ooze out of my

back side and near side and let it sling me out to the corners I haven't visited in a while.

doing the internal work. Mirroring the first of many dances.

There is so much to see in the dark.

Allow the light inside to orient and guide.

Orient: the special of the luster of a pearl. East.

align or position something relative to the point of a compass. Or other specified positions.

This makes me think of magnets. Feeling that Eternal pull.

Direction, light consent, calibrate daily.



Dis/orient.

where is the pull today?

As the Earth spins, tilted in space how can
I trust true north?

My South is where my coccyx is sent. In
the way I push these bones infused with
Spirit around these spaces. There is more
possibility when I get out of the cube grid.

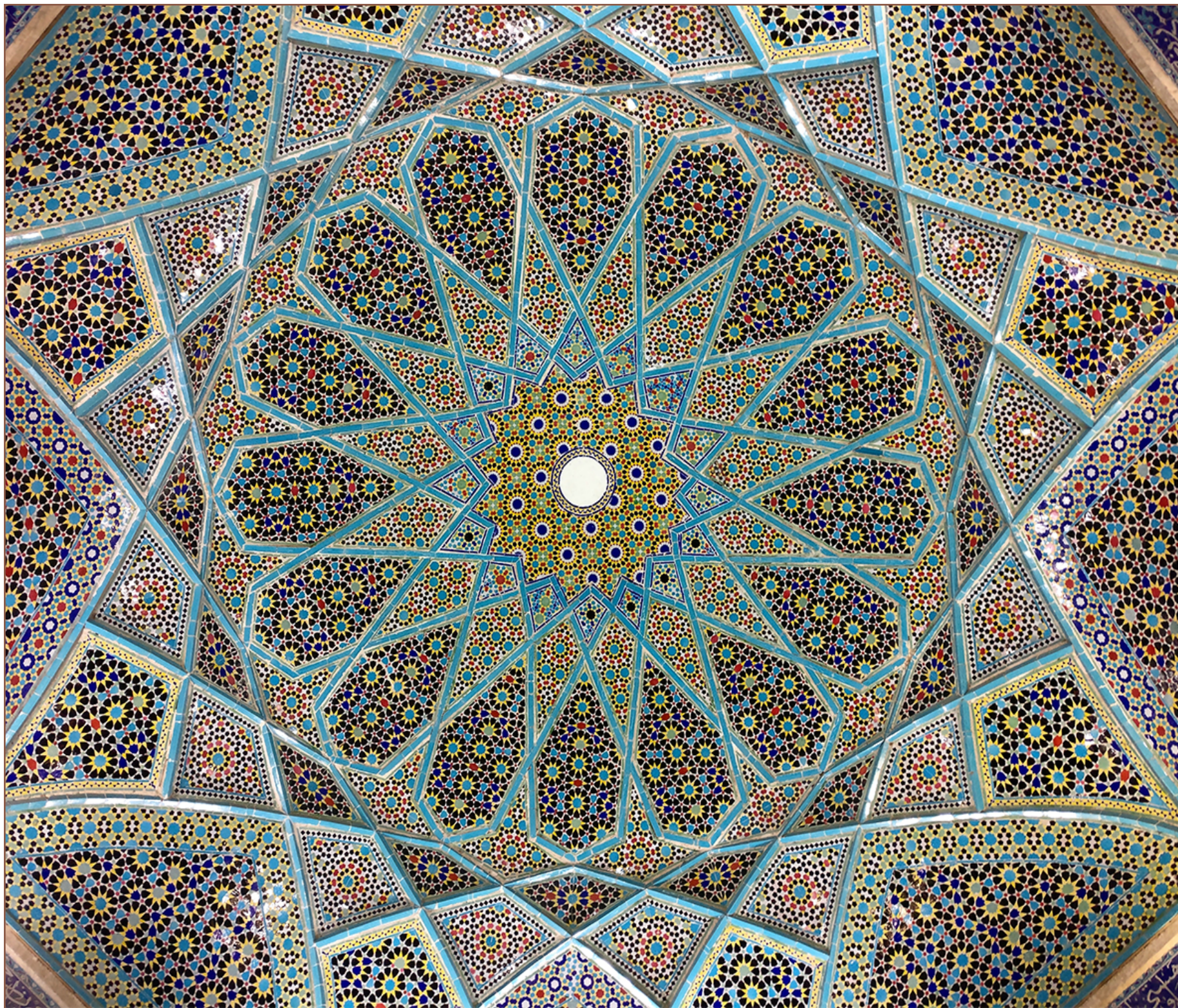
pulling down ropes to lift me up.

Spiral As

Sacred

Pattern





The arabesque is an ornament of painting, sculpture, engraving or mosaic repeating stylized symmetries which evoke forms of nature such as plants, leaves, and geometric shapes.⁵

The choice of geometric shapes and their arrangement stems from a vision of the world specific to the Islamic universe.

For a Muslim, these forms constitute motifs whose repetition extends beyond the visible material world: they symbolize the infinite – and centerless – nature of creation.⁶ Like Christian iconography, the arabesque is the expression of a spirituality.

The arabesque or biomorphic sub-styles also include two structure types: the spiral and the kapali. Each exists as a structural linear foundation where the motif, such as a floral or vegetation, would be attached. The spiral design is a continuous pattern across the entire design. The kapali, which means “closed” in Turkish, is a structure of versatile shapes that aligns on a geometric grid.⁷ The kapali works with the spiral as well as alone due to its architectural properties.

Meditation On A Dance Shape: “Arabesque”

From fingertip to toes I am circling past energy to new horizons. The longitude of my leg connecting to Earth’s center cruxes the latitude of my branch winding behind me mid-air. These lines meet in the center of my curved pelvis and radiates out through the satellites of my arms. North of time and east of rivers I am cyborg, I am cyclone, I am a reflection of the infinite.

African Fractals; A Sacred Symmetry

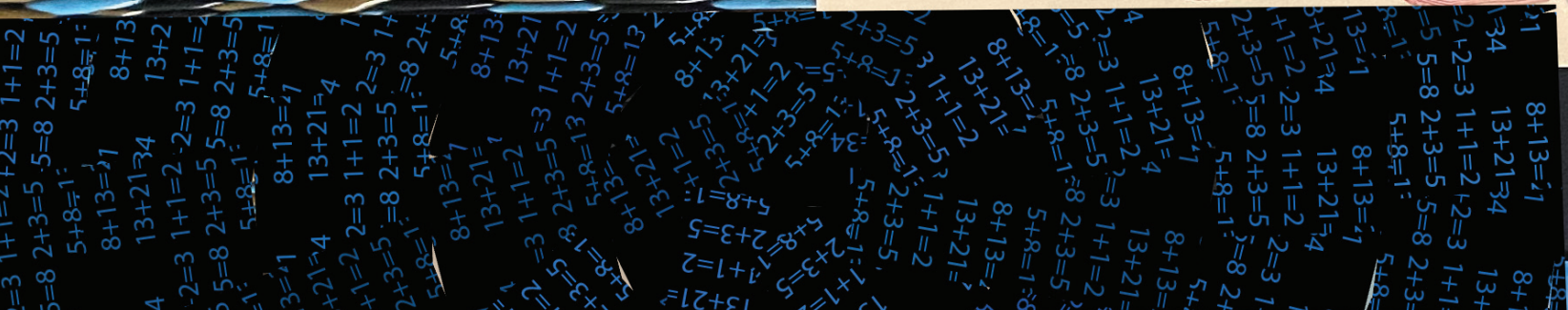
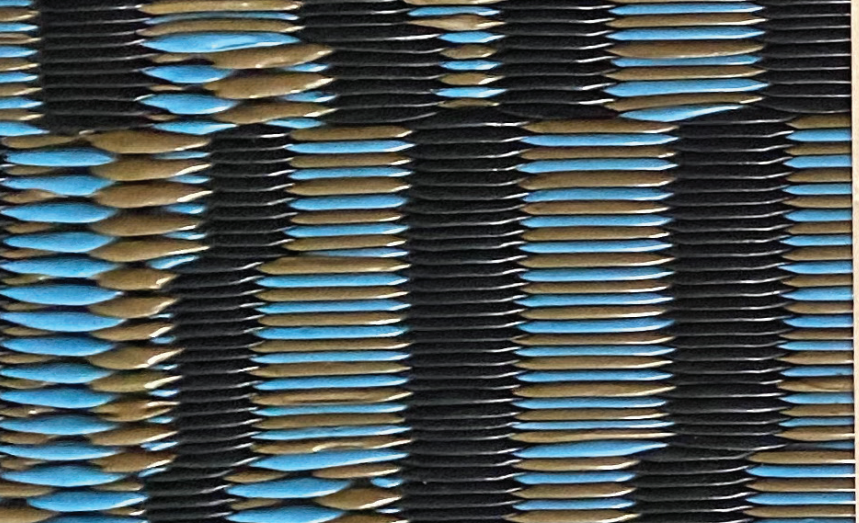
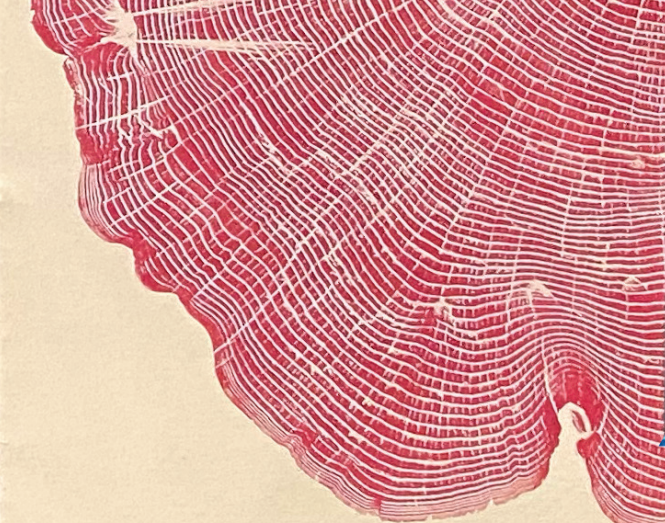
Ethno-mathematics is the study of the relationship between mathematics and culture. Contrary to what most people think, mathematics is not universal – rather, a civilisation develops the mathematics according to their needs.⁸

In recent decades, ethno-mathematicians have started to focus on Africa in search of ancient forms of numeration and mathematics, and one of the most noticeable findings has been that fractals were used all over Africa for centuries and centuries – even millennia if you consider ancient Egypt – while they're almost absent from other continents.⁹

Fractal: a curve or geometrical figure, each part of which has the same statistical character as the whole. They are useful in modeling structures (such as snowflakes) in which similar patterns recur at progressively smaller scales, and in describing partly random or chaotic phenomena such as crystal growth and galaxy formation. (Oxford Dictionary)

For me, fractals translate a completely different understanding of space and time. The endless repetition of the same pattern at different scales could be a metaphor for the cycles of life which repeat/spiral at different time scales – sun/moon, macrocosm/microcosm, birth/death.







Spiral As Sacred Architecture

In dancing with Alonzo King Lines Ballet there was a deep reverence for circle and line reflecting nature through the horizon and the cosmos. This was my first introduction to the body within ballet technique as a form of sacred architecture. Where the limitlessness of one's body could be used to embody the ballet form.

In the "classical" European narrative, ballet's shapes are a representation of the Euclidean model. Flat, 2-dimensional shapes of the legs and arms that exist within the "technique" to form pictures and tableaux to support a narrative and display for a "king."

A contemporary approach focuses on the embodiment and the transportation of one through space, with form. I have found that spiral and sacred architecture offer an aliveness of form not unlike contemporary dance forms.

Monumental works of art and design all over the world have been choreographed using the golden ratio. This ratio refers to the mathematical expression of "1: phi," where phi is an irrational number, roughly 1.618.

This ratio is called "golden" or "divine" because it's visually pleasing, and some scholars argue that the human eye can more readily interpret images that incorporate it.

It is credited as having Greek origins and is connected to the scaling mathematical pattern called the Fibonacci sequence. It is important to note, however, that Fibonacci

was born in Pisa and traveled to North Africa to learn about mathematics, and published the first of this sequence after returning to Italy in 1202. (Bennett 2021)

Why does this matter? There is no coincidence that in Africa, design practices tend to focus on bottom-up growth and organic, fractal forms. They are created in a sort of feedback loop or what computer scientists call "recursion." You start with a basic shape and then divide it into smaller versions of itself so that the subdivisions are embedded in the original shape. What emerges is called a "self-similar" pattern, because the whole can be found in the parts. (Bennett)

These scaling patterns can be seen in many ancient African designs and archaeological evidence not limited to only Egypt.

It is important to note that when archeologists pull these artifacts from the ground they bring their own cultural baggage to their interpretation (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Davies 2019) Many of these archeologists come with the "baggage" of semitic languages or the study of the Hebrew bible and it was very important to them to bring Egypt specifically, into the sphere of biblical studies. (Davies) Doing this carves Egypt from the African continent and through "race" brings it into a dominant western culture.

Egyptologist Alexander Badaway found the Fibonacci Series' use in the layout of the Temple of Karnak. It is arranged in the same way many African villages grow: starting with a sacred altar or "seed shape" before accumulating larger spaces that spiral outward. (Eglash 2005) These patterns are not only present in the land but in hairstylings, cloth patterns, and rhythms. (Eglash)

It is called fractal geometry and has emerged as one of the most exciting frontiers in the fusion between mathematics and information technology. Fractals can be observed in many of the swirling patterns produced by computer graphics, and they have become a vital tool for modeling in the natural sciences. (Eglash)

I find this geometry and architecture a particularly provocative tool for analyzing codified dance forms from an ethnographic perspective. While fractal geometry can allow one to get into the far reaches of high-tech science, its patterns are surprisingly common in traditional African designs. Also, some of the basic concepts in fractal geometry are fundamental to African knowledge systems: quantitative techniques, symbolic systems, engineering, architecture, games, traditional hairstyling, textiles, sculpture, painting, carving, metalwork, dance, and religion.

As I personally embody the form of ballet, colonized by the guise of a "European classical technique" I bring these Africanist technologies with me, inherently.

As Ron Eglash explains in *African Fractals: Modern Computing and Indigenous Design*, although most people learn Euclidean geometry in school, few study fractal geometry, which plays a significant role in modern mathematics and design.

Fractal geometry accounts for the pieces of the whole. In dance, this might show up as the transition steps, 'and' counts as a polyrhythmic approach to the music and body itself. It may manifest as an adagio of the legs with complex phrasing of the arms. It exists, in my class, patterned after Alonzo King's approach, as perennial truths of verticality as spirit and horizon as humanity.

Where these meet is perhaps where the momentum of the dance, through the heart, can spiral out from.

If Euclidean geometry can be used for the study of flat even surfaces like a blade of grass, fractal geometry accounts for the rugged coastline and the network of a tree's roots.

It is important to note that Ron Eglash, resists the hypothesis that the use of complex geometries in Africa is a result of simply imitating nature. He points out that the notion that natives are closer to the natural world is fraught with both colonialist and racist assumptions about culture.



Eg lash also refutes the idea that this complex indigenous mathematical knowledge system is due to unintentional designs and repetitions. In his fieldwork, he takes care to listen to what the designers and users of these structures have to say about them, as he looks for what he believes to be intentional mathematical components of design.

While satisfying to the human eye, spiral maintains its intention while keeping the journey in mind. It accounts for the bruises and the dips of feeling lost during periods of growth and transition (spiraling out) and at the same time it accounts for the wisdom of the oak trunk and that feeling of having arrived without even knowing how you got there.

Through this research, I have found that it is a cyclical yet vertical pattern (spiral) that frames our world and how the chaos of the cosmos takes shape.

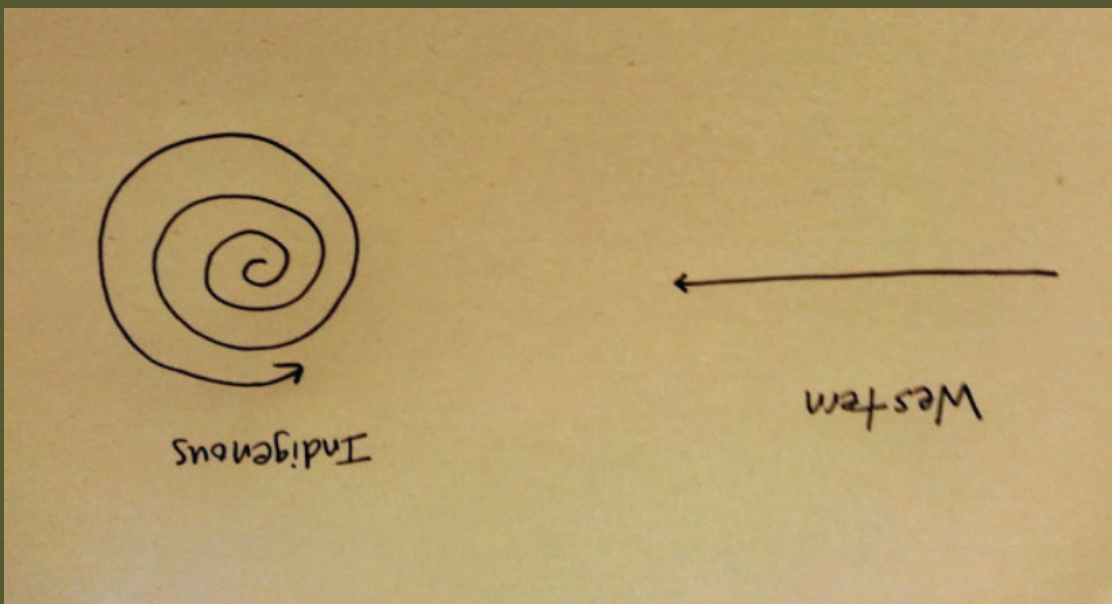
Much like architecture, there is a sometimes stagnant, linear way of doing and making, and then there is an organic recurrent method too.

Spiral is revolutionary in the way that it bends the line without breaking it and unlike the circle doesn't contain but leaves an opening. Possibility. Spiral as potentiality. Everlasting spiral to zoom into one's origins and energetically whirl out into limitless expansion and ecstasy.

In a short essay on the work of visual artist Bernard Réquichot, which was first published in 1973 and later appeared in English translation, in the collection "The Responsibility of Forms," Roland Barthes juxtaposes the contours of the spiral with those of the circle. "The circle", he writes, "is religious, theological; the spiral, like a circle distended to infinity, is dialectical: on the spiral, things recur, but at another level: there is a return in difference, not repetition in identity. Thanks to [the spiral], we are not constrained to believe: everything has been said, or: nothing has been said, but rather: nothing is first yet everything is new."



SPIRAL AS INDIGENOUS WAY OF LEARNING







dig deep to find treasures Within Myself helping the students find treasures
striving for the otherness and having ten toes down

grace was a form of giving. It wasn't about me. It's never been about me.)

How do we dismantle the B word? Representation and connection. Connecting it to spirituality, to science, to physics, to mathematics, to human emotion, and epic mythology. To self awareness, and ritual, and meditation. To care, and sensitivity, and bravery. To thoughtfulness, to mastery, to hard work, to improvisation in the African sense of making the most out of what you have.

one day, the whole system can crumble and won't even be a big deal for a young black girl to desire to uncover the girl in her. she naturally makes. Even if that means a technique that wasn't made for her. she goes for all marginalized folks and body types.

dom vs liberation.

anic soaring means you know where you're going o
been

each student that crosses my path is on an epic
I want to show up in someone else's path sooner. I

ence, tools, and better navigation, but it is their final

each student that crosses my path is on an epic

understand one another

the theme

and we are using a

Guides.

I simply want to

I got my guide

to help them rem

who say are

subconsciously give powers to others

at least are content with where you've

Flight is sometimes in

the B word.

going on this dig this Mission together.

there has to be more

Make it make sense

My approach is improvisatory

teaching can be radical. teaching as a form of resistance. ideas instead of steps.

in my lifetime I hope I can use the tool of ballet as a form of resistance. ideas instead of steps.

girl to desire to uncover the girl in her. she naturally makes. Even if that means a technique that wasn't made for her. she goes for all marginalized folks and body types.

one day, the whole system can crumble and won't even be a big deal for a young black girl to desire to uncover the girl in her. she naturally makes. Even if that means a technique that wasn't made for her. she goes for all marginalized folks and body types.

How do we dismantle the B word? Representation and connection. Connecting it to spirituality, to science, to physics, to mathematics, to human emotion, and epic mythology. To self awareness, and ritual, and meditation. To care, and sensitivity, and bravery. To thoughtfulness, to mastery, to hard work, to improvisation in the African sense of making the most out of what you have.

grace was a form of giving. It wasn't about me. It's never been about me.)

dig deep to find treasures Within Myself helping the students find treasures
striving for the otherness and having ten toes down

leech from the inside out.

leave things open enough for people to find their own liberation and their own

knowing what speaks directly to you.

teaching is also an act of liberation

what makes a good artist?

the same thing that makes a good human. intelligence, care, love, attention, humility, generosity

playfulness, joy, wisdom, giving, giving.

The technique is alive because we are living it and breathing it. It is not just symbols or pictures

out there away from our center or every day experience. It is in the now. Because we are in the

pushing blood. We are recreating it as much as it transforms us. The battle, the loss, it's not a

ending until you tell me I so.

How can I, with students, create an environment that fosters class-taking as a ritualized practice?

Moving within the ballet form, seeing it as architecture – simply a method to organize the body in a compounding way – is there a way to assume “wholeness” within the form?

Where one enters this transformative journey with a sense of connectedness to one's history, ancestry, rhythm, and blood memory and that these are the very things that propel them forward?

Debunking the “leave it at the door” motif in which most ballet classes and rehearsals operate from. Instead giving permission to the learner to embrace the “spirit” within their vessel which may include oppression, marginalization, and otherness, as well as inherent knowings, rhythms, and genius. (Gottschild 2003)

Many indigenous cultures spiritualized their universe and endowed the forces that threatened them with supernatural powers (see Mbiti 1982; Peek 1991). By doing so they hoped to establish some sort of communion with

the supernatural world and thereby be able to relate to the universe. Indigenous African ontologies expressed the essence of the relationship of the individual to society and to nature. Most things in the natural world were imbued with spirits. These spirits gave power and meaning to whatever the African did. For example, in the representation of the body in African sculpture and in other art works, spirits were said to move and guide the artisan's hand. (Sefa Dei 2002)

In a contemporary sense, I'm interested in how this approach provides an Afro-futurist way of seeing. This breakdown of time and place may offer portals where one can fly, unencumbered, is the space I want to imagine, create and educate from.

There is power in the practice of visualization and imagination when it comes to an indigenous approach to ballet as it is easy for folks to associate themselves as separate from the “technique.” Ballet is often imagined as a static (perfect) picture outside of oneself, so what would it take for one to step inside of the form and embody it fully?

I believe in the transformative power of indigenous knowledge, the ways that such knowledge can be used to foster empowerment and justice in a variety of cultural contexts...including a ballet class. A key aspect of this transformative power involves the exploration of human consciousness, the nature of its production, and the process of its engagement with cultural difference. As Paulo Freire and bell hooks argue, indigenous knowledge is a rich social resource for any justice-related attempt to bring about social change. My aim is to soak myself in this knowledge...assimilate the feelings, the sensitivity of epistemologies that move in ways unimaginable by most Western academic impulses.

Spiral is my code, my way of “entering in the middle” from Irít Rogoff that may provide an oblique viewpoint on a historical “technique”.

Modernized ways of learning, rooted in scientific method and a separation of the mind and body is deemed “intelligent” through the context of adult logic – a linear process.

The purpose of schools can no longer simply involve the transmission of validated Western information from teacher to student. Instead, a more compelling form of analysis is initiated with teachers engaging students in

Many indigenous cultures of the East see life as a cycle; the world as an interconnected reality; human beings, plants, animals and the universe as one interconnected whole, and that our survival depends on how these forces interact with each other.

In all societies, the beginning and meaning of life lie within the world of myth, and these myths are given form through rituals. For these rituals to be effective, dances and other cultic acts are performed, and art objects are created to give form and potency to the ritual.

In other words, songs are composed, dances performed, and sculptures and other art objects are created to support rituals. These rituals accompany us throughout our lives, from birth, through initiation ceremonies, weddings, festivals, funerals and many other events. The purpose of the events is to secure the place of humans in the wider scheme of things.

Through a spiraled, indigenous approach, could we perhaps
pre-purpose the body as an organic, fluid, flexible, mythical,
creation that can be open to all forms of moving?
Open.
Turnout as an opening. Turnout as a blossoming. Turnout as a
spiraling to grow out.

*If this imagining
came first, could
we then lead with
knowing instead
of lack?*



Re-Landscaping The Body: Fine-Tuning For Horizon Work





A Praxis

Give in to the support of the mother below, you are held.

Floor, wood, concrete, soil, lava. Feel held and connected. Call attention to your points and space.

Notice the horizon.

Wide, bare, everlasting.

We will begin by relandscaping the body.

Fine tuning for further horizon work.

Might this offer a new noticing before during and after practice? A Black Feminist interpretation to a classic form.

Making a way out of no way.

I'm interested in identifying the terrain of this technology so that I might move from an organized connected space as opposed to a disjointed, dysfunctional place of habit.

The transmission of this practice needs another system of articulation. How can future generations continue the modernization of this dance if they themselves do not imagine themselves in the form?

Imagination

I've been thinking about imagination as a conversation with higher self. Albert Einstein said, "Your imagination is your preview of life's coming attractions." And in the 1950s, author Napoleon Hill wrote, "The imagination is literally the workshop wherein are fashioned all plans created by man."

A black, female presenting student once told me that when they think of ballet steps, what they see in their mind is another (white female) executing them.

This detachment is a testament as to how life-less this form can feel on the average body. Through the will and technique the heart is not acknowledged and it is easy to disassociate from such an otherizing form.

Alonzo King offers this:

“And so people think ballet is this little thing. No, it is connected to how to live life. Or I should say dancing, because when I say ballet, I’m thinking of every dance is a ballet. It’s an Italian word for dance. But we Americans have given it this thing, ballet. We’ve kind of glorified it into a luxury brand. Yeah, no, it’s not a luxury brand. It’s based on life truth. These truths include circle, line, radius, orbit, the function of toys and wheels, science, nature.

What you’re doing with your body is you are manipulating energies. You’re not just sitting there, you’re manipulating energies. You’re manipulating energies so that you can achieve different kinds of states and you’re also finding home sources.

So things don’t ever start externally. Why would they? Unless it’s a choreographic, meaning why would they? Because in the basis of the study in the physics, it’s inside out. Inside out. And in most primordial cultures, it’s understood inside out.”











New Pathways for 7 Old Dances

Plie: To melt. To give in. To widen. To both succumb and resist at the same time. To acquiesce.¹⁰

Port de bras: Carriage of the arms but opening of the heart. How you speak and share your truth. Never an “afterthought.” Are you carrying love? Are you sharing fear or bitterness? As the energy rises up the spine it fans out through the extension of the arms.

Pique: IF the hips are mountains then perhaps a pique is just to reach the top of your mount everest. An unstable equilibrium, in constant negotiation between the scales of balance.

Releve: Recycled energy. Like a fountain shooting up to: spray, gather, collect, and rise again. To rise in connection with the oppositional. The bending gives in to the earth while the rise is simply a continuation of the surge of electricity from the center of the mother (earth) which then spills out the top of the crown, pools on the ground to gather back up again.

Rond de jamb: In relation to time. The arms on a clock. High noon is front. 3 pm as directly to the side and 6pm behind.¹¹

Pirouette: To whir, to fling out. A motor of a ship.¹² A spinning anchor.

Degage: To free, to emit, The degage leg as free from the hips, extending out and away. Buzzing up out and away. A compounding of the tendu and a beginning place for further extension.

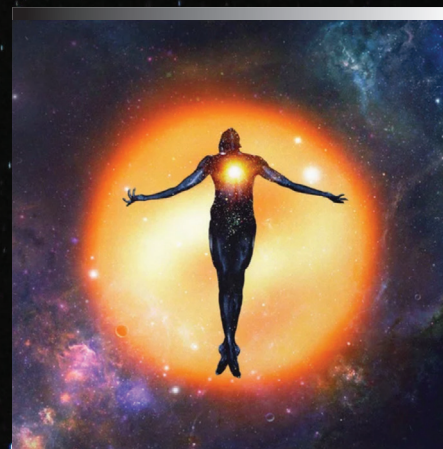


Whirring

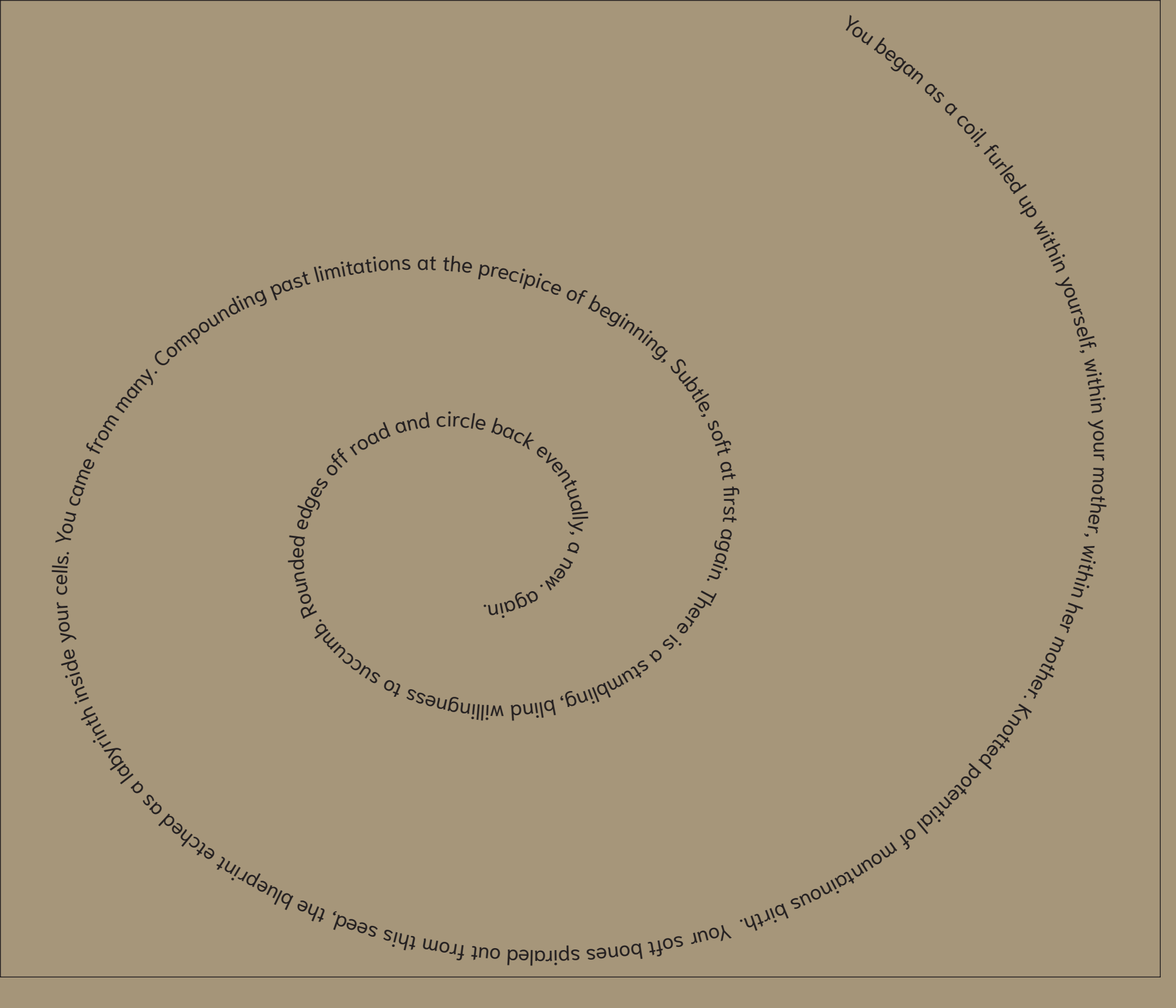
Words

&

Worlds

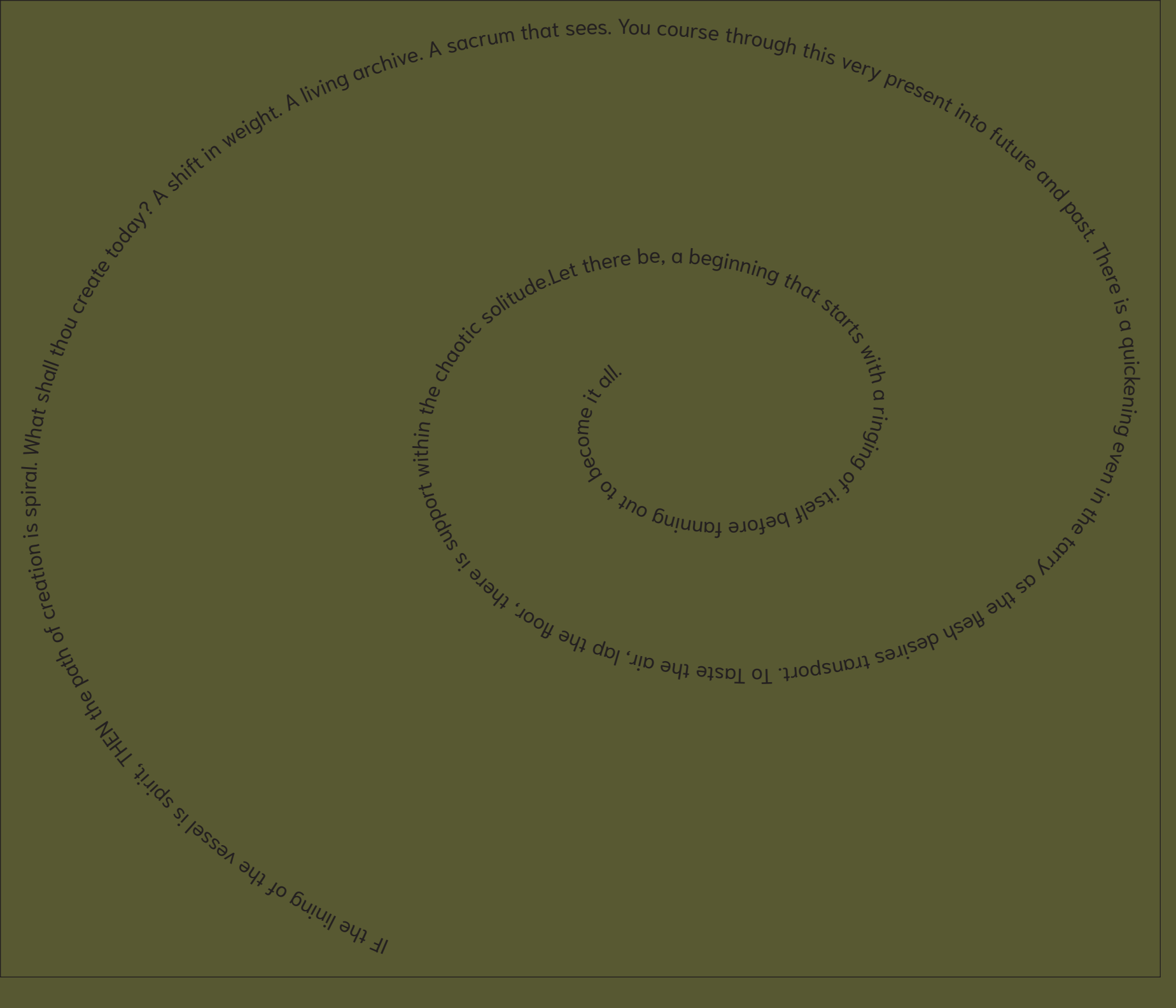


Transcendence through the cosmos I've found another sun. It is you, my love. Providing warmth and governing relations. You cause my earths to wobble and my moons to shake. As the ages darken I am away from you sludging through thousands of years as the material of the world kills and cuts. In the beginning, there was desire. Vibrations of sound unfurled the magic wand of your spine and cast your body out unto a blanket of stars. The particles around pulse as your heart beat.



Your soft bones spiraled out from this seed, the blueprint etched as a labyrinth inside your cells. You came from many. Compounding past limitations at the precipice of beginning, Subtle, soft at first again. There is a stumbling, blind willingness to succumb. Rounded edges off road and circle back eventually, a new. again.

You began as a coil, furled up within yourself, within your mother, within her mother. Knotted potential of mountainous birth. Your soft bones spiraled out from this seed, the blueprint etched as a labyrinth inside your cells. You came from many. Compounding past limitations at the precipice of beginning, Subtle, soft at first again. There is a stumbling, blind willingness to succumb. Rounded edges off road and circle back eventually, a new. again.



IF the lining of the vessel is spirit, THEN the path of creation is spiral. What shall thou create today? A shift in weight. A living archive. A sacrum that sees. You course through this very present into future and past. There is a quickening even in the tarry as the flesh desires transport. To Taste the air, lap the floor, there is support within the chaotic solitude. Let there be, a beginning that starts with a ringing of itself before fanning out to become it all.

Transcendence through the cosmos I've found another sun. It is you, my love. Providing warmth and governing relations. You cause my earths to wobble and my moons to shake.

A procession of the equinox.

Where are you on this time curve? Which portal did you fall through?

As the ages darken I am away from you sludging through thousands of years as the material of the world kills and cuts.

My seed futures to closeness where we collectively quicken knowing truth and surpassing form.

Are we there yet? You ask as we rewind back back to a new new renaissance.

In the beginning, there was desire. Vibrations of sound unfurled the magic wand of your spine and cast your body out unto a blanket of stars. The particles around pulse as your heartbeat.

You began as a coil, furled up within yourself, within your mother, within her mother.

Knotted potential of mountainous birth. Your soft bones spiraled out from this seed, the blueprint etched as a labyrinth inside your cells. You came from many. Compounding past limitations at the precipice of beginning, subtle, soft at first again. There is a stumbling, blind willingness to succumb. Rounded edges off road and circle back eventually, a new. One more gain.

IF the lining of the vessel is spirit, THEN the path of creation is spiral.
What shall thou create today?

A shift in weight. A living archive. A sacrum that sees.

You course through this very present into future and past. There is a quickening even in the tarry as the flesh desires transport. To Taste the air, lap the floor, there is support within the chaotic solitude.

Let there be, a beginning that starts with a ringing of itself before fanning out to become it all.

Gratitude for those who allowed me to go
back and fetch it ...

Berthenia Jackson (Great Grandmother)
Candance Henry (Mother)
Horace Henry (Father)
Issa Dean Cissokho (sun)
Shayla Vie Jenkins (thinking partner)
Alonzo King (thinking partner)
Jimena Paz
Jaamil Kosoko
VK Preston
Ben Pranger
Donna Faye Burchfield
Tommy DeFrantz
Emily Wexler
2021-2022 UArts MFA Cohort
UArts Undergrad Students 2021-2022



Bibliography

- Adams, Monni, and Alphonse Tiérou. 1990. "Dooplé: Loi Éternelle de La Danse Africaine." *African Arts* 23 (2): 96. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3336908>.
- "Art on a Loop: African Fractals; Sacred Symmetry / Francois Beaurain / Medina Dugger - ART AFRICA." 2018. ART AFRICA. March 26, 2018. <https://www.artafricamagazine.org/art-on-a-loop/>.
- Bennett, Audrey. 2021. "Did the Golden Spiral, Which Is Fundamental to Swiss Design, Originate in Africa?" Designyatra. April 23, 2021. <https://designyatra.com/did-the-golden-spiral-which-forms-the-basis-swiss-design-origin-ate-in-africa/>.
- Calais-Germain, Blandine. 2014. *Anatomy of Movement*. Seattle: Eastland Press.
- Crawley, Ashon. 2015. "Otherwise Movements." The New Inquiry. January 19, 2015. <https://thenewinquiry.com/otherwise-movements/>.
- Dowd, Irene. 2016. *Taking Root to Fly : Articles on Functional Anatomy*. New York: I. Dowd.
- Duggar, Medina. 2021. "Chromatin (by Medina Dugger & Francois Beaurain)." Vimeo.com. 2021. <https://vimeo.com/476767358>.
- Eglash, Dr. Ron. 2000. "Spirals | CSDT." Csdtd.org. 2000. <https://csdt.org/culture/adinkra/spirals.html>.
- Eglash, Ron. 2005. *African Fractals : Modern Computing and Indigenous Design*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- EMPAC. 2020. "Ashon Crawley: Quantum Mechanics. Quantum Sound. Quantum Love." Www.youtube.com. 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sA3oW8X1qPc>.
- Friere, Paul O, and Antonio Faundez. 1989. *Learning to Question. A Pedagogy of Liberation*. Geneva: Wcc Publications.
- Gottschild, Brenda Dixon. 2003. *The Black Dancing Body : A Geography from Coon to Cool*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- hooks, bell. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. Routledge.
- Israel, Nico. 2018. *Spirals : The Whirled Image in Twentieth-Century Literature and Art*. New York, Ny: Columbia University Press.

- Jill Bolte Taylor. 2022. *WHOLE BRAIN LIVING : The Anatomy of Choice and the Four Characters That Drive Our Life*. S.L.: Hay House Inc.
- King, Alonzo. 2022. "Thinking Partner Conversations." Zoom, 2022.
- Kondo, Dorinne K. 2018. *Worldmaking : Race, Performance, and the Work of Creativity*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Kosoko, Jaamil. 2022. "Creative Research Mentor." Zoom, 2022.
- Manning, Erin, and Brian Massumi. 2013. *Always More than One: Individuation's Dance*. Durham London Duke University Press.
- Manoussaki, Daphne, Richard S. Chadwick, Darlene R. Ketten, Julie Arruda, Emilios K. Dimitriadis, and Jen T. O'Malley. 2008. "The Influence of Cochlear Shape on Low-Frequency Hearing." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 105 (16): 6162–66. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0710037105>.
- Maragha, Alexandra. 2022. "Arabesque Patterns, Art, & Design." Study.com. 2022. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/arabesque-designs-patterns-islamic-western.html#:~:text=As%20we%20learned%2C%20the%20arabesque>.
- Munz, Alexander. 2021. "Individualized Practice in MUNZ Floor." Zoom, 2021.
- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Vanessa Davies. 2019. "Ancient Nubia Now: How Egyptologists Removed Ancient Egypt from Africa." *YouTube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRL6EDWfqMs>.
- Paz, Jimena. 2022. "Feldenkrais Thinking Partner." Face to Face, 2022.
- Ruthy Alon. 1996. *Mindful Spontaneity : Lessons in the Feldenkrais Method*. Berkeley, Calif.: North Atlantic Books.
- Wolfe Sam. 2015. "Why Do Spirals Exist Everywhere in Nature?" Blue Labyrinths. Blue Labyrinths. March 19, 2015. <https://bluelabyrinths.com/2015/03/19/why-do-spirals-exist-everywhere-in-nature/>.
- Sefa Dei, George J. 2002. "SPIRITUAL KNOWING and TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING." In *The Research Network for New Approaches to Lifelong Learning*. Ontario, Canada.
- Susan Leigh Foster. 2002. *Dances That Describe Themselves : The Improvised Choreography of Richard Bull*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press.
- Zipline Media. n.d. "DEAR BALLET //an Excerpt from Our Conversation with JASMINE HEARN. @Dancelabny." Accessed 2022. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cb0G NUzDhDF/>.

Images

Images

Wrapping Photos: Photo by Claudia Escobar and Jake Weirik

Images starting from 'Spiral As Code'

1: Image by Manzel Bowman Edits by Courtney Henry

2: Photo by Lino Brown, Dancer Babatunji Johnson

3: Photo by Sasha-Yudaev

4 : Photo by Courtney Henry

5: Photo by Courtney Henry

6: Photo by Courtney Henry

7 : Image by Manzel Bowman

8 : Photo by

9 : Photo by Courtney Henry

10 : Film still by Courtney Henry

11: Photo by Mario Cruz

12: Collage by Courtney Henry, Image by Medina Duggar

13: Collage by Courtney Henry

14: Image by David Kovalenko

15: Collage by Courtney Henry

16: Drawing by Courtney Henry

17: Collage by Courtney Henry

18: Image by Manzel Bowman

19: Photo by Rene Muller

20: Image by Marv Torrez

21: Collage by Courtney Henry

22 Collage by Courtney Henry

23: Collage by Courtney Henry

24 Collage by Courtney Henry

25: Collage by Courtney Henry

Endnotes

- 1 Israel, Nico. 2018, *Spirals : The Whirled Image in Twentieth-Century Literature and Art*, (New York, Ny: Columbia University Press), 123.
- W
- 2 Zipline Media. n.d. "DEAR BALLET //an Excerpt from Our Conversation with JASMINE HEARN, @Dancelabny," Accessed 2022. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CbOGNUzDhDF/>.
- 3 Eglash, Dr. Ron. 2000 "Spirals | CSDT." Csdtd.org. 2000, <https://csdt.org/culture/adinkra/spirals.html>.
- 4 King, Alonzo. 2022. "Thinking Partner Conversations." Zoom, 2022.
- 5 Maragha, Alexandra. 2022. "Arabesque Patterns, Art, & Design." Study.com. 2022. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/arabesque-designs-patterns-islamic-western.html#:~:text=As%20we%20learned%2C%20the%20arabesque>.
- 6 Maragha, Alexandra. 2022.
- 7 Maragha, Alexandra. 2022.
- 8 "Art on a Loop: African Fractals; Sacred Symmetry / Francois Beaurain / Medina Dugger - ART AFRICA." 2018. ART AFRICA. March 26, 2018.
- 9 "Art on a Loop: African Fractals; Sacred Symmetry / Francois Beaurain / Medina Dugger - ART AFRICA." 2018. ART AFRICA. March 26, 2018.
- 10 King, Alonzo. 2022. "Thinking Partner Conversations." Zoom, 2022.
- 11 King, Alonzo. 2022. "Thinking Partner Conversations." Zoom, 2022.
- 12 King, Alonzo. 2022. "Thinking Partner Conversations." Zoom, 2022.