

Mapping
Lineage

Mapping Lineage
Book Project

Lineage Maps by Dance
Improvisation Artists

Edited by Tamara Ashley

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Forward

Nina Martin,

*January 4,
2017*

Marfa, Texas

In 2013 I finished my dissertation, *Emergent Choreography: Spontaneous Ensemble Dance Composition in Improvised Performance* (Martin, 2013) and in one of the last paragraphs I wrote, "Finally, narrowly focused symposia on ensemble improvisation dancemaking methods as a subject featuring the artists, ensembles, and dance scholars working in this area would promote innovations in dancemaking practices. A symposium format with performances, lecture demonstrations, panels, and presentations of scholarly and first-person artistic research would be helpful for opening spaces for new ideas and input into the issues within this area of dancemaking."

Not long after that Lower Left Performance Collective members Shelley Senter, Margaret Paek, and I approached the dean of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, Allyson Green, and the director of the Tisch Initiative for Creative Research, Dana Whitco, about Tisch School of the Arts hosting a symposium focused on interdisciplinary ensemble improvisation art practices. Allyson and Dana were immediately receptive and planning began with great assistance from Indah Walsh.

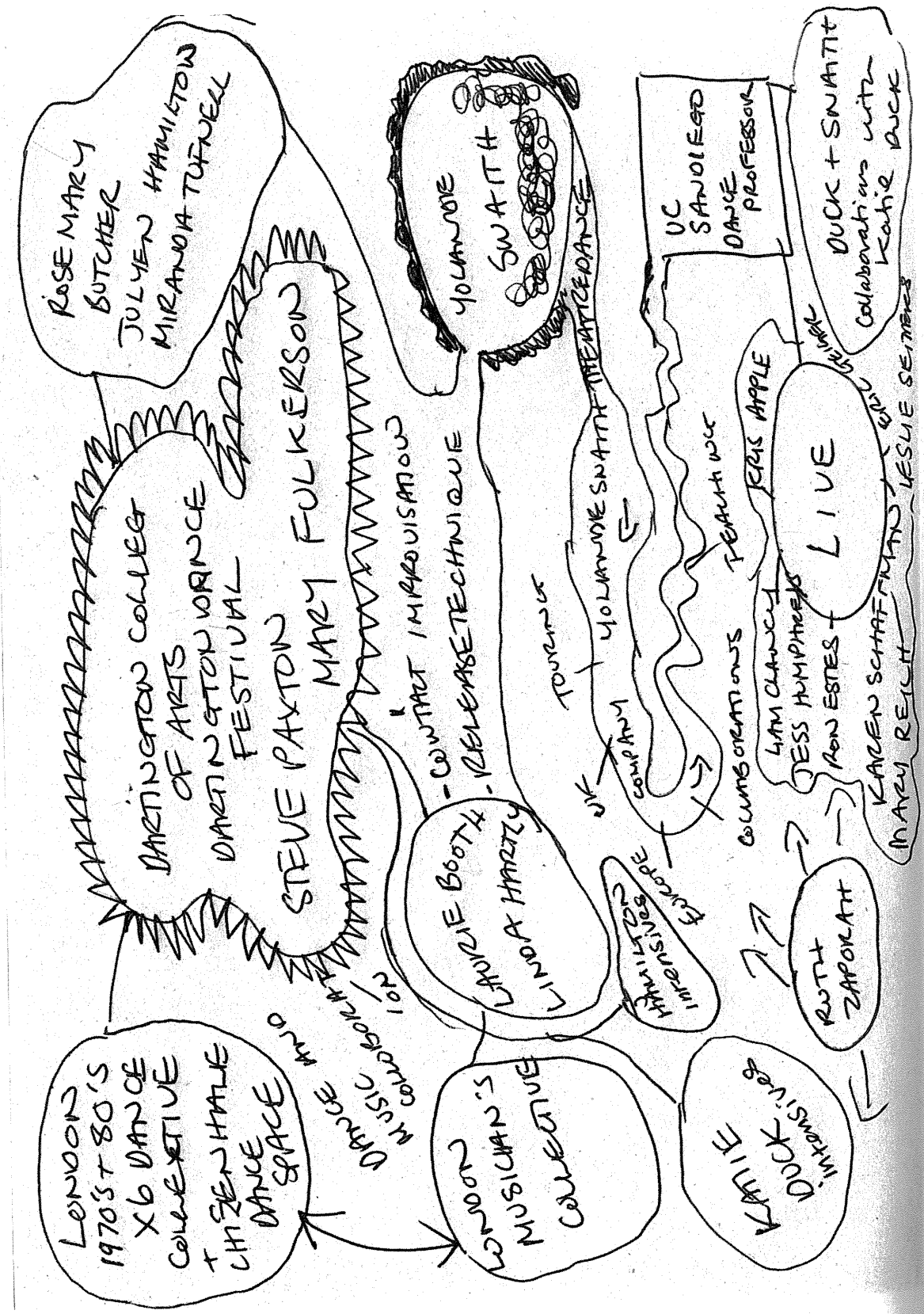
Rosemary Quinn, director of the NYU Experimental Theatre Wing and Pam Prieto, NYU dance faculty, Dana, and I formed the core planning committee and were joined by NYU faculty from the Steinhardt School, Dance, Drama, and Performance Studies and Ensemble Improvisation: Form in Question Symposium (FIQ) was on its way. Sean Curran, chair of the dance department, graciously gave the dance building over to the symposium. Dean Green hosted a healthy breakfast and lunch spread everyday so that participants could continue to engaged as a large group rather than splitting up into East Village restaurants.

With the FIQ symposium posted on Facebook registrations poured in from artists across the US and several participants from Europe. Some artists such as American choreographer Barbara Dilley and British artist and writer Tim Etchells participated via Skype calls. Notions of ensemble shared by Chisa Hidaka with her Dolphin Dance Project and Dr. Nancy Smithner and her formerly incarcerated students contributed a breadth and depth to symposium offerings. Many other artists, who have contributed their lineage maps to this volume, shared their research and new connections were made. The atmosphere from the first moment of the symposium was one of frenzied energy as artists reconnected after many years and across many miles. The value of a symposium solely dedicated to ensemble improvisational forms was immediately obvious as well because discussion of solo and duet forms did not distract from the ensemble focus.

On the last morning of the symposium, one of the closing activities organized by Tamara Ashley and Julie Nathanielsz was for the participants to map their artmaking lineages. Some participants were not present at the closing activity and some participants did not feel that their map was suitable or complete enough for inclusion in this artist book.

I am sure that if we all did them over we would include more information and ask for bigger pieces of paper! In any case, Tamara saw the value of preserving this data and organized funding from the University of Bedford, UK and conducted a successful crowd funding campaign in order to publish these maps. Thank you Tamara!

I hope that these maps are a useful documentation of the Ensemble Improvisation: Form in Question Symposium. I know that I will treasure the maps as I treasure the experience I shared with some many colleagues.



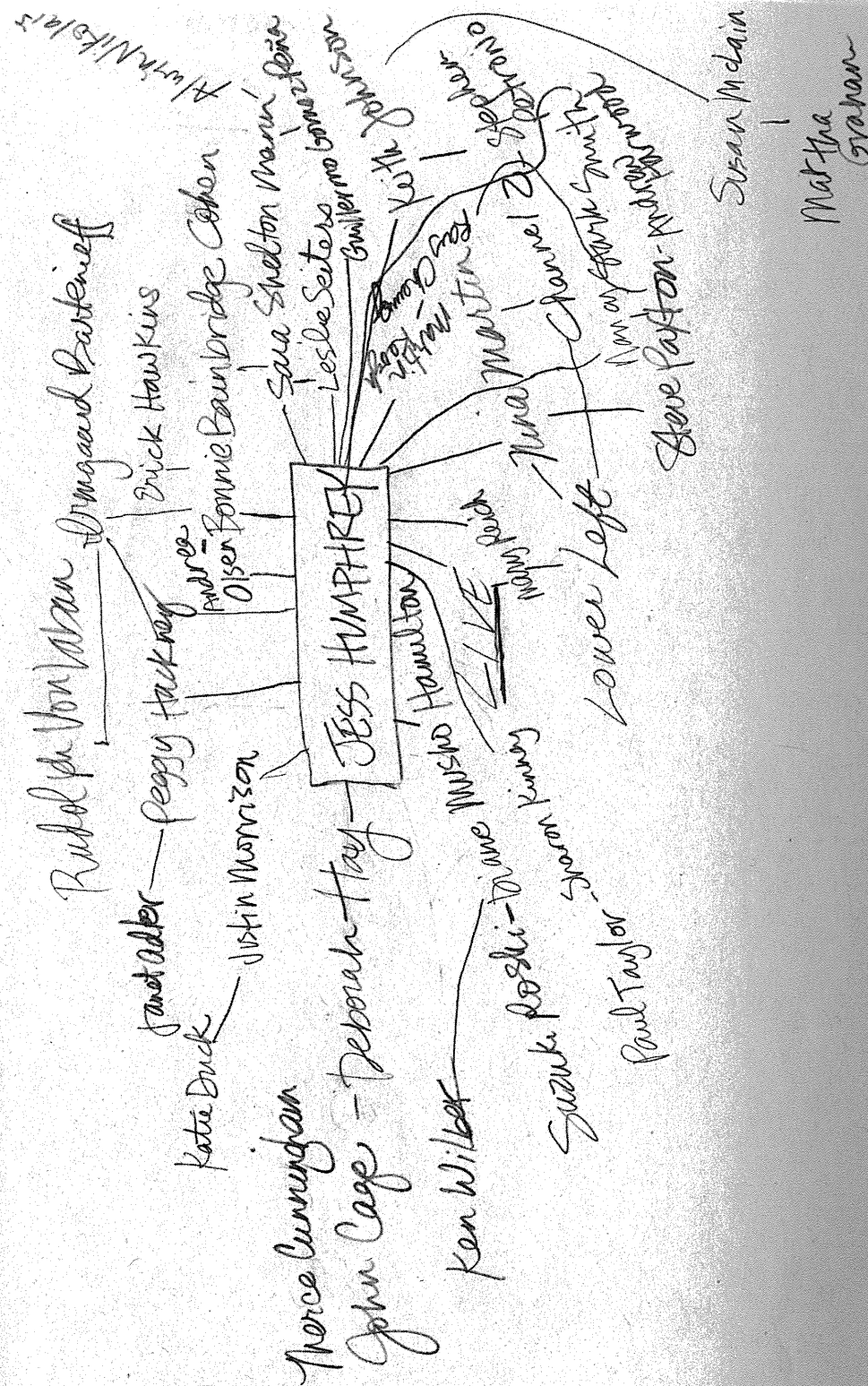
Nina Martin 1976 NYC
 Paul Hunt Simone Forti
 Mary Overlie / Hamilton Floor Barre
 July Padon
 Channel 2
 Feld, Warsaw, Madden, Lepkoff, Martin, Petronio
 Steve Paxton/PBS Dance in America
 in the Air
 Case
 Cunningham
 Grand Union
 Anna Halprin
 School for New Dance Development (Out House)
 + Arnhem
 Lock time Collective - Johanna Meyer Jennifer Keller
 Alexandra Hartmann
 Mary Fulkerson Elaine Summers/Kinetic
 Awareness
 Experimental Theater Wing
 David Gordon/PickUp Company
 Deborah Hay Barbara Dilley
 Ensemble Thinking/Rewire-Dancing States
 (theorizing)
 Impuls Tanz Vienna
 MFA PhD - Texas Woman's University
 Lower Left Performance Collective
 Karen Schaffman, Mary Reich, Jane Blont
 Margaret Paek, Andrew Wass, Kelly Dalrymple,
 Rebecca Bryant, Shelley Senter, Leslie Seates
 Marfa Texas
 Marfa Live Arts
 March 2 Marfa/Dance Ranch
 FORM in Question! January 14-17
 2016

Nina Martin
(USA)

As we approach publication, I am looking at my map again 20 months later in August 2017. I realize that I mostly put down artists with whom I directly studied and/or performed. If I were to do the map again I would highlight dance pedagogue Margaret H'Doubler and composer John Cage because I realize my information as I a post-modern dance artist theorist is due to their innovative ideas that survive generationally through the work of artists such as Anna Halprin, Robert Dunn, Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer, Deborah Hay, Steve Paxton, Mary Overlie and Simone Forti.

I arrived in NYC in the fall of 1976 knowing that I wanted to work in the avant-garde since artists in Austin, Texas had introduced to me the concepts of John Cage. Upon arriving in downtown Manhattan I decided not to study at the Cunningham studio because the students did not seem to have more information than I had already acquired and I felt that I needed to be around dancers that were more informed than I. As I left the Cunningham studio, I met Eric Hess who knew something about postmodern dance and living in New York (thank goodness) and we rented an apartment in the Lower East Side on 3rd Street between avenues A and B for \$200. That night we went to see Deborah Hay perform at the Paula Cooper gallery in SoHo. I was mesmerized with Hay's performance though I could not figure out, for the life of me, what principles of dancemaking she was working with! Simone Forti was in the audience and asked me to perform with her in her upcoming piece Planet at PS. 1 in Queens. Of course I was thrilled and, as it turned out, I had found my dance family many of whom I continue to work with today! Some of the 40 performers (that I can recall) include Pooh Kaye, Paul Langland, Wendell Beavers and Terry O'Reilly. I found a dance community and went on to perform in different configurations with Steve Paxton (PBS Beyond the Mainstream), Judy Padow (Brooklyn Academy of Music - Next Wave Festival), David Gordon Pick-Up Company, Nancy Topff, Deborah Hay, Barbara Dilley, Mary Overlie, Channel Z (Danny Lepkoff, Diane Madden, Robin Feld, Stephen Petronio, Paul Langland and Randy Warshaw), and Martha Clarke.

In addition to Channel Z, I went on to work with several ensembles/ collaborations that researched improvisational dancemaking including: Locktime (Jennifer Keller, Johanna Meyer and Alexandra Hartmann), New York Dance Intensive (Frances Becker, Shelley Senter, Wendell Beavers), Lower Left Performance Collective- San Diego/Marfa (Karen Schaffman, Mary Reich, Jane).



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