

What Happens Next?

Omari 'Motion' Carter, *The Motion Dance Collective*

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a-Welcome to the class,
welcome to the class.
Make sure you've got a webcam
and your internet is fast.
We've got time for a warm up
so I'm sharing through the sound.
So turn your speakers up
and mute your microphones now.
Look...

My name's Omari 'Motion' Carter
that's for starters.
Screendance practitioner -
with the Master's,
lecturer at universities with dancers,
and produce dance-film with
The Motion Dance Collective objectives,
with hip-hop's perspective.
I be "ebonically linguistic"¹ with the
rhetoric while academically legit.
So listen carefully and
check out all the references,
there's knowledge in the words I spit.

I want to talk about the problems
I've been having teaching.
How pandemic present
has affected all my lessons.
Bridging the gap with a rap

is my rhyming's reason.
So take a seat, sip a tea,
and let's start the session
from the bottom,
to implement a base.
Beginning with the novice in the
screendance space...
With limited time to teach them
what they should know,
do we need shutter speed, aperture, ISO?
I asked Mitchell Rose and he said no,
reorienting their thinking is the way to
go.²
Oh! So have I been teaching all wrong?
Was I implementing camera theory
all too strong?
Has this digital detachment
thrown my practice in a realm
where my teaching is now limited
to lecturing film?

I know my goal is to make
film methods tangible
and for dancers this process is
much more manageable.³
However, I could not imagine at all,
that I'd have to shift initially to teaching
verbal.
When we all know the best workshops



either start with walking around the space, laying on floors or sitting in circles. Uh!

a-Welcome to the class that takes place in your room. I'm sorry that your late, you should have downloaded Zoom. This is being recorded though for you to watch back and if you want to check the videos they're posted in the chat.

I don't want to teach online...

Is that a crime?
Face-to-face knowledge was working out just fine. I had my notes, the projector, a huge dance space, and a stopwatch set to keep time.

Of course the necessity is undisputed, but engaging creative minds while their muted is not what I computed.

I also wonder if it's good for my health, since the first sign of madness is talking to yourself. Listen...

It's also impossible to know what I lack, cause as an hourly paid lecturer I don't get the feedback.

Most organisations assuming that screendance education is as easy as a screen and an educator. Re-writing modules with the phobia of trial and error; Blackboard/Moodle network architecture; Face-to-face, live-stream, pre-recorded lecture; Adequate schooling? A matter of conjecture.

So I reached out to dance-filmmakers under separate names, to provide mutual support and thoughtful exchange. But these came mostly in the form of empathy texts, as we keep our altered exercises close to our chests. Couldn't say I aim to blame, we all need a paycheck. A place to share experiences is what we need next.

That's what we need next...

So what happens next?

So here I am:
Editing dances, while teaching classes and being asked 'Sir? How do we pass this?' Well here's the truth kids. I got my Masters by making my interests worth more than the marks were.

Being authentically you is the answer, regardless of the modes in which you're taught to be dancers. You mould the mode to move your moving images. Flip the script to rip apart your scrimmages...

You should be having *Conversations* like you're Malaolu;⁴ Curating other artists like my man Mr Opoku-Addiae.⁵

Solidifying process? No stress;
Common Dance like Lee,⁶
 direct like Morg & Jess,⁷
 hyper-match like Mitch,⁸
 journal like Kappenberg,⁹
 location scout like Millar,¹⁰
 write like Rosenberg.¹¹

As hard as it may seem
 to work in these extremes
 and to explore the practice of
 screendance practically.
 Disseminating knowledge
 through these digital means
 has, to my surprise, come quite naturally.

I'm not sure if that's because I'm under 33
 or when it comes to analogue,
 I know it ends with a 'g'?

a-Welcome to the class
 I think that you will find,
 we were meant to be face-to-face
 but Boris changed his mind.¹²
 I've made a whole new schedule
 and I hope it's not too strange.
 And just like the whole world right now,
 it is subject to change.

Asking podiums at symposiums
 in particular,
 How do we *mark* the language in the
 screendance curricula?
 In your digestion of that
 rhetorical question
 let me recommend
 a couple of suggestions.

Number 1: Let's have fun;
 Lighting simple - lamp, torch, sun;
 Flick on a soundtrack
 that's copyright free;
 Explore every axis: X-Y-Z.

Suggestion 2:

we already know what to do:
 Netflix, Facebook, Vimeo, YouTube -
 So much information coming at us
 in a loop;
 So much screen time
 that we professionally view.
 So what happens when years of viewing
 is put to use?
 Knowledge comes from each individual
 frame you peruse.
 The art is showing us
 how it reacts to the times.
 I can only guide its processes
 a limited amount.
 But if I was to give this period a title,
 I wonder if the splitscreen era counts?

Let's advocate developments of
 more embodied learning.
 Through exercises utilised in
 our creative teaching.
 Physically advancing
 an approach to the screendancing
 that affects the many ways in which
 we are currently filming.

We owe it to ourselves,
 to be proud of our process.
 Hold our heads high
 as we hope for a time
 that is zoom-less.
 Even if at times we feel clueless.
 Know that our practice isn't rootless.
 Relish in the *NOWNESS*¹³
 and the newness.
 Know that you can do this.
 Experience never renders you useless,
 so remain ruthless.
 Be an optimistic opportunist.
 The best single way to conclude is...

a-Welcome to the class
 I think it's time to end
 I thank you all for coming
 and I hope you re-attend.

I think I've said my piece
(a rant it may have seemed to be).

I wish you all adieu
and hope your paths stay Covid-free.

Listen to "What Happens Next?" on Soundcloud:

<https://soundcloud.com/omari-carter/what-happens-next-1/s-4Gv7bv4Qlz8>

Audio Credits

Original Composition and Performance by Omari 'Motion' Carter

Sound Engineering and Consultancy by Stacy Carter

Biography

Omari 'Motion' Carter is a screendance practitioner and lecturer based in London and, for the past decade, has been directing, choreographing, editing and performing for music videos, film, television and theatre. A first-class BA(Hons) degree in Performing Arts at London Metropolitan University led Omari to perform for 7 years in the West End and international touring productions of 'Stomp!' During this time, Omari choreographed, directed, performed and produced a varied reel of dance on film work with award winning Screendance production company, The Motion Dance Collective, of which he founded in 2011. His practice and research centre around hip-hop dance culture, body percussion, urbanity, and dance-film, with the aim of bridging the gap between the movers, makers and thinkers within the genre. Omari is associate lecturer in screendance at London Contemporary Dance School (LCDS), University of East London and Lincoln University and a graduate, with distinction, of the world's first MA in Screendance at LCDS. Omari's short dance-narratives have screened both in the UK and internationally at over 50 film and dance-film festivals, as he continues to push the critical awareness of narrative dance-film practice, through workshops, talks, podcasts, curations, screenings and commissions within the UK.

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Notes

¹ Q-Tip, "Start it Up" by A Tribe Called Quest.

² Filmmaker Mitchell Rose, speaking with The Motion Dance Collective in screendance podcast, The MDC Talks (July 19, 2020). This episode was unreleased at time of publication.

³ Ellen Maynard as cited in Bench, "Screendance: Learning, Teaching, Living," 191.

⁴ Lanre Malaolu, "The Conversation."

⁵ Freddie Opoku-Addaie, SystemsLAB.

⁶ Rosemary Lee, "Common Dance."

⁷ Jessica Wright & Morgan Runacre-Temple, <https://www.jessandmorgs.com/>

⁸ Mitchell Rose, "Crowd-Sourced Filmmaking."

⁹ Claudia Kappenberg, <http://www.ckappenberg.info/>

¹⁰ Marlene Millar, <https://www.marlenemillar.com/>

¹¹ Douglas Rosenberg, *Screendance*.

¹² "Boris Johnson has announced all primary and secondary schools will be shut for the whole of January amid ongoing backlash from teaching unions." 4 Jan. 2021. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1379534/School-closures-live-update-UK-latest-term-dates-in-my-area-Covid-lockdown-rules>

¹³ NOWNESS. <https://www.nowness.com/topic/dance>

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