

# RACHEL HELTEN

*BFA, Simon Fraser University.*

*Vancouver, Canada*

Strong. Creative. Passionate.

## FORMAL TRAINING

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**Simon Fraser University | BFA in Dance** - Vancouver, CANADA (September 2012- August 2016)

Intensive training for ballet, contemporary and modern (specializing in techniques such as Graham and Cunningham). Emphasis on technical execution, strength, mobility, creativity, and performance.

Academic propionate inspires critical thinking and risk-taking. Expansive knowledge of mind and body creates heightened kinaesthetic and proprioceptive awareness. Emphasis on interdisciplinary studies cultivates inventive, dynamic and impactful work.

**Mcbride's School of Dancing** – Vancouver, CANADA (September 1997– June 2012)

Worked alongside numerous choreographers and dancers learning multiple repertoire pieces in various styles including ballet, jazz, modern, and lyrical. Competed in multiple national competitions each year.

**Royal Academy of Dance**– Vancouver, CANADA (September 1998- June 2012)

Studied RAD ballet technique under the leadership of Heather Mcbride. Successfully completed examinations up to Advanced II. The RAD syllabus focuses on technical execution in ballet, terminology, dance theory, pointe and character work.

## INTENSIVES

**Addo Platform | Gaga** - Cascais, PORTUGAL (July- August 2019)

A two-week intensive focusing on Gaga training, Batsheva repertory, Creative Labs and improvisation. We trained under the guidance of Guy Shomroni, Yaniv Abraham, Margarida Macieira, Nicolas Ventura, Alvin Collantes and Hugo Hugo Marmelada.

**Vault Movement Projects | Countertechnique Intensive** - Vancouver, CANADA (March 2019)

Intensive taught by Charles Slender-White. Technique classes, improvisational and explorational labs investigating the principles of Countertechnique.

**Nexolab**- Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA (December 2018)

In this three-day dance intensive, we vigorously explored various improvisational methods. We probed and cultivated discourse of what was seen, felt and expressed.

**Residencia de Face Cafe**- Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA ( February 2018)

Participated in a 3 week intensive. The first weeks included intensive training in various methodologies such as Cunningham, Graham, improvisational techniques, “animal man”, contemporary contact and partnering, cross partnering techniques, counter technique, classical ballet from the sensitive body, improvisation and aerial dance.

**Open FLR** – Florence, ITALY ( July 2017)

Trained in a three-week intensive facilitated by choreographers from around the globe- Christopher Evans, Shumpei Nemoto, Dorotea Saykaly and Jasmine Ellis. Intensive incorporated workshops with each choreographer. After casting we began to work intimately with Dorotea Saykaly to devise a piece for a showcase to be presented at the end of the three weeks and 4 site-specific works to be danced around the city of Florence.

**Modus Operandi Intensive** – Vancouver, CANADA (July 2015, July 2016)

Trained under the leadership of Tiffany Trethargen and David Raymond. The intensive focused on technical execution, repertoire, improvisation and performance in ballet and contemporary.

**Company 605 Intensive**– Vancouver, CANADA (December 2015)

Trained under the leadership of Josh Martin and Lisa Gilley Martin. The intensive focused on complex modes of improvisation, dynamic repertoire, and highly physical contemporary technique.

## PERFORMANCE

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**Dezza Dance Company (Desirée Dunbar) -**

*Deep Roots* (Dancer) | Aberthau & The Orpheum Annex | January- May 2019

*Amuse- Bouche* (Dancer & Singer) | Aberthau | April 2018

*There's No Place Like Home* (Dancer) | Aberthau | September- November 2017 &

*A Port in the Storm* (Dancer) | Aberthau | July 2015

I have acted as assistant to Artistic Director Desirée Dunbar in various avenues: administrative, rehearsal assistant, teaching assistant, teacher, choreographer, and performer. Explored the boundaries of structured improvisation and choreography, while furthering investigating other disciplines including meditation, energy work, yoga, and conditioning. Performed in site-specific collaborations with live musicians and intergenerational dance artists.

### **Plastic Orchid Factory**

*Digital Folk Tour* (Dancer/ Singer) | Vancouver & Alberta | June 2019, October- November 2018 & July- September 2016

Digital Folk is described as “a video game/costume party, music and dance performance/installation built around the desire to revisit how communities gather to play music, dance and tell stories.” It is a collaboration with dance artists, James Gnam, Natalie LeFebvre Gnam, visual artist Natalie Purschwitz, lighting designer, James Proudfoot, and 11 dance artists. It explores a generation’s approach to identifying through highly physical and playful movement, visuals and sound.

### **Voirelia: A dance, psychology and philosophy hub**

*Dracula’s Garden Film & Performance Series* (Choreographer/Performer) | Vancouver | February 2019-Present

A series of contemporary dance works inspired by Gothic literature. Each dance work is like a poem – telling its own unique story and inspired by a different poem or text.

### **Bloom: Wine, Dance, Comedy**

*Mascall Dance* (Dancer) *Bare* Choreography by Sophie Brassard | June - July 2018 and *The Venus Effect* choreography by Chelsea Goddard | March-April 2019

Sophie’s work explored the textures, physical sensations, and emotional tones that live within our skin. Chelsea’s work probed notions relating to vanity, mirrors and altering perspectives.

### **J&K Collaboration**

*Ignite Festival* (Dancer) | The Cultch | May - July 2018 & April - May 2019

Under the mentorship of Julie Chapple, Jenna and Kayla asked us to explore and subvert our inherent movement habits, preferred dynamics and pathways.

### **The East Vancouver Opera**

*Alma* (Dancer) | The Metro | May- June 2017

Performed as a mythical owl in the post-apocalyptic harrowing tale of a young girl with hidden powers. The movement was an amalgamation of ballet, burlesque flavors and the studied nuances of owls in flight.

### **The Lovers Cabaret**

*Lovers of Dylan* (Dancer/Singer) | The Wise Hall | February- June 2017)

The Lovers Cabaret is a contemporary dance company that imbues their affinity for folk and classic rock to create meaningful work that delves into concepts of social, political and personal unrest and the various ways we choose to protest. In this process I am acting as a collaborator as a dancer and singer.

### **SFU CREDITS** | *Fei & Milton Wong Experimental Theatre.*

**Sarah Chase, Heather Myers & Judith Garay** | *4 Views* (Dancer) | April 2016

**Rob Kitsos & Peter Bingham** | *Nostos* (Dancer) | November 2015

**Gioconda Barbuto, Vanessa Goodman & Emmalena Fredriksson** | *Shift* (Dancer) | April 2015

**Wen Wei Wang & Crystal Pite** | *SFU Rep* (Dancer & Singer) | November 2014

### **CHOREOGRAPHIC/INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE**

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**Let’s Find Out - Elle Wolf** | Music Video (Choreographer & Dancer) Vancouver, BC | September - October 2020

I was asked to create a dance that portrays the struggle between empowerment and disempowerment in toxic relationships. Collaborators: Ana Sosa, Samantha Presley, Arash Khakpour and Elle Burston.

**Our Stories - Addo Platform** | Residency (Choreographer & Dancer) Online Festival | July - August 2020

“Our Stories [is an online dance festival that] connects dance artists from around the world with art lovers and supporters. This project aims to enhance interconnectivity, interdependence and co-creativity on a global scale”. For this work “As Within, So Without, As above, So below.” I will be investigating the different shadow archetypes and enlightened archetypes that live within my spirit. I explore how the microcosm of my internal landscape amplifies out into the macrocosm of my external reality.

**Sins - OurGlassZoo** | Music Video (Interpreter & Dancer) Vancouver, BC | May - July 2020

I will be interpreting the shadow archetype of envy through a persona described as the “fashionista” for an upcoming collaboration with Vancouver based band “OurGlassZoo” and a collective of other inspiring artists.

**12 Minutes Max** | Residency (Choreographer & Dancer) The ScotiaBank Dance Centre | September - November 2019

This residency allowed us space to explore, share and receive mentorship from Raina Von Waldenberg and Idan Cohen. In this work, we delved into the meaning of oneness vs. division, within ourselves and the world around us. My collaborators were the brave and brilliant Chelsea Goddard, Sophie Brassard (dance artists), Ben Helten (composer), and Ezequiel Peralta (digital artist).

**Tara Cheyenne Performance** (Intern & Apprentice) Vancouver | January 2016-2018

My internship/ apprenticeship duties included: helping with the notation of movement and text.

Assisting with generation, refinement, and demonstration of movement. Present for remount of Tara’s solo work “Porno Death Cult”, the development of an arts club musical “The Post Mistress”, a Theatre Under The Stars presentation of “West Side Story” (Assistant Choreographer) and the genesis of a new solo work “I can’t remember the word for I can’t remember” (Rehearsal Director) and a dancer for a cultch residency for a work entitled “How to be”. Last Spring, I am assisting the choreography for a musical at The University of British Columbia entitled “Les Belles Soeurs”.

**Dezza Dance: Leg Up** (Choreographer & Performer) Moberly Arts & Cultural Centre | March 2018, February 2019 & February 2020

***Our veins like her branches*** | **February 2020:** *Our veins like her branches* is a love letter for mother nature. In this work, we embody our symbiotic dance with nature while mourning our violent separation from her, from ourselves and one another. In light of our current climate crisis, this subject weighs heavily on our hearts and minds. Through the mediums of dynamic movement, live electric guitar, and real-time digital projections we endeavor to share this story through a journey of ceremony, harmony, destruction, and redemption. We explore how this collective grief lives within our bodies and the undertones of loss, anger, and helplessness. While by the grace of our tenderness, connection, and bravery we uncover the truth of our unity and the love that lives within all things. This is a 30 minute interdisciplinary work choreographed by Rachel Helten in collaboration with Dancers: Sophie Brassard, Chelsea Goddard, Composer: Benjamin Helten and Digital Artist: Ezequiel Peralta.

***We Endure*** | **February 2019:** I created a solo work amidst the Andean landscapes and ruins of Peru and Bolivia. I was deeply inspired by the pulse of their spiritual beliefs, arts, and culture. The work is a sentiment of the enduring nature of the human spirit. The first sharing of the work “We Endure” was February 15th & 16th for an Emerging Choreographer Showcase.

***Historias Desenterradas*** | **March 2018:** I choreographed an 11-minute solo work entitled “Historias Desenterradas” relating to concepts pertaining to intergenerational influence and the resonance of nature. While I was in South America (Uruguay, Brazil, and Argentina) I crafted movement phrases and wrote poetry in different areas in nature i.e. the ocean, in forests, in the mountains to investigate my response. Later I consolidated the work in a studio while training in Buenos Aires.

**For the Wild** | Fundraiser for CPAWS (Producer/ Choreographer/ Performer) 45 W | June 2019

Self-produced fundraiser sharing that presented 8 dance and music works. With the help of numerous artists and loved ones, the show raised \$1,052.85 for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

***The clarity of all that is:*** A duet between sibling duo Rachel and Ben Helten (Musician ) that probes how memories, trauma and emotions live within our body and the healing power of nature.

**Lazy Afternoon: Dezza Dance Summer Series** (Choreographer & Performer) | Aberthau | June 2019

Alongside the brilliant West Point Grey Community Dancers, we performed to the beautiful sounds of Mark Atherton’s opera singing and enchanting piano. I created a solo work inspired by figures of Greek Mythology and their desire for freedom.

**Me pierdo** | Music Video for Ecuadorian Artist Verde 70 (Choreographer & Performer) Vancouver | June 2019

This film was an international collaboration with filmmaker Juan Diego Monsalve, exploring our reactions when we are haunted by past memories. The film will be present in Canada, Ecuador and internationally.

**Judith Fair- Ally Theatre** (Choreographer & Performer) The Cultch | December 2018- March 2019

The duet “***The Place of Her Sighs***” is related to the themes of dehumanization, humanization and our need for unity. We first started our exploration with artists from Argentina and I have continued the process with one of my collaborators Sophie Brassard here in Vancouver. We presented this work in progress for a celebration of International Women’s Day March 4th, 2019 for “Judith Fair” at The Cultch Theatre in Vancouver.

**Split Screen: Youth Choreographic Residency** (Choreographer & Performer) Boom Box | September- October 2018

This process was facilitated by Justine Chambers, Ileana Cheladyn & Katie Lowen. My collaborator Chelsea Goddard and I explored the notions of synchronicity, fate, and the energies that connect us in a work entitled “*Oasis*”. In this site-specific work we utilized projections of our everyday rituals, props, and lighting to create an “Oasis” for the audience in a 9’x9’x9’ space.

**Performing Arts Abroad Internship** (Volunteer Dance Teacher at Art Therapy Centre) Quito, Ecuador. | October- December 2016

I had the privilege of teaching dance at an Art Therapy School “Sinamune” for students with varying disabilities. I taught classes in Spanish, contributed choreography and assisted with demonstrating movement. I worked Monday to Friday while I was present in Quito. My five-hour workdays included teaching Movement Therapy, Choreography, and Recreational dance.

**Burnaby Arts Council Residency** (Choreographer / Performer / Co-writer of Original Musical) Children’s musical Ellery Zephyr and the Whispering Winds | Burnaby & Vancouver | April- August 2014

Co-created an original children’s musical. Job position included writing the script and songs of the musical, performing 50 shows around the lower mainland, choreographing movement, and creating the set, advertising, and administrative work. Lead role skills required: singing, dancing, acting, playing the flute, etc.

**SFU CREDITS** | *SFU Woodward*s

**Promethean | Grad Show** (Choreographer & Performer) by Rachel Helten and fellow SFU Graduates | April 2016

Co-created an hour-long movement-based mosaic commemorating our last four years at SFU. Collaborated with lighting designer Jake Lindsey and composer Nathan Marsh. Choreographed a group piece that included 8 dancers, a trio, a quartet, and solo. I found inspiration through various mediums and experiences i.e. paintings done by Salvador Dali such as “Bacchanale” which grasped the essence of our journey- a mixture of immense solace and internal ruction.

**SYZYGY | Ascension** (Choreography & Performer) | December 2015

Through movement and sound, we endeavored to exemplify the profundity of the soul and how our energies create a ripple effect that has the power to change the world around us. A collaboration with lighting designer, James Kokol, composer, Nathan Marsh, and 9 brilliant dancers.

**The Cloak of our Shadows | Student Main Stage** (Choreographer & Performer ) | March 2015

Inspired by the exploration of dynamics opposite to my habitual movement qualities. Delved into notions of suppression and how stifling emotions can manifest into hysteria. Danced to eerie sounds by Erik Satie and Poetry by Jim Morrison. Worked with dramaturge (Ker Wells) to amplify dramatic presence. Imbued my own spoken word into the piece by responding to the poetry of Jim Morrison.

## **AWARDS/SCHOLARSHIPS/TEACHING**

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- Dance Teacher: Adult Creative Dance, Parent & Tot Dance, Beginner Creative Ballet, Adult Beginner Ballet, Pilates & Barre Flow Instructor
- Performed with Music Artists “Young Blood” as a dancer at JUNOFest 2018.
- Scholarship for Modus Operandi Intensive (2016)
- SFU Service award (2015, 2016)
- Training Society of Vancouver board member (2016- Present)
- Royal Academy of Dance Ballet Exams: Intermediate Foundation, Intermediate, Advanced I and Advanced II (2011)

## **EDUCATION**

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### **Simon Fraser University**

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Dance Major

## **REFERENCES**

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Desirée Dunbar | Artistic Director of Dezza Dance Desiree Dunbar MFA | Founder, Artistic Director, Choreographer and Performer of Dezza Dance | Mentor

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\*More references available upon request.