



Wacsmash: Lines to Recognize

Nisha Gujral, Grace Winston, Nikki Friedman
WACUS, wacsmash@gmail.com



The Community

- WACUS: The World Arts and Cultures Undergraduate Society**
- Established 16 years ago with intent of producing more opportunities for the undergraduate students in the Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance to create art.
 - Comprised of WAC/D undergraduate students
 - Responsible for organizing and facilitating different events that incorporate the academic curriculum in the department, preparing the student body to embark into the professional world.
 - Helps to plan and manage dance classes to enable students to teach one and another, unite the undergraduate student body through social events, and develop workshops that help facilitate discussions regarding career guidance.
 - Serves as a bridge between the undergraduate students and faculty members by addressing student opinions and concerns and attending faculty meeting
 - Serves the student population through many facets of art making and education, most significantly, Wacsmash.



Wacsmash is a performance showcase of undergraduate work that gives WAC/D students the ability to work on a 5 minute piece over a four month period and present it in a cohesive evening show. It is produced by three seniors in the Department who are committed to bringing through the values of WACUS to the greater UCLA population. They seek out all funding sources and personnel, develop marketing strategies and a budget, and manage the timeline of the production.



Our Intent



Wacsmash started in 2000 by students in the Department who wanted to provide more performance and choreographic opportunities for the WAC/D study body.

Since the beginning of its inception Wacsmash has continued to be the single source of student proactivity that bridges our passion for dance and movement to the greater UCLA community.

Wacsmash 2016:

- This year we planned to take the creation process of the show seriously, implementing structured workshops and conversations geared toward community growth and understanding.
- We knew that with a safe environment for critiquing and improving ideas, and giving guidance and feedback to one another without feeling attacked, our show would turn out the most cohesive and developed it has ever been.
- We gave particular attention to curating a thought provoking performance that transcends the idea of art and choreography solely as entertainment.
- We titled our show Lines to Recognize in an effort to recognize the lines of influence in our lives as artists. In the process of creating art (and life), our teachers, families, friends, artistic predecessors, and the institutions we are a part of draw lines. It is up to the artist to push those boundaries to find unexpected yet gratifying outcomes or to work within the security of the line to find new information.

The Event

Location: Glorya Kaufman Dance Theater in Glorya Kaufman Hall at UCLA
Date: February 5-7, 2016
Artists: 19
Participants: 60
Audience: Over 900
Audience demographic: UCLA students, greater Los Angeles art community, WAC/D students and faculty, family and friends.

Subject Matter Addressed In Performance: mental illness, stigmas surrounding the female body, collaboration of live music and movement, co-collaboration of film, dance, and ceramics, video game culture, death, technology and its impact on communication, economic inequality and more.

Quotes from Audience Members

"The show order was great this year! Really showed diversity and every piece was placed really well."

"What an incredibly talented cast! Everyone moved so beautifully!"

"I loved how many different styles of dance were incorporated into the show. There was a wide variety which truly showed the performers skills."



The Outcome

Marketing Methods:

- Advertised Wacsmash through various social media outlets such as Facebook and Instagram
- "Artist Spotlight" where we posted a bio and photo of each artist to maintain audience relationship
- Personal outreach
- Worked with a graphic designer to create posters and postcards to place around campus and to spread the word about the show

Results: Many of the individuals in attendance had simply just heard about the performance through word of mouth and marketing. In our survey asking if people were inspired to take a dance class after watching the performance, the majority of people said yes.

Conclusions/Future Directions: The show went incredibly well. We received amazing feedback on how strong of a show it was this year. Additionally, we were told how successfully it reflected our dedication to movement practicum, scholarship, and choreographic studies that we devote ourselves to every day in this Department. The show exhibited a diverse array of subject matter and used movement to actively engage our audience to critically think about the topics being addressed.

Overall, the turnout for the audience was also successful. We did, however, have one show scheduled on Super Bowl Sunday, which made for a smaller audience on that day than expected. We should have planned for this ahead of time by marketing more for the Sunday show or even, holding the show at night rather than daytime. When organizing similar events in the future we could spend even more time promoting the show to the UCLA community and greater Los Angeles arts arena in order to ensure a full house each night.



Acknowledgements

Thank you to Jane and Terry Semel for their vision and support for the Healthy Campus Initiative, and for the HCI leadership, including Gene Block, Scott Waugh and Wendelin Slusser.

An additional thanks to CPC, ARC, and USA/BOD for providing funding for this project as well as Arsenio Apillanes, Ginger Holguin, Mark Goebel, Will O'Loughlen, and Dan Corrigan for all of their production work throughout this process.

Photography by Taso Papadakis