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There was a sea

Paula Lamamie de Clairac Garrido
University of Iowa

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THERE WAS A SEA

by

Paula Lamamie de Clairac Garrido

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts
degree in Dance in the
Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

December 2015

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Rebekah Kowal

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2015

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Paula Lamamie de Clairac Garrido

has been approved by the Examining Committee for
the thesis requirement for the Master of Fine Arts degree
in Dance at the December 2015 graduation.

Thesis Committee:

Rebekah Kowal, Thesis Supervisor

Charlotte Adams

Jennifer Kayle

To Sebastián who loves the sea, and to Simón who came from it.

In the beginning, there was a blackness
Only the sea
In the beginning there was no sun, no moon, no people
In the beginning there were no animals, no plants
Only the sea
The sea was the Mother. The Mother was not people, she was not anything
Nothing at all
She was when she was, darkly
She was memory and potential
She was aluna

Kogui Cosmology
The Elder Brothers by Alan Ereira

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to use this opportunity to thank all the people who have made this piece and all the life around it, possible. First, thanks to George de la Peña and all the faculty of the Dance Department for making the University of Iowa an open and happy space for creativity to arise. Special thanks to my thesis committee: Rebekah Kowal, Charlotte Adams and Jennifer Kayle for their inquiries, guidance and support. Thanks also to Eleanor Goudie-Averill for her insightful feedback. A lot of thanks to Jim Albert, Don Ladd, Leigh'Ann Andrews, Adriana Fernandez, Briana Maxwell and the entire DPA Production Unit for being such a good team to work with. Huge thanks to the beautiful people, dancers/thinkers/collaborators of *There was a sea* who have invested energy, thoughts, and a lot of muscle work to make it possible. They have not only created movement, but also generously given ideas that re-directed the piece completely. To each of you: your dedication is the best gift. I want to thank Jason Palamara with all my heart. He is not only a great musician, but also a true collaborator. Many thanks to Juliana Waechter for sharing with me the costume puzzle with a smile. Enormous thanks to Alex Bush who is such a pleasurable artist to work with. Thank You to all the friends and family that gave me feedback, support, and real practical things like dinners, babysitting hours and care, thanks: mamá, Giuseppe, Dana, Pablo, Noni, Addie, Melanie and Amy. And thanks Duane and Maurice for listening and for your hugs. And above all, Sebastián, this would have not been possible without your practical and conceptual help, without your imagination and your love for the Sea (sigh) Thank you. And tinny most special thanks to Simón, who let me steal some movement for this choreography, and who, with his every morning smile, gives me everything I need to keep going.

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

My choreographic work explores human relationships in interdependence with the natural and cultural world they inhabit. I am interested in the dichotomy body/image that the virtual era is generating in society, disconnecting us from nature. In my choreography I use different media to pursue an aesthetic on the stage among which are video, installation and poetry. I work collectively with the dancers and the music, costume and light artists. I believe that dance has the power to communicate aspects of our culture through the body that escape to verbal language. For every piece I try to find the specific movement that is needed to achieve this act of communication.

In my thesis piece *There was a sea* I have researched the relationships of human beings with the element water. I am interested in the water capacity to give life but also to destroy it; in its beauty, its violence and in our dependence to it. Global warming is changing the geography of the planet and with it, the access that different populations have to water. This remind us that Nature shapes our lives, even in this urban and technological era in which we have a fake sense of control. In this dance we created scenes in where the lack and excess of water appear to highlight this dependence. We go through a journey around the world to see the different situations that people confront, from floods to scarcity, passing through abundance and balance, to show a picture of inequality, somehow given by Nature itself, but also caused or accentuated by human behaviors.

Title: *There was a sea*

Concept and Direction: Paula Lamamie de Clairac

Choreographer: Paula Lamamie de Clairac in collaboration with the dancers

Concert Performance Dates: April 2-4, 2015, 8:00 PM

Concert Venue: Space Place Theatre, University of Iowa North Hall

Music: Jason Palamara.

Voice: Anna Krupp and Simón Velásquez

Video Design: Sebastián Velásquez and Paula Lamamié de Clairac; edited by Paula Lamamié de Clairac

Poem: Excerpt from the creation story of the Kogui people of Colombia, found in *The Elder Brothers* by Alan Ereira

Lighting Design: Jim Albert

Costume Design: Paula Lamamié de Clairac and Juliana Waechter

Dancers: Tyler Clark, Courtney Fleming, Crystal Gurrola, Anya Kress, Anna Krupp, Devanshi Mishra, Amy Simonson, Melanie Swihart, Kristen Vasilakos, Calvin Windschitl