“code em” Revisited: Reimagining Realities Through Embodied Exploration
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Background
A group of four BIPOC scholars from the Theatre Arts & Dance program led by faculty Farrah McAdam. We are passionate about embodied research and the daily struggles our own identified groups face.

- “code em”- Choreographed work by Farrah McAdam (2018) that explored the various emotions of BIPOC experiences through personal narratives and the “em-” prefix.
- Our process rooted from “code em” resulted in 4 Individual Cohorts to further research specific topics: “SystEM”, “Pillars”, “529”, and “Ho`opuka E Ka La Ma Kahikina and Lili`u E”
- Critical Response Process- Created by Liz Lerman and John Borstel as a way for receiving and sharing feedback for works in progress.
- Embodied Research- The study of embodiment of research through movement and visceral improvisational prompts. Movers are encouraged to become aware of how trauma lingers on and through the body, especially that of BIPOC individuals. Residual systemic oppression and rigor causes an extended awareness of human nature and rights.
- Collaborative Process- Introductory agreement process based in Urban Bush Women’s pedagogies, creating equitable and safe space for all parties involved.

Research Questions
- How do we model physical embodied research through a successful collaborative creative process in a hybrid space?
- How do we embody research specific to themes surrounding BIPOC experiences?
- What pivotal life events have shaped us into the people we are today?
- When was the first time we recalled being made aware of our races/ethnicities?
- How do we find a personal relationship in a culture that has been exploited, colonized, and on the brink of being erased?
- How do we find and show up in solidarity and advocate for racial equity with BIPOC communities?
- What does solidarity mean to us?

Methods
- Weekly 3-hour meetings consisting of mutually agreed upon codes of conduct within the space.
- Open, guided dialogue and discussions also took place within the space, regarding race, gender, systems, and societal binaries.
- Embodied research through prompted improvisation and choreography (led by all).
- Documentation through vlogging, video, and audio recordings.
- Prompted improvisation and movement scores.

Results
This research can never truly be finished; it is lifelong, internal work that must be done in each and every one of us. Some of our findings within this exploration consist of the following:

- “SystEM”: Movement from improvisational scores and word associations based on the question: “What do you feel when you hear the phrase, “the system is broken?”
- “529”: Improvisation and choreography based on the personal relationship to racial advocacy, expressed through visceral embodied reflection
- “Pillars”: Exploration of lingering traumas in the body through journaling, shadow work, and guided improvisational concepts.
- “Ho`opuka E Ka La Ma Kahikina and Lili`u E”: Revival of individual past relationships with the culture while further researching the history, the colonization of Hawai`i, stories, and traditions.

Resources
- Critical Response Process (CRP) by Liz Lerman and John Borstel
- Hiking the Horizontal by Liz Lerman
- “Entering, Building and Exiting Community” tools by Urban Bush Women
- My Grandmother’s Hands by Resmaa Menakem