Intervener Garrett Hall posed two fundamental questions to these talented student artists of the Maverick Dance Company, whose work is being featured in AT THE EDGE OF PROXIMITY.

1. What is the name of the piece you’ve choreographed, what it is about, and its nature and style?
2. What has your process to fully realize this piece been like during the COVID pandemic?

Here are the responses of these three Maverick Dance Company ensemble artists.

YESENIA BARRERA
The name of the piece is “Sin Pigmento” and was choreographed in collaboration with Megan Medina and Rachel Nabarrete. We used special elements such as crayons and large pieces of paper to portray our message. While the piece can be interpreted in different ways, our thought process was to create something that represents a loss of identity. Life is often bright and colorful but what happens when our color gets stripped away? Do we find ourselves or do we learn to adapt to new changes? This interpretation can be left up to the individual viewer and what they believe the outcome is. Choreographing this piece has definitely been a new learning experience for us all. After returning from the pandemic shut down, oftentimes it has been difficult to find our creativity (especially with the new safety precautions that took place in the making of the piece). However, being able to collaborate with such talented choreographers made the experience go as smoothly as possible. We were able to problem solve and pitch new ideas to each other. It was also fun to learn a new side of dance performance. By making a virtual concert, we were able to learn about camera angles, filming, and adapting choreography to alternative spaces. It turned out to be a wonderful piece and I couldn’t thank my collaborators enough.

RACHEL NABARRETE
The name of the piece is “Sin Pigmento” (translates to “without pigment” in Spanish). It’s a contemporary piece and it’s about the struggle of finding yourself when you have lost your sense of self. The process has been a bit difficult considering we weren’t allowed any physical contact or partnering due to the virus. However, having brilliant choreographers as collaborators really helped the process go smoothly, even through the obstacles. (Shout out to Yesenia Barrera and Megan Medina for being the best partners ever!)

CAMILLE SMITH
The work I choreographed is “Unfurling: of life, but apart.” (It features an original score by composer and UTA graduate James Talambas as well.) The dance utilizes movement in the combined style of modern, ballet, and Luigi jazz technique. “Unfurling: of life, but apart” is about finding growth and connection amidst persisting isolation. It explores the idea of a deepening relationship with the self and a peripheral awareness of others while remaining rooted in a solitary space of one’s own making. It highlights how all are tethered to an organic origin point but also are entities alone in individual spheres, settling into the relativity of isolation experience(s). The COVID pandemic certainly complicated this semester and infused a heap of anxiety into the process, but having a small cast made it easier to explore and to create safely. I prefer to create quietly on my own at home or outside in nature anyway (pre-COVID, too), so studio time/space restrictions did not complicate the endeavor. I appreciate the faculty for their vigilance in protecting the students and for remaining focused on supporting a creative, exploratory space. This helped me tremendously. I especially have gratitude for Amanda Jackson for her patience, presence, and commitment to the art during this process. Ashley Tyser and Josie Cass (the other dancers in this piece) are a dream to work with and were an invaluable part of bringing the dance alive in its own organic form. It was exciting (and happily exhausting) to create a work for film. It took a different type of attention than it takes to make a dance for traditional stage viewing.