

Cotillon

Samus Starbody



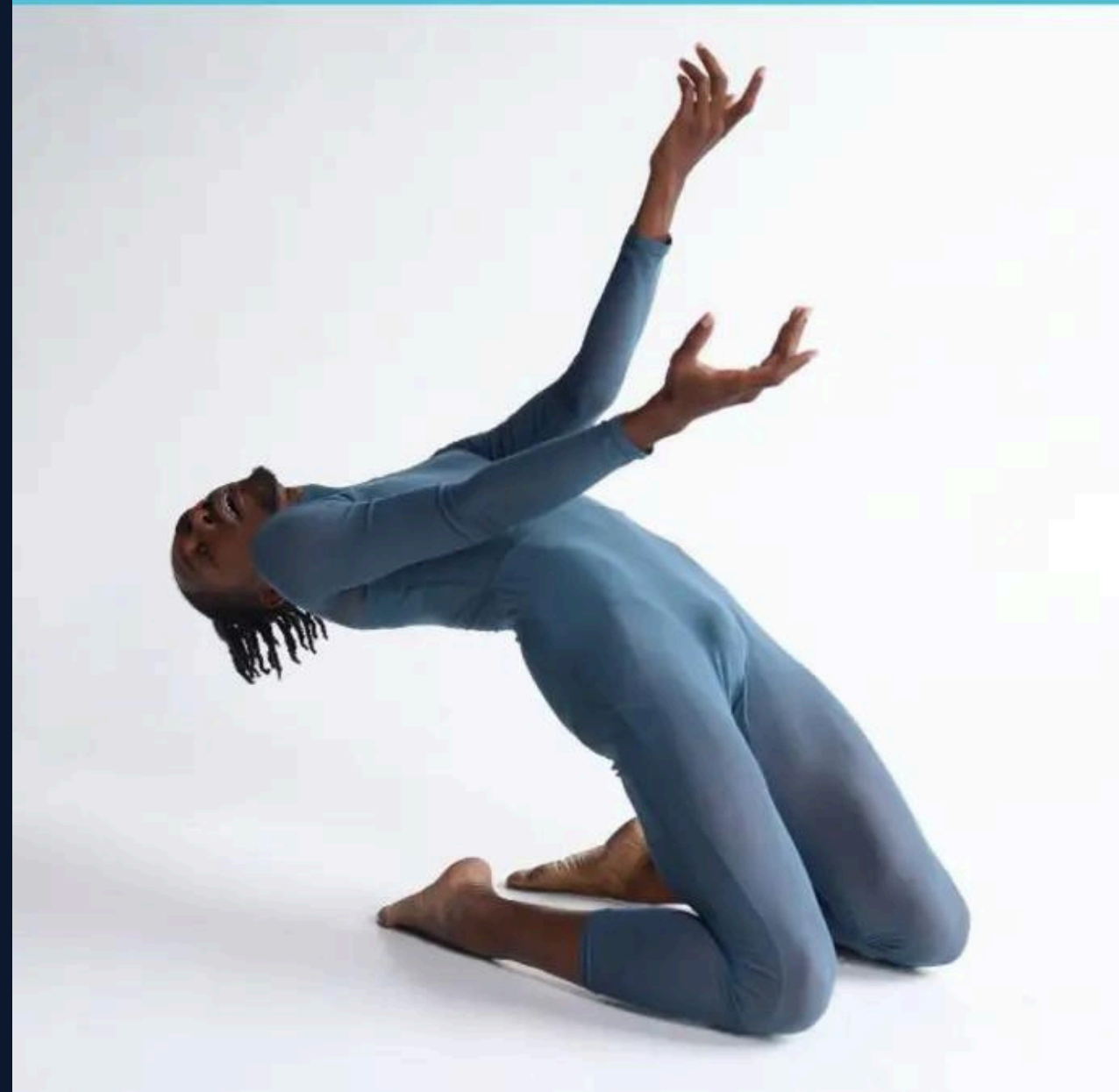
Our story begins in the Summer of 2024, during a DanceChance event. Up until this point, I had been suffering from an internal conflict regarding my place in dance. Am I a creator, performer, teacher? Do any of those structures still satisfy me? Where do I belong in this community?...

While thinking of what I would do with the opportunity of a DanceChance grant, I came across a revolutionary idea: a personal Bantaba of drummers from all over the world, playing to activate the latent blood memories in my dancing body...

CHICAGO
DANCEMAKERS
FORUM

Monday, September 9, 2024

DANCE 2024 CHANCE





The space set scene for the work. After finding out that we would be performing in the gym, I reflected on the start of my dance journey. Where did I perform? What did I listen to? What was I communicating through my performance?

I was ultimately led to the idea of a Cotillion, the debut of Black high-society's youth. While many of them were my friends, I was never able to experience the privileges of the privileged. This hunger for more...more visibility, more expression, more responsibility, more recognition...moved me to dance in the first place...to dance in spite of, and to dance where I was expected to perform some other version of black masculinity...

07/24/24 12:41AM

PAUL'S FUNDRAISING EVENT WAS
ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL. VERY INSPIRING.
IT WAS A PLEASURE HAVING ADAM &
WINN THERE... CECILIA, CAROLINA, MELISSA,
ROBYN. VERY NICE CONVERSATIONS. GOOD
INSIGHT. COMMUNITY BUILDING. KARAOKE
SHARING. IT FELT LIKE WE WERE ON THE NEW
WAVE.

↓
WE ARE THE NEW
WAVE.

EARLIER I READ AN ARTICLE ABOUT A
CHRONIC PAINER. IT QUOTED MARTHA
LESAGE THE LATE BLOOD MEMORY (I'M SO SORRY
I WAS STOPPING LOL) AND I COULDN'T
DISCARD IF IT WAS SOMETHING WE SHARED
OR IF I WAS INSPIRED. WHATEVER THE
CASE, REALIZING THAT REPEATED MERRY THINGS
FOR ME. THE IDEA OF THE BLOOD MEMORY
PERMANENTLY MY PRACTICE IN SUCH A WAY THAT
IT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE
WORKS I CHANNEL THEM INTO.

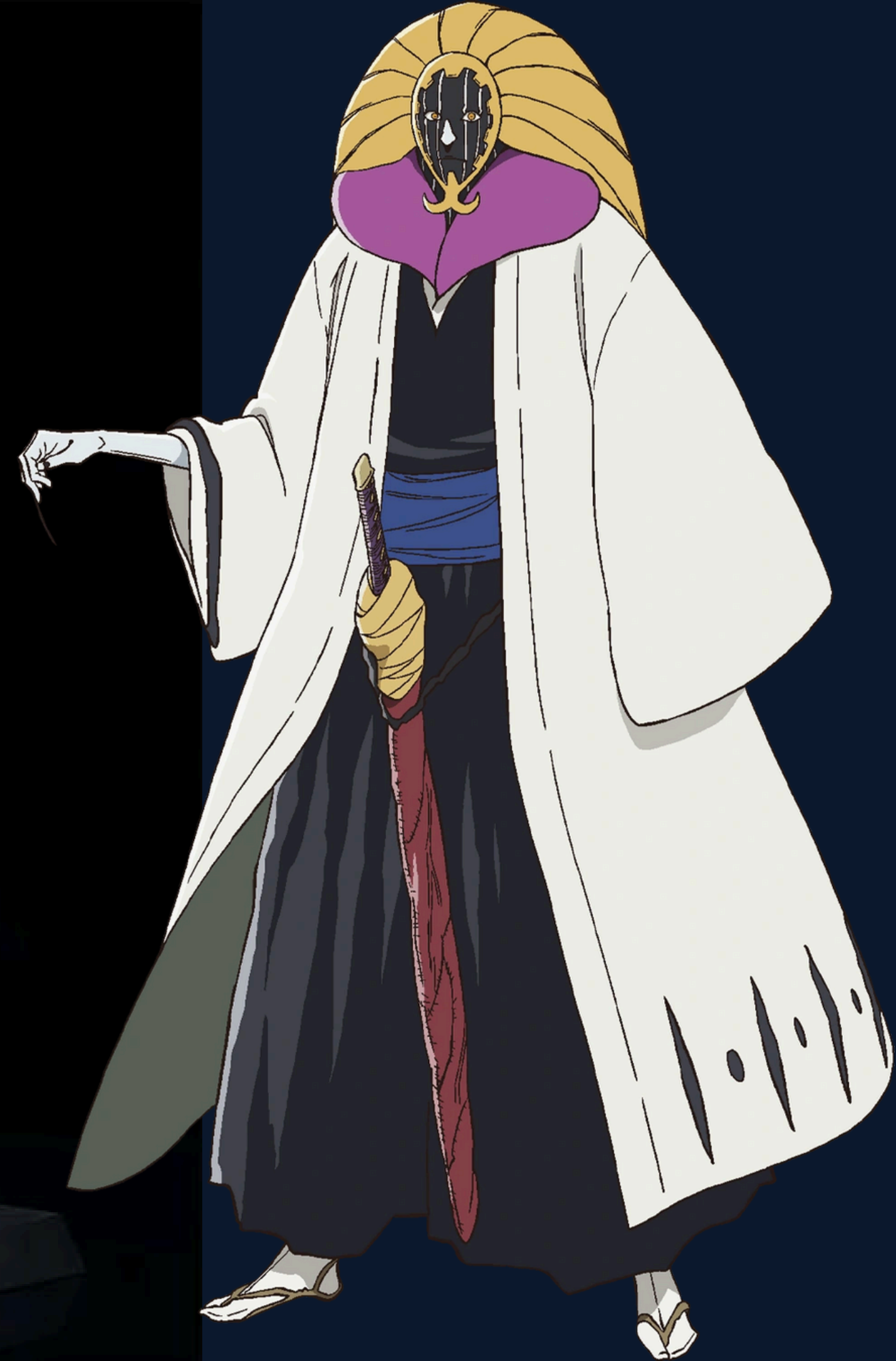
I THINK I WANT MY DANCE CHAIR
CHART ~~TO BE~~ PERFORMANCE TO BE
CALLED COTILLION: BLOOD MEMORY. I
WANT TO CHECKBACK MY Afro-CARIBBEAN
FOOT. I WANT TO REINFORCE THE MEMORIES
IN MY MUSCLES. I WANT TO RELEASE.
FEEL MYSELF. LEAVE MY PAIN.
REESTABLISH MY VOICE. THE NAME
WORK OF BECOMING THE CREATOR I'M
MEANT TO BE, HAS JUST BEGUN.



Ulali performing 'Mother'. Smithsonian Folklife. 2006.

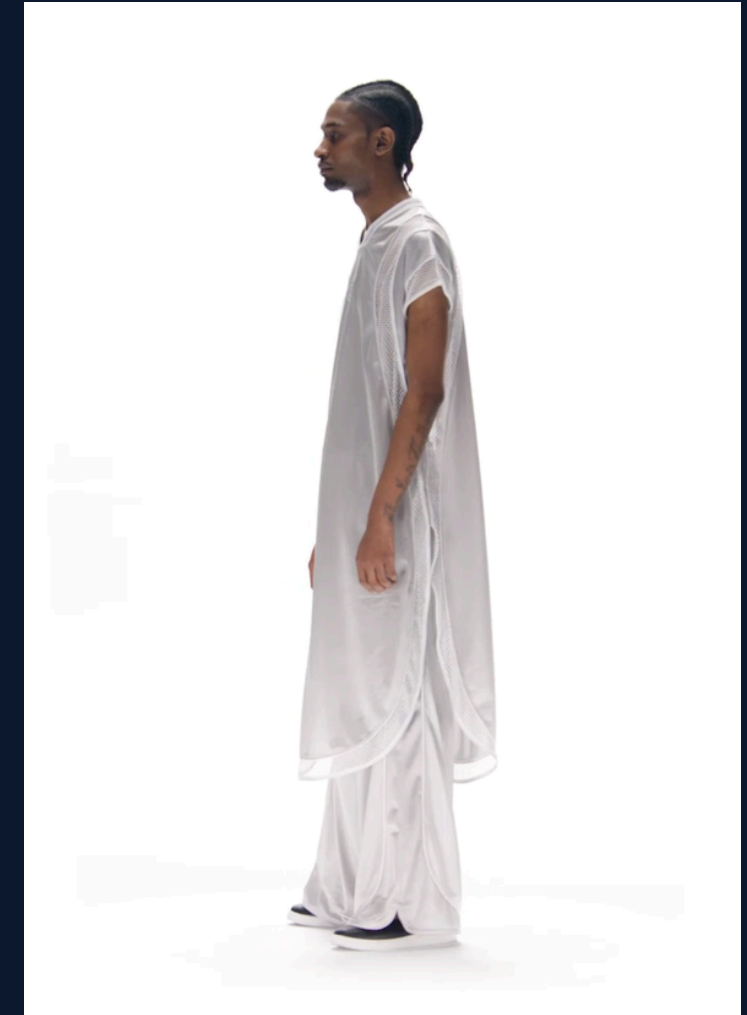
7/31 COTILLON - DANCE OF THE PATRICIAN
 WHEN I USED TO THE SAME MOTION
 I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL SOMETHING. FROM
 THE VERY FIRST TIME I HEARD TO
 JUST NOW - IT HAS MAJOR REVERBERATIONS
 IN MAKING ME FEEL EXPERIENCE
 SOMETHING ETHICAL, ANCESTRAL, AND
 FREE. MY BODY BECOMES UNCLAMORED,
 UNBROKEN, AND UNBURDENED. I GO
 THROUGH MANY EMOTIONS. I TAP
 INTO GRIEF, JOY, PAIN, PLEASURE,
 SACRIFICE, AND POWER...

WHILE I DO HAVE IDEAS TO
 EXPLORE VARIOUS FORMS OF PLEASURE,
 AND RHYTHMS AND HOW THEY
 INFLUENCE THE BODY, I BELIEVE IN IT
 A PACE IN MY CHURCH AND JOURNALS
 WHERE I CAN DELIVER ~~SO~~ JUST
 ME. THAT HAS TO BE HONORED AND
 EXPLORED THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS AS
 WELL.



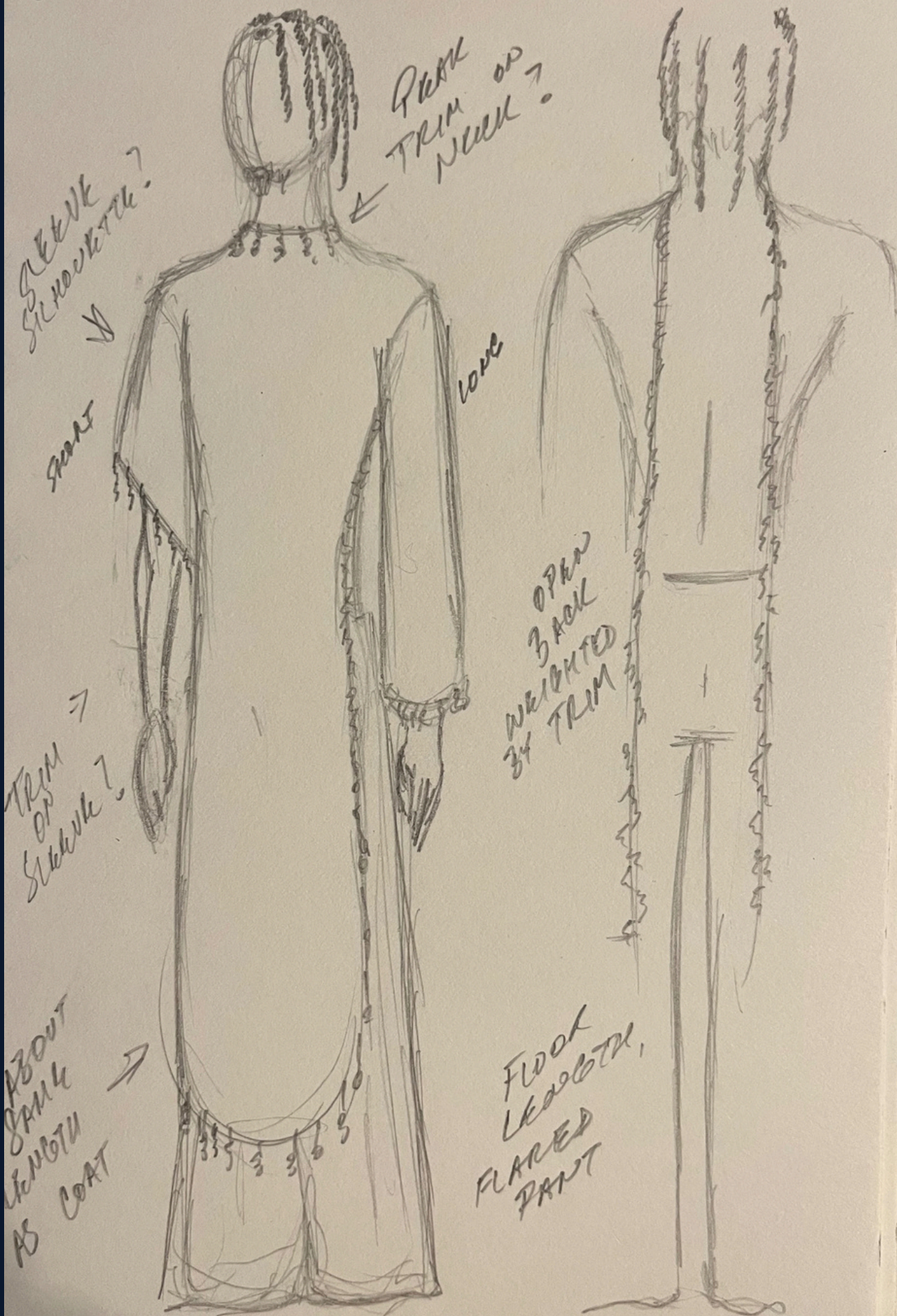


Early costume inspiration



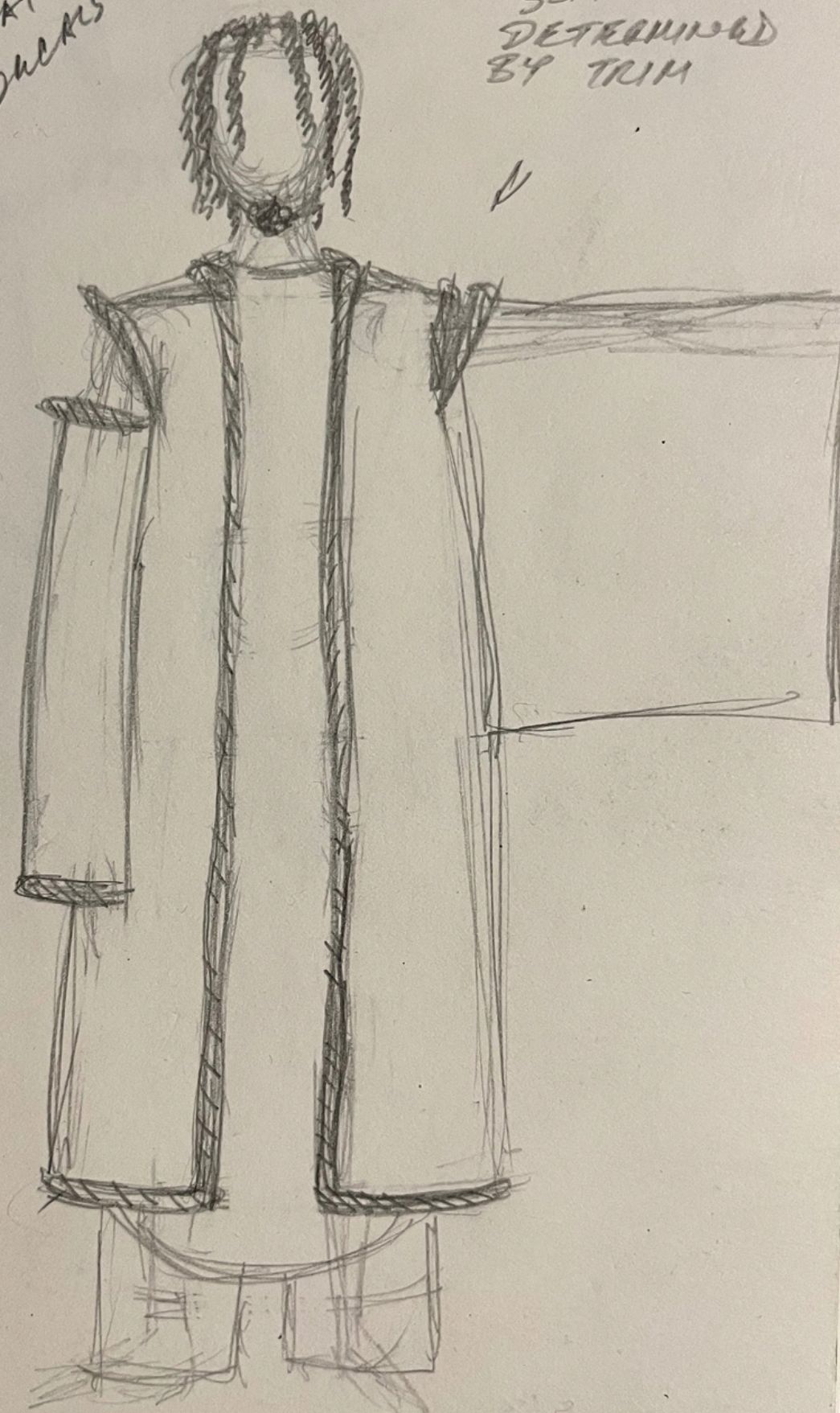
A major part of the overall project has been the costume design. Working on Cotillon has provided me the opportunity to truly operate as a multi-disciplinary artist that honors multi-cultural identity.

TUNIC
PANT FOR
COTILLON



COAT
FOR COTILLON

*MAY
NEED:
- RECK UP
- COAT
- DUCKS







COTILION

NOTES FROM STUDIO SESSION II ✱

I Fell ^{!!!} OUT OF A LAMP THAT I'VE BEEN DOING FOR YEARS! IT'S WEIRD, AS I CAN'T WORK COMFORTABLE BEING IN THE AIR, I'M LOSING TOUCH W/ THE FINISH. STUCK WITH TURNING. I'M SURE IT'S A GOOD THING. I JUST WISH MY TURNING STAYED IN MY BODY. OR THAT I HAD MORE SPACE & INSPIRING SPACES TO MOVE.

THINKING ABOUT MOVEMENT, I'M GOING TO FOCUS ON THE MID-PLANE. SHAKING & JARRING FOR OPENNESS WHILE EXERCISING FEAR. MOVE AROUND. CONNECT TO THE AIR & THE SPACE. THE FLOOR UNDER YOU. THE WATER INSIDE.

TO PREPARE, I DRAMATICALLY WENT TO GET CARDIO, A 4X4, A YOGA W. POSSIBLY A BACK. TIME AT THE BACK. A MEDITATIVE PLAYLIST. BE MINDFUL OF FEET, LOWER BACK, KNEES, AND RIBS.

IT'S GOING TO BE GREAT, JUST LET GO!





The major lesson learned in this performance, was just how deeply my body could be affected by external and internal forces. What resulted was a constant push and pull, a battle between restraint and a hunger for freedom...

Financial Request

I am applying to the Weisman Award to secure funding for the next phase of this project, which includes world building and documentation.

My goal is to create supplemental work that will flesh out the story around Cotillon, calling out the cultural references made in the development process as well working to capture the true essence of the choreographic work.

These works include planned additions to the costume design; an immersive installation that hints on the multiversity of my artist identity, Samus Starbody; and a limited edition book that dives into the ritual of “Cotillon”, both historically and metaphorically.

Budget 1

Project Component	Expenses	Description	Cost
Costume Updates			
	Alterations/Seamstress Fee	5 hours at \$30/hr	\$ 150.00
	Dry Cleaning	3 garments; 3.99/unit	\$ 12.00
	Kasa Hat		\$ 50.00
	Swarovski Beads	24 Packs at 4.28/unit	\$ 102.72
	Tassels		\$ 49.50
	Light Blue Violet Liquitex Paint		\$ 9.99
	Men's Dance Belt		\$ 30.00
Supplemental Work			
	Photographer Fee		\$ 250.00
	Space Rental	Haz Room; 3 hours at \$35/hr	\$ 105.00
	Backdrop	3 at 15.99/unit	\$ 47.97
	Prop Budget	Chair; step stool; pillows; small pool; towels, blankets	\$ 100.00
	Photobook Production	Mixbook, 12x12, 60 pages	\$ 230.00
Installation			
	Monitor	24" curved monitor	\$ 119.99
	Large Green Plants	14 Non Perishable plants, trees	\$ 544.83
	Sculpture Base	2 15" Teak planter stands at \$75/unit	\$ 150.00
	Carving Tools		\$ 30.00
	Wood Stain		\$ 5.00
Total Cost			
			\$ 1,987.00



Installation Draft 1



Potential book panels

Cultural Impact

Cotillon is culturally significant because it presents Black intersectionality as not just a source of trauma, but instead as a moment of release and expansion. As a black, queer man, I have continuously challenged notions of what that identity is. From performing with all female ensembles in spaces where traditional masculinity is pedestalized, to creating an androgynous Black anime hero, my life's work has been about “honoring it all”.

Considering the time I grew up in, this work was sometimes dangerous. Society was still not entirely receptive to gays in their own backyards, let alone football fields. And while there are many (limited) representations of BlaQ men in the media, they do not push the boundaries of amplifying the history or variety of narratives in our culture.

while I do not present *Cotillon* as the solution, I present it as a possible strategy that has grown out of the pursuit for one.







