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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

“I Want to Get Closer.”

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Acting)

by

Zakiya Iman Markland

Committee in charge:

Gregory Wallace, Chair
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Manuel Rotenberg

2016

The thesis of Zakiya Iman Markland is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2016

DEDICATION

THIS GOES OUT TO

all my Sensei's to have woven their knowledge into the fabric of who I am.

And to my Sister/Queen/Goddess/Mother Eartha Markland.
I am eternally grateful our souls found one another. Love you for-I-va. SHABA.

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LIST OF SUPPLEMENTAL FILES

File 1: *La Bete*, Princess Conti

File 2: *La Bete*, Princess Conti

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

“I Want to Get Closer.”

by

Zakiya Iman Markland

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Acting)

University of California, San Diego, 2016

Professor Gregory Wallace, Chair

I became into a body that attracted more attention than my mind. I developed inseparably from a physique that betrayed who I was inside. Inside a battered ego sprawled its limbs out for eternal embrace: validate me. If at birth my mother named me Intelligent, how then did I view my knowing as primitive, stupid? Nancy Drew-ing this alone failed to free me, so creating inner confidence as artist became my purpose. Out I journeyed into the pockets of Galbraith Hall where I worked so *hard* that all you could see in my work was work-ing, effort-ing. But confidence is not work alone -not a mere creation. It's self-possession,

something you already are. How ironic was it then that my final role at UCSD, Princess Conti, demanded from me just that? I mean, you can't rule a nation that speaks in rhyming couplets whilst strutting -no, gliding- across a room in 6" crystal-encrusted heels without knowing first-hand that *everything* you are, do and know is The Shit. Princess Conti was the definition of self-possession for me. In and out I was sensei, was senseid as I said "*how do I be her without forcing her?*" Use the text as power, breath and thought as inspiration; listen to play and play to receive, but, most importantly, believe. I believed. *Still*, in and out I was senseid; schooled by an art that requires years more of mastery.

How far I've come. How much farther I have to go.