By Joe Ferguson

In his 1963 book *The Two Cultures: A Second Look*, C. P. Snow argued for a third culture that would bridge the widening gap between the humanities and the sciences in academic institutions. He wrote, “…we can educate a large proportion of our better minds so that they are not ignorant of imaginative experience, both in the arts and in science…” A noble goal, but one that has yet to materialize.

Visit any college campus, and you’ll find a maze of buildings dedicated to specialized studies. Very often the arts are at one end of the campus and the sciences at the other. The polar nature of the layout underscores the undergraduate experience that concretizes the idea that these two disciplines—the arts and the sciences—are mutually exclusive. After leaving the institution, graduates are ushered into exclusive professions—scientists go to their antiseptic, alabaster labs and artists locate to *affordable* metropolitan neighborhoods. Rarely do the two tribes mix, and when they do one is usually in the role of passive observer and productive exchanges are uncommon.
A unique event that brought these two groups together was Hope Mohr Dance’s Bridge Project—now in its seventh annual offering. This year’s event was called Rewriting Dance, and focused on the intersection of language and movement. It took place at the Joe Goode Annex on November 6th-8th.

The Bridge Project opened Friday evening with a performance by dance artist Jeanine Durning titled inging. The performance was part spoken word and part dance. From noon to 5 on Saturday and Sunday, Durning lead a two-part workshop, titled what we do when we do the thing we do before we know what we are doing, which centered on an investigation of "creative practice, choreography and performance through acceptance of not knowing as a generative state."

Saturday evening’s performance was organized in three parts, collectively titled Reorganizing Ourselves. It began with a one-hour performative lecture by Debra Hay, a pioneer in experimental, question-based choreography. Her presentation A Continuity of Discontinuity--part lecture, part performance—invoked cellular biology as a base from which she drew questions about her experience as a performer and choreographer.
A second lecture by UC Berkeley professor and philosopher Alva Noë followed. Titled *See me if you can!*, Noë spoke about consciousness and art as a disruptive practice that can have emancipatory effects for the viewer. His lecture wove concepts from cognitive science, philosophy, and performance art. He also addressed ideas from his new book, *Strange Tools: Art and Human Nature*.

Saturday evening concluded with a salon-style discussion facilitated by curator and dance producer Michèle Steinwald. Every audience member was encouraged to contribute questions provoked by the two lectures.

The *Bridge Project* came to a close on Sunday evening with a series of short performances. *Talk the Walk* featured Gerald Casel, Maurya Kerr, Megan Nicely, Lauren Simpson, Maureen Whiting, and Hope Mohr. Each choreographer presented new material in which language played a central role.

Artistic and scientific activities are equally intellectual endeavors. Rather than creating a bridge that reinforced the distinctions between disciplines, the *Bridge Project* offered a view of an inclusive community—one in which complementary, rather than disparate, pursuits benefited each other and those in attendance.