Thomas believes in dance as both sacred and spiritual, even or especially in its most social forms. Thomas therefore draws deeply from traditional and modern rituals, in order to make the danced “space” sacred. In that space, he seeks, to let the body discuss, defend, push, press, develop and create. Growing up Thomas was made aware that Europeans get to celebrate their humanity through great architecture and monuments like the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, La Sagrada Familia and more. Being also of Caribbean descent it became apparent that his Caribbean and African American-ancestors were robbed of the autonomy and opportunity to shape their surroundings, in a way that would leave similar monuments to their descendants. Thomas has therefore dedicated his artistic life to exploring the moving architecture of the black dancing body. That is where the Eiffel Towers and Notre Dames of his ancestors lie stored and ready to be internalized, through danced rituals, moving technology and memory. Thomas was first trained by his Trinidad grandfather, also a medical doctor. Thomas learnt in great detail how to move the body and achieve the undulations, trembles, shakes, and pulses that so characterize African Caribbean movement. With the instruction came detailed descriptions of which muscles were used and the angles of the body, in order to achieve a certain effect. Thomas therefore early developed an interest and understanding of the technical side of africanistic movement. An understanding Thomas later found lacking or ignored in many Africanist dance classes.

The reason for Thomas’ instruction was the brutal and violent racism he had experienced growing up in a small town in Norway surrounded by a large Nazi community. Thomas moved to his Trinidadian grandfather at the age of 12, his back full of cigarette marks and with visible cuts and bruises from multiple encounters with the racist. His grandfather used Caribbean deep culture, in the form of dance, calypso, and oral tradition in order to rebuild and heal his grandson, physically, spiritually and emotionally. Thomas first hand got to experience the healing power honed and cultivated by his ancestors while facing inhuman racism, violence and abuse. Their mode of survival, have become distilled cultural tools, tools Thomas is determined to pass on to the next generations. Thomas has found instruction by less known names who have dedicated their lives to upholding the danced rituals in their traditional or sacred forms most rewarding. Thomas has been initiated into Trinidadian, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian (Yoruba), Ewe, and Brazilian, spiritual traditions, gaining access to witnessing and participating in danced ritual, in multiple modes and locations. The difference in movement between the human body and a “suprahuman” (one filled with spirit), he found particularly fascinating.

Due to his grandfathers instructions, Thomas noticed mechanical/technical differences in the two “bodies” movement range, use of multiple centers, weight and choices. Thomas started to develop a technical system that focuses on training the necessary control in order to move the body, by choice, the way it is moved by spirit. The result today is a fully codified movement technique. The Talawa Technique is based on 81 African Dances and 56 Caribbean dances. A system of notation was developed to find the most commonly used positions, paths and qualities. The most common elements were defined and distilled by help of mathematics and systemized into the technique/system. The result is 32 basic hand positions (compared to ballets 5), 14 basic foot positions, 7 isolation levels of the Torso and a varied and dynamic set of exercises in order to combine and explore the possibilities of them all. The technique has coordinates that are 100% Caribbean and African, choosing not to draw any of its elements from Ballet or Europeanist aesthetics. The technique has taken particular care in developing modern exercises in order to develop a natural movement quality that would normally have been honed by traditional life.