

The following text, a collection of questions, thoughts and reflections about Open Practice this week, was generated during a writing practice in the form of a Double Interview between Denise Comba and Emma Wilson. This is a platform which invites each of our respective practices to think and move itself through the articulation of words. It is a generative practice, that is it has its own momentum and a movement forwards through lines of inquiry.

The Double Interview was conducted with both of us simultaneously asking and answering questions of each other. We both started with the same question and then generated questions for the other from the response each gave to the previous question.

Open Practice - 7th March 2018 - Wait and Accelerate

Participants: Charles Ball, Emily Doherty, Emma Wilson, Lucia Delgado, Olga Rubio, Vivien Vago

Facilitator: Denise Comba

From Denise: We started with a 10 min movement arrival in self and in space. After that, a 5 min stream of consciousness writing and some sharing of thought and feelings.

I introduced the topic of waiting. We did 5 min of exploring the waiting in the body.

In pairs, we had 2 roles: witness and mover. We did 8 min rounds in each role, with a small conversation in between.

We went back to our notebooks to write about our experience and I fed some questions in as stimulus to the writing. We had a brief groupal sharing after that.

I introduced the topic of acceleration. We did 3 min of exploring acceleration in the body.

In pairs, again with the witness and the mover roles, we did 5 min rounds in each role, accelerating and decelerating, with a small conversation in between.

Finally, we did 12 min of free jam where we could explore both waiting and acceleration, witnessing and writing and feeding in words and text.

The last 10 min of the session served as a final sharing of experiences and thoughts.

What were some key triggers for reflection for you coming from Open Practice this week?

Denise

I realised how I usually tend to think of tasks and movement suggestions from an individual point of view, or to be tried on one body only, maybe having external witness to support the action of the individual but without communicating an express intention of connection with other to the participants. Maybe it's because individual and collective is a core question in me that flows deeply underneath what I do most of the time... But it doesn't have necessarily the same presence in others. I struggle in communicating that... and I struggle to imagine tasks that involve an obvious interaction of two bodies... or maybe I never stopped to really think about it... or maybe I'm in doubt because that was "the subject" of last week's practice by Sandi and I don't wanna 'copy' but the same question was actually in me as well, so how do I find the courage to explore it from my point of view or keeping enriching OP?

Why do you feel the desire to imagine tasks that involve an obvious interaction between two bodies?

Because I feel it's a valuable experience for humans. Because it's not something that comes out of me naturally, so I always tend to find ideas in places I don't go very often. As an internal behaviour, I always try think of things that are foreign to me, that are not part of my deep-rooted inner trees. I like to follow those ideas, things that I

Emma

The invitation to explore the concept of 'wait' challenged and stimulated my thinking this week. And there was a shift in how I approached this invitation. To begin with I noticed I was generating actions to show waiting, things I do when I am waiting. These included things such as watching others, watching the space, scrolling on Facebook on my phone, pacing, looking out the window, zoning out and being quite still in my body. And then we were invited to enter into this exploration again but this time with a witness. Showing that I was waiting had lost its interest for me and I altered my approach from exploring how to 'show' waiting into a directive that I was tasking myself with. Wait became interpreted a request to delay whatever I am doing in that moment. I chose two actions. The first was to go to the toilet and delay my pissing. I needed to experience the duration of waiting as a physiological activity. The second action was to move from standing to sitting. The completion of this action then was consistently being delayed by directive to wait. I was wondering what this produced in me, in the situation and why it was more interesting to me than 'showing'. I noticed this way mode of engagement required a difference in the way i was using my attention. In the first instance my attention was directed more externally, seeking affirmation in the 'other' that yes I am waiting, can you see i am waiting? In the second instance my attention was

haven't explored in my body before and bring them to OP or to any other space of exploration. But returning to the questions, I guess obvious interaction of bodies feels challenging for me. Maybe I think about it more related to partnering work or contact or circus stuff which have always challenged me and which I don't practice since a long time really. Maybe that's why I feel it foreign to my present body. And because also something magical happens when two people dance together... and it strengthens the relations between participants. I feel creating an environment where participants feel close to each other and trust each other is very valuable.

This feeling close to another, dancing together with another - do you think this is a different way of engaging than what you call partnering work/contact etc? And something that came up this week was waiting in relation to another. How do you think about this?

I think of it as being different because I would not see it from a technical way, I don't want to facilitate it as technical exercises. I'm more interested in it as something that arises more than something that is imposed because I feel it might be challenging to others. But if I think specifically of the group that came this week to OP, I don't see why not. Maybe it's just a fear in me. A fear of making other people uncomfortable but I know it's silly. A way of engaging physically that I'm interested in is simple, pure, organic. I'm interested in the physical connection that happens through human connection, from a link that happens before the body. About the second question... I liked that putting the lense of 'waiting' finally showed how there's waiting in everything, if you want to think

directed more internally tracking the duration of the unfolding action, which produced a more focused expression of my attention.

So waiting for me in these instances had their own duration. When an action completed then the waiting also completed. The waiting did not extend beyond the action completing itself. Then something else was permitted to happen.

How do you approach moments of 'losing interest' in a task? What happens in your body and in your mind to make the choices you make during or after that moment?

Ok this is a great question. And I'm realising now that I did exactly what I'm often encouraging others not to do: to discard and abandon that which is 'not interesting'. One of my mantras has often been 'persist with that you are doing, move into and through the boredom'. But ok, that's what I did this week and now I am wondering why. If I take my mind back to OP I can see that I was very intent on challenging myself to find in each moment, with each choice I was making 'what is at stake', what risk do I need to take in order to find something new and shift my way of thinking and experiencing in that moment. And what was at stake for me? Initially I did feel like I found something that belonged to the realm of the invitation, a way of approaching the task that 'fitted'. But it also felt safe, it felt known, it was an answer that felt easy to me. I wanted to try something that didn't feel so comfortable and required me to consistently question and articulate what I am doing and the choices I am making. There's something else that comes to mind, in those moments of wanting to

about it in that way. It made it feel more real than imagining waiting for an invisible bus or something. Inside I smiled when Emma went to the toilet and the timer went off and she came in much later. I relieved myself of the thought of feeling responsible for her to being present in the common space at the time of a task. I have many of these facilitating related questions....

How do you think waiting became visible in what was generated in the practice this week? And was there anything else you wanted to mention that you haven't already?

I think it had different stages of becoming visible and invisible. In a literal way, it appeared in me as I was imagining that I was waiting for somebody to arrive. So I stayed in my spot and looked around, outside of our space, through the window, as far as I could. I could also see others waiting when the body language showed the waiting, probably from the person reaching back to some memory of waiting for something. Then I also discovered the invisible waiting. The one that happens constantly if we want to look at it in that way: waiting for the timer to go off, waiting to change roles of witness-mover, waiting for the conversations in pairs to quiet down, waiting for someone to make a certain move for me to finish waiting and move on. I say invisible because they were happening underneath the surface of the task.

Something else I want to say... I can't avoid thinking and observing how different I feel when I facilitate and when I participate. I guess it's a normal difference of being and holding the space. I enjoy both. But I recognise that they have different levels of engagement and 'sinking

shift my approach, my way of relating to the proposition, I was wondering how I could activate myself to find this shift. Activating myself or activating the space is something I often think about when wanting to initiate a change of some kind.

About activating the self/the space and initiating change... how do you think these two interact with each other?

I approach each of these quite differently, with different awarenesses and intentions but I think in terms of the way they become visible they may be quite similar. Activating myself usually involves shifting my approach or relationship to what I am doing. Reconceptualising, reframing, rearticulating. The example I gave before of shifting from 'showing' that I am waiting to using 'wait' as a directive towards that which I am doing. Activating the space on the other hand involves generating change in the environment. That maybe with objects, furniture, the act of rearranging physically the space. Or it might mean injecting another kind of dynamic to energetically shift what is going on. Both inject something new, something different in that moment and could potentially have a similar affect. But the mode of approach is quite different.

What changes do you observe in others and in the space when you do these things (activating, reframing, injecting, etc)? And was there anything else you wanted to mention that you haven't already?

in'. The image came of me being on a boat, floating in the sea, not being able to sink into the bottom, only briefly before my boat would pull me up on the surface again. From the surface I can see fishes swimming and whales jumping out of the water.

That's a hard one to answer, I never know how change is initiated and I couldn't really presume to be the initiator of that change. But I could say internally for myself I notice a shift in the way I am attending to what is happening. I think in those moments of feeling a desire for something to shift or change, its because my attending to what is happening feels cloudy. I'm feeling a lack of clarity in terms of what I am doing, my intention, the choices I am making, my relationship to what is happening.

The act of activation is an act of choice making and propositioning, asking through action (which could also be speech) to the group the question "what if...".

The concept of agency is weaving in and out of all of these thoughts. What is my responsibility to myself, to the group, to the space, to this situation? Where is the agency in waiting? Does to wait imply that agency is externally located, that I am waiting for something to happen in order for me to act or respond. Or can my engagement with the activity of waiting be a proposition? Can this engagement have its own agency? The open space at the end was a moment these questions became particularly necessary as there was no task or directive of how to be in the space together. It forced be to be accountable with all the choices I was making, to articulate for myself my position or stance in each moment. And this really highlighted the agency present in the engagement of waiting. The moments of being not sure what choice I am making needed to be reframed as a choice in itself: I am in this moment actively not taking responsibility for making something happen and I choose to be here in the not knowing of what is happening. This in itself is quite liberating; to wait becomes an action that frames and makes visible the agency of deliberate non action.

