

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. It is also a performative practice. We are both performer and witness for each other within this format.

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 - 14th March 2018 - Working with scoring

Participants: Kristian Santic, Olga Rubio, Denise Comba, Emma Wilson

Facilitator: Emma Wilson

Session outline:

20 minutes:

Arrival into the space, with the following anchoring questions:

- *What can I do that brings me a sense of joy or pleasure?*
- *What can I do that attends to my needs in this moment?*
- *What can I do that problematises* this situation?*
- *What can I do to engage with my habitual mode of being in this space in this moment?*

**problematise: make into a problem that is looking for a solution*

10 minutes:

Write about what happened during this time

10 minutes:

Create a score from this written information that can be passed on to someone else to engage with

15 minutes:

Pass the score onto another, spend time now with/in that score.

How do we, bringing all of our histories, knowledges, experiences, politics, aesthetics interface with this score?

What can we claim in this space of negotiation?

Perform scores for each other

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

Denise

I had the image of my body in movement being captured, crystallized in a score. The question came around if I would have known my warm up was going to be scored, would it have been different? The feeling of being in a performative space, having to pin down and to define what I did (what I remember I did) in a set of instructions for another to execute. And how rich it was to receive a score from somebody else and combine my visual memory of that person warming up (the moments I had the chance to see), taking the score very seriously (trying to execute it as faithfully as I could) and then also finding the freedom, the gap where I realize I'm free to interpret and invest something personal into it. As I write this, I also think how similar this process is to any choreographic process where the choreographer/movement maker translates his creation into other bodies. It becomes a performative act, a place where many elements come together to create something bigger or beyond 'just movement'.

I'm curious about this gap you talk about, between a 'faithful' execution of the score and what you bring - your interpretation, your way of being and engaging... Can you talk a little about this space you claimed for yourself?

Well, it's a space that needs to be claimed in order for a dance to be alive, to be your own even if you didn't create it. The interesting thing is that dance as a creation doesn't exist really. It only exists in the bodies moving in that dance. It exists in the moment, it exists in the

Emma

After Open Practice this week I was thinking a lot about my life situation and the Open Practice format. Since at the moment I am very occupied with looking after my two children and don't have so much time and energy for new dance projects, Open Practice is one of the few spaces I have to engage with my dance practice. It is a platform for me to ask questions and explore thoughts and ideas. However the conditions of the format, being 2 hours weekly, is a very concise window for these explorations. And then that got me wondering what does Open Practice produce (I know what it gives me, what it enables me do it). But what does it as a format produce when I am not also working in other contexts. What if for the rest of my life this was the only format I have to be productive through my work? Often there is a time during the Open Practice session where we witness each other performing or engaging in the provocations offered for that week. It is a performance. And often I'm really excited but what is happening in these moments. Hey people, did you know that there are performances happening every week in OP? I hadn't thought before about OP being also a space for performance practice. Aside from that I think what OP gives me is the possibility to index, archive and gather ideas for future projects. It's like an expanded notebook of ideas. The ideas don't just stay between the pages, to be poured into grant applications fueled by the hope to find a funded space for exploration and development. These ideas are brought to life, wrestled with in the studio by real people and bodies.

performance, in the now, now, now, now, now. I guess that's the magic about it and that is also its death sentence. Sorry, I got too existential about this. Coming back to that gap between score and interpretation... it's about keeping the interest, make it interesting to myself, invest my attention to it from a genuine place, be honest to myself. Honesty is a way for me to like something. If I'm lying, it means I'm not liking it. Finding the joy, the interest, the engagement in something, opens a flow between the mover and the audience. I guess that's a fundamental aspect of performance... or of being a good performer, or at least it's one of my most treasured values, to be true and to be alive, to bring the dance to life when I move (I got existential again....oops!).

I like your existential tangents Denise! So going with that thinking, if dance only exists in the now, now, now, now, then what kinds of knowledges, awarenesses, perspectives are collected from our practices - or how are they collected? If dance only exists in the now does that mean there is something also lost, or does something remain?

Thanks for your support Emma! I think all our practices together allows us to embrace each other in our craziness, doesn't it? Coming back to your question... EXPERIENCE. Accumulation of experiences. Like any experience in life, it informs every experience that may happen in the future. In the accumulation there's a learning of more and more possibilities to act, to react, to enact. I think that also happens with dance practice. Our body remembers, collects information, creates neurological pathways. And through improvisation I think we are constantly challenging those memories,

So i carry with me in my body and my notebook an index for all my future projects.

I was thinking about the path of OP so far, everything that has been explored, how the space was being held by us to make it happen. Do you feel the necessity for OP to grow into other directions? A kind of transcending the notebook of ideas? Or do you feel it could go on like this, as an exploratory platform from where ideas can be developed? Or any other thought around this...?

If I reflect on the trajectory of OP since we started our studio practice together and then opened up that space up to be negotiated and claimed by a wider community, it has always been determined by needs and desires of those present. And I think this has given OP its own momentum to evolve and grow. I think it is a format that reveals itself and what is possible through being in it, and I often find myself quite surprised by things that emerged, like this week for instance. My hope for OP is that it gains a certain critical mass through engagement by a growing group of people and wider awareness in the community, and this allows its tangibility to become more visible. I think the form will reveal to us what is possible and in what directions it can go. This does sound quite vague, but I do think this is already happening. In a way the format of OP is like a score, coming back to what we were working with this week. And it requires constant negotiation from each of us to discover what is possible within this format.

I like the idea that the growing of OP is already happening and also the idea of it being a score, because it is, every session is

those pathways, renewing them, updating them, finding the ones that make us be us in this week, in this day, in this moment.

Unconsciousness is an infinite fertile land where everything we experience is gathered and planted. Some things get lost forever... and some remain, whenever they are brought back into our active thinking, the thinking we are aware of. Also, many forgotten things arise once I'm moving again. Because my body remembers, I remember many things when I move. Ideas arise in a different way when I'm moving than when I'm still and thinking.

And this body, that “collects information, creates neurological pathways..challenging memories, renewing them...accumulating experiences” - how does THIS body interface with a score? What does it expect from the score? What does it ask for? What does it demand? How does it make itself visible within the scripture of the score? Any other thoughts from you this week?

Aaaah! It makes me think... how many different bodies do I have? Just as how many different Denises live inside me? I feel myself as a multifaceted being, different aspects of my body are activated in different physical situations. Multifaceted and interface... There's something I can never escape and it's that I'm always in my body, in its shape, in its state, in its vitality. Interfacing with a score, I think there is a conversation that opens between my body today, where that body wants to take that score, how much of an exertion will it make to execute it... what it expects from the score is simply a reason to move, an good excuse, something that's worth it. I think I mostly find this in the play, in the field of the unknown and where I

structured (more or less, depending on the core idea). How did you feel with the experience of ‘making a score’ ‘in the score’ of OP?

To score an experience which I cannot possibly have total awareness of, involving all of my senses, is to undertake an impossibility. I was really aware of the idea of how the activity of making, the choreographic act, becomes an apparatus which attempts capture the difficult to articulate, that which sits beyond conscious awareness, that which we can recognise, understand, and make sense of. But I really enjoyed wrestling with this impossibility. What was produced by the questions articulated in the session outline were what I would call “domestic” responses. These were things that may normally belong to the private sphere and experience of the individual. These were the moments that wouldn't normally warrant attention or significance to the choreographic lens. Attempting to capture, select certain information from the memory of my experience, knowing that I can't articulate in words the totality of my experience, was asking me to acknowledge the futility of the position of the maker/choreographer. Whilst writing the score I knew it was both attempt to write the unwritable and also I was aware of myself as fabricator as the writer of my own truth of experience.

There is a certain challenge, or even nonsense, in this impossibility. And yet, we carry on, we go to those places where we know we can't ‘win’ or conquer the question. Why do we do this, Emma? What carries you, what moves you to go to these places of such uncertainty? Do you find light, enlightenment in the process?

want to go and discover. To feed myself with more experiences, to enrich my body and my mind. The body makes itself visible to the witness (and I also take myself as a witness of myself) that knows how to SEE, not only to look.

Other thoughts are how much I need to have this place of inquiry, because it makes me feel alive! It makes me feel the movement within. Like coming out of the matrix for a moment.

I'm thinking of the piece you made a while ago at IndependANCE...how many Denises are there ? A common thread perhaps in your work...

And was there anything else you wanted to mention that you haven't already?

Wow these are big questions! Um ok where to start... "Carry on" is a phrase that pulls my attention in this moment. I think our obsessions have a very strong hold on us, or at least that is my experience. It's very difficult to shake them off. They haunt us in the middle of the night when we can't sleep, they trickle into our mind stream when we have zoned out from another's conversation that doesn't engage us. I don't think I could ever say I find enlightenment, but I find i have access to a certain energetic charge that has its own drive and momentum and 'carries me'. Often through turbulent waters, in and out of whirlpools, with strong currents. These are the exciting moments when idea takes hold, or something becomes visible. When the imagination of an idea is seen and felt and is seeking an avenue of exploration. I also really look forward to moments of calm, after an idea or tangent of exploration and thought settles; it's found a platform to extend itself into the world and is now able to rest quietly basking in a sense of momentary fulfilment and satisfaction. This is definitely a very different tangent to where I thought this conversation may have possibly gone today!

I want to thank Olga for giving me such a difficult score to work with: an abstract drawing. I was really stumped for how to approach performing this score. But what it opened up for me was really exciting. The score became a container to create an experience for myself and those present as 'audience'. I enjoyed moving between being a 'performer' watched by others and a co-creator of an experience, a 'being-with' the others present in the space. I would really like to continue exploring working with scores as the time

limitation this week meant many questions have been left unanswered. I want to experience also working with a text based score. Others questions are what kinds of language were people using in their score and how did they engage with these?