

"Precious to bold"
An ongoing exploration and
shared practice

Catherine Magill
Rikke Jeppesen Rod

FORSØGSTATIONEN
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Embodied Immediacy – “precious to bold”



*Peaceful calm- a summers afternoon
She is reading the book of her body
Rolling over, Turning pages
Words fall softly around her
Pictures drift by
Clouds across the sky
She listens to the breeze
Tumbleweed turns-
Over and over
She opens her pages wide
Breathing stone
The Sphinx listens closely
Black snowflake prisoner
Arched spiral star
Balanced edge of contemplation
A moment's thought- she rolls on.....*

Poem by Catherine Magill

Background and starting point

The project is born out of an ongoing dialogue between two practitioners of movement art, Catherine Magill (AUS) and Rikke Jeppesen Rod (DK). Catherine Magill was invited to perform and teach at the Varia Festival in Gothenburg, Sweden, and the idea thus formed to make this project, to exchange practices and share the work in a Danish context.

Magill and Rod both have a long history of working with dance improvisation techniques in performance and research, in and out of academic settings, and a desire to push the boundaries of immediacy; of accessing stories of the lived body through a language of words, spoken - written – drawn – whispered; of becomings of meaning in closest relationship to the experience of the embodied, embedded stories. What is there? What emerges?

They first met in Berlin of 2014 at an intensive workshop with performance collective LowerLeft (US) and have since been looking for opportunities for collaboration. The idea of the project was born from email exchanges and video diaries shared on their separate practices and what common interests were revealed.

The purpose of the project was and is to initiate a shared space of work – of letting our different approaches and experiences – cross fertilize and evolve. Catherine will bring an invested interest in the exploration and development of instant composition and the embodied moment, notably through her practice as a solo artist. Rikke will bring several phenomenological investigations of dance and artistic practices, especially the techniques of Deborah Hay (USA), and recent discovery of the voice work by Nadine George. They also

both have a background in contact improvisation work in performance and Body Mind Centering (BMC).

Main Question

Our two main question has been how to access and tell the stories of the body through movement and words intertwined, and secondly how to create shared practices across continents.

The Process

We found a format which was to begin with 10/15 min Authentic Movement witnessed by the other, then followed by a 5 min writing, then switching roles. We would end each session with a video recording with us summarizing the day and individual notes, ideas and reflections.

What we found

Related to our first main question, we found a way together, using the authentic movement model, to open up or allow the body to articulate, share, tell its stories, experience knowledge through uncensored, un-choreographed, un-stylized movement; I.e. 'authentic' movement. The question that arises is then: what is authentic? For us it means allowing



the impulses, curiosities and sensations of the body to be the primary motivation for moving. Staying with the truest or strongest impulse, rather than letting the movements develop into secondary impulses, or into known, familiar, remembered, habitual stylistic, aesthetic choreography.

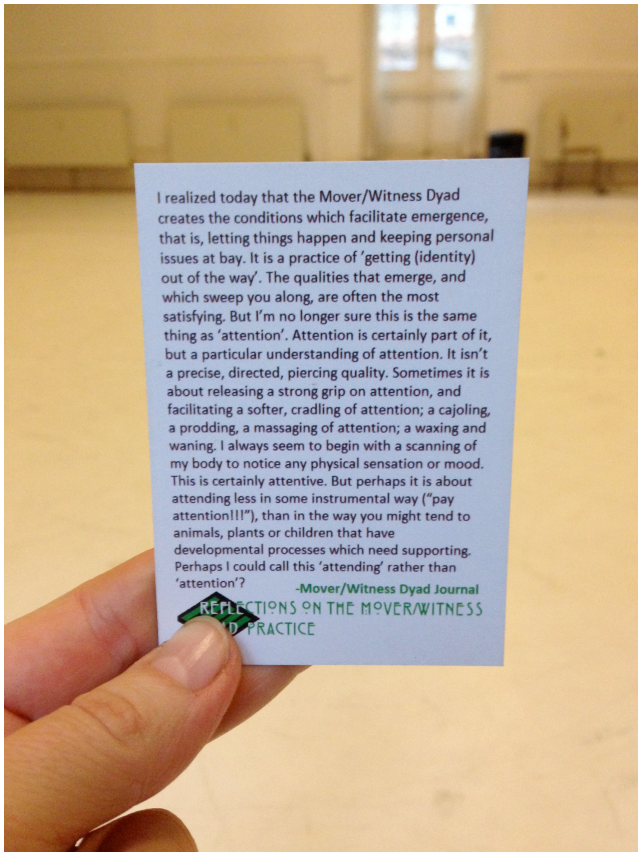
To achieve this, we attempted to remain in a state of 'attending' i.e. a sensitive vigilance to staying true to the primary impulse. The challenge of this is to keep attending to what is there, without falling into a passive state of waiting, which has the potential to

deaden the impulse towards moving. This – along with our time constraint – lead us to the statement/realization that *we needed to move quickly through precious to bold*. The quality we recognized as 'precious' was part of our process of developing trust with ourselves in relationship to the other, and also in the development of the material and work.

As individuals with different challenges and competing professional and domestic roles, the challenge of staying with what is there is very real – as artists and as human beings. During the practice Catherine came up with a sentence that was helpful in embracing these demands: "Holding the world in our sensing, in our knowing, the body mind is spherical". Thinking the body mind as spherical allows for the mundane demands of life to work with us, in our artistic practice instead of being an obstructing factor. Which leads to:

The second question - how to create shared practices across continents?

The first thing we acknowledge is that we cannot replicate being in a room with someone. The subtleties and complexities of the shared embodiment and relationship cannot be transferred via video and other digital communication. Taking inspiration from Shaun McLeod's (AUS) card deck (see photo), and what became our shared practice, we have decided to create our own individual card packs. A standard card pack has 52 cards, a year



has 52 weeks so recording a weekly practice. The structure of the card pack gives us a small concise way to share images, creative writing and personal insights. With 52 weeks in the year, we envision that a card will be created as a result of each weekly practice. The cards will have a format of writings on one side and an image/drawing on the other side. In consideration and commenting on consumerism and conservation, we have decided to make the cards out of recycled and found materials. We plan to share these cards digitally at the end of each month. Along with sharing the card pack visually we also plan to share voice recordings of poetic writing made in the score formats used/developed during our shared time.

The shared voice recordings of ourselves reading our creative writings, and/or insights – we will use as a way to interact, connect with each other in our solo studio practice sessions in our distant countries. We will use this material in different ways

i.e. listening to the spoken word, while moving/writing; listening to the spoken word then writing/moving, etc.

Prior to leaving Australia, Catherine presented a collaborative performance, entitled “Women of the North”. For this performance, Catherine invited Rikke, along with Karin Johansson (SE) and Lisa Larsdotter Petersson (SE) to contribute poetry, music and image respectively. Rikke has proposed that this format be used by each of us over the coming months to create a performance platform for our shared practice. In 2017, upon Catherine's return to Australia, we will invite Karin and Lisa to join this and the card pack project. The “Women of the North” format also welcomes collaboration with other local or international artists.

Our awareness of the challenge of maintaining a regular movement practice within the demands of everyday life was fully realized and confirmed. The authentic movement practice and what it asks of the mover, highlights and brings to the fore, the reality or truth of what is ‘going on’ for each individual. One of the challenges we experienced within the practice was the discipline of staying with what is true, in the present moment, without

slipping into habits of movement: While maintaining an open attentive nonjudgmental state, to witness our selves, each other and the unfolding processes without judgment required focused rigour.



We moved away from performative skill building (especially spoken word) and towards a practice of refining and deepening our embodiment, i.e. our availability to the body's material and the writing that emerged.

Although we had been together in an intensive, immersion workshops in Berlin, we had not shared a studio practice. It took the first few sessions for us to get to know each other creatively, to understand each other's ways of working and recognizing our shared and different movement vocabularies.

How this joint approach across space and time can play out, will only be truly tested and developed as our collaboration proceeds.

Where do we go from here? Will this continue, what impact will it have (cooperations, productions etc.), has it called forth new questions and new wishes for inquiries/research?

Our time at Forsøgsstationen has provided the foundation from which to build and develop long distance collaboration and shared creative practice. It has created a spring board for creative productions, events and performance projects.

New questions

How to create and maintain more space and time for our creative practices/artistic lives?

What other methods, technologies can we use to strengthen connection and collaboration?


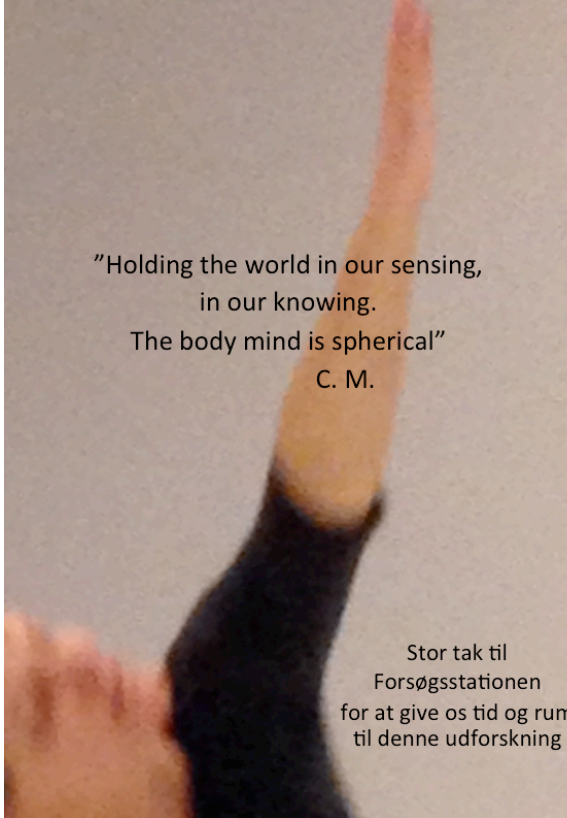

What is the place of the poetry, ie: is it only process or will it also become a product? ie: prototype booklet shared at Platform sharing.

What venues of funding are available to us to be in the studio together again?

What other events would provide a forum for our collaboration? eg: Impro Xchange Berlin.

Booklet:

We made a small prototype booklet for the showing on December 9, 2016.
Below is front and back of booklet, and two sample pages.

 <p>Forsøg</p> <p>Nov. 23 – Dec. 9 - 2016</p> <p>Catherine Magill Rikke Jeppesen Rod</p> <p>“Precious to bold”</p> <p>An ongoing exploration and shared practice</p>	 <p>“Holding the world in our sensing, in our knowing. The body mind is spherical”</p> <p>C. M.</p> <p>Stor tak til Forsøgsstationen for at give os tid og rum til denne udforskning</p>
 <p>Foto: Catherine</p>	<p>Rikke moving 29/11</p> <p>Ladybug. I have you spotted. There are a lot going on with you huh? Then the creek and then the grass and the trees on end. Finding earth space for no purpose. It is not easy. Go do the grasshopper dance Whenever you are ready. Never is, apperently. In your own little world Your own wings to carry you wherever, whenever. Why roll on your back when the air is thick with sun and laughter. You just dont care, do you? Solitary solitude solidly solo. You are such a little spider rock. Filled with your own circles of movement. With your own rythms and rhymes. I guess you will come around. Eventually.</p> <p>Rikke writing after moving</p>

References

WRITINGS:

Watching scores: Frames for perception - Card pack by Shaun McLeod, Australia. (article about the work can be accessed [here](#))

M train: Patti Smith, 2015.

My Body, The Buddhist: Deborah Hay, 2000.

Choreography/Koreografi: Holte, Kongsness and Skolseg (eds), 2017. (online version available [here](#))

RECOLLECTIONS AND PONDERINGS from workshops with:

LowerLeft, San Diego, 2001, Berlin 2014

Julyen Hamilton, Banyoles 1994, Berlin 2014

Deborah Hay, Vrå DK, 2004, Melbourne, 2014

Rosalind Crisp, Berlin 2014, Gothenburg 2014

Nadine George, Voice Studio International, Copenhagen 2016,

Angelina Watson, Copenhagen 2015-ongoing

OTHER INSPIRATIONS:

David Whyte: [Start Close In](#). From "River Flow: New & Selected Poems", 2012

Rolling Stones: "Wild Horses (couldn't drag me away)", from album "Sticky fingers" 1971.

Music by Jun Miyake, Japanese composer. Known for his collaboration with Pina Bausch.

Louise Bourgeois, [exhibition Louisiana Museum](#), December 2016- January 2017.

Basic information

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The research was done at Forsøgsstationen between the 23rd of November and the 8th of December 2016, and part of the Platform sharing on December 9, 2016.