

kinesthetic/cartographic memoirs— a fertile performative ground reflecting on our dis/re locations and environments

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We are dancers and improvise themes of displacement, migration, belonging, arrivals and departures which naturally nestle into our notions of home. In this presentation we will outline the methods of improvisation that allow for the intelligence of cohering visceral impulses moment by moment in order to create poetic meaning. This is coupled with images and analysis of improvisations performed with the participants through a process of dialogue, graphic recording and transferring to movement.

Through movement improvisations, we move through a kaleidoscope of narratives inviting those who witness to meet this with their own lived experiences and interpretations. Graham (2104) writes of this kind of open circuit with our viewers.

“Art becomes more than individual self-expression practiced by the strange and gifted. It becomes a language for a conversation about experience, a way to inquire about the world, even a way to change how we see the world and our relationship to it. “(p. 30)

This liminal space of moving embodied narratives from one source to another became the nexus of Ricketts' (2011) graduate work and subsequent and current research. We will begin a story only to arrive somewhere unexpected depending on the context and the condition of the telling.

We see the storytelling space to be an empty space, a void that is the result of an essentialized process involving a stripping away of specificity, fragmenting meaning into a poeticism that blasts chronology, logic and sequencing into space and lands in what we would consider the body as 'home'. The pieces fall where they may and are understood differently by each of those who experience and witness.

In this way poeticized dance narratives speak to space and place as external and internal topographies pointing to a felt sense of home. As dancers we are constantly reading the world through movement and reading movement as sentences of meaning, grammared, and

punctuated with all the nuances of shifting weight, leverages, and centers. For example, when we improvise in outdoor sites, our partners become the wind, the gravel under our shoes, the rusted steps and brick wall, and all of these elements are intrinsic to both our physical choices as well as the metaphors of place, both external and internal. These choices shape our own sense of arrivals and departures, belonging and displacements creating a newness in the familiarity.

Graham writes of the work of the artist as countering predictable circumstances by “embracing ambiguity, surprise, imagination and idiosyncratic outcomes.” (2014, p.33) As artists we disrupt habituated relationships of knowing “The world is depicted as an object of consumption. Places are owned, measured, used, and thrown aside.” Instead, we are working to reassemble a world through what he calls our own “personal mythologies” (Graham, 2014, p. 34)

Knowing that our lived experiences are the foundation of a collective storying process, we are interested in the historicity that lives within a creative bricolage mapping our stories, both unknown and remembered, probing and traversing time, space and meaning and all the points between. When we tell the stories of our past, is it an unravelling of what was ‘meant to be’ and know that conditions and contexts ultimately determined the outcomes or are we surprised by its evolution? Lacan writes of “the moment one arrives at illusion...” (Cited in Miller, 1992, p. 10), in this way we understand by believing that illusion is not necessarily misconception but rather a disruption—a suspension of patterned historical associations that problematize the obvious, the habitual. Our fury to define fact and fiction as necessary binaries is replaced with a liminality of the narrative in relation to self, history and the other. We have learned that creating narratives in relation to ‘home’ is entirely transient and relational to the other. Our story, here and now, exists within the multiple conditions of this moment within *this* space and place. Golden (2001, cited in Graham, 2014: 34) exemplifies this: ‘A sense of place vitally shapes our being, our identity... it refers to not simply location but at a deeper level to home, departure, arrival and destiny.’”

We perform metaphors of ‘home’, both internal and external, fixed and fluid, liminal and determined. These metaphors are portrayed in the form of poetic expressions anchored within a clear intent. For example, perched on a large rock in an abandoned alley reeling in the long trail of my coat with my suitcase delicately balanced on top, could be a metaphor for isolation and gathering to self that which brings comfort. Lippard (1997) writes of these notions of place, “Place is longitudinal and longitudinal with the map of a person’s life. It is temporal and spatial, personal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth, it is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there and what will happen there.” (p.47)

This virtual workshop combines movement, story and drawing to create kinesthetic, cartographic memoirs in relation to arrivals/departures within the field of home(ness). This performative exploration starts with the prompt *I remember when I first arrived/departed*. This will call upon participants to think of geographic and emotional ‘homes’ in relation to dis or re location.

These conversations and subsequent drawings and transfers to movement operate as catalysts for shared storying of internal and external notions, memories, resonances of ‘home’ and rather than erasure of self in these blended narratives, we seek to cultivate

ecosystems of shared truths that transcend the boundaries and borders that often challenge this. Graham (2014) adds to this that our stories are generated, steep and linger within our place and communities "...history and community endure in places, in the land and in those who live in it" (Graham, p. 46).

In partners (breakout rooms), the story is told; one person speaking and the other drawing the salient points resembling a cartographic or topographical record. This is transferred to movement with chosen words poeticized and spoken simultaneously. The partners reverse the roles and they end with combining their two vocal, kinesthetic and visual stories exemplifying this modality as a fertile ground to reflect upon our chosen and unchosen environments both transitory and fixed.