



one second  
it's there

...

Movement, time, space and the art  
of dance in galleries and museums.

A response to the event by Emmie McLuskey

26 June 2019

The Hunterian Gallery, University of Glasgow

A day of discussion, performance and exchange between artists, curators and everyone interested in the art of the choreographer and dancer, with contributions from Mark Bleakley, Michael Bachmann, Vincent Crapon, Ashanti Harris, Dr. Nele Lipp, Elisabeth Schilling, Simone Stewart and Lucy Suggate.

*“[Dance] gives you nothing back, no manuscripts to store away, no paintings to show on walls and maybe hang in museums, no poems to be printed and sold, nothing but that single fleeting moment when you feel alive.”*

- Merce Cunningham

*“One could easily assume that the substance of choreographic thought resided exclusively in the body. But is it possible for choreography to generate autonomous expressions of its principles, a choreographic object, without the body?”*

- William Forsythe

*“To understand what I am saying, you have to believe that dance is something other than technique. We forget where the movements come from. They are born from life. When you create a new work, the point of departure must be contemporary life — not existing forms of dance.”*

- Pina Bausch

*[when we watch others dance,] “we shall cease to be mere spectators and become participants in the movement that is presented to us, and though to all outward appearances we shall be sitting quietly in our chairs, we shall nevertheless be dancing synthetically with all our musculature.”*

- John Martin, Introduction to Dance

*“I am thinking around performance, the stage, the museum or gallery, visual art, video, film, writing... active contemplation and how I would like to be able to live in and between these particular forms (perceived medium landscapes) as organically as possible, banishing any hierarchy... A principal question to this process is: how can an intensive artistic research and immediate art-making practice translate to the staged realm of the spectator? This ongoing struggle between process and production creates a tension that is a vital element in all of my artistic work.”*

- Ralph Lemon

*“...Watching dance is no mystery: what you see or feel is what is happening.”*

- Jonathan Burrows

- 10:30am • Coffee will be available •
- 11:00am Welcome and introduction to the day by curator Simone Stewart
- 11:15am Presentation of paper by art and dance historian Dr Nele Lipp (Hamburg)
- 12:15pm Artist intervention/ provocation by Mark Bleakley
- 12:45pm • Lunch •
- 1:45pm Artist intervention/ provocation by Ashanti Harris
- 2:15pm In Conversation - Michael Bachmann (Glasgow Uni), Lucy Suggate (Artist) and Vincent Crapon (Curator based in Luxembourg)
- 3:15pm • Tea Break •
- 3:30pm ‘Long Table’ format discussion for all attendees at the event.
- 6:00pm • Drinks and light refreshment •
- 7:00pm Performance of ‘FELT’ by Elisabeth Schilling in the Contemporary Art Gallery (45minutes)

Picture Credits:

Pg 5, 7, 8, 9 (x2), 10, 11 (x3), 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20: Tim Nunn

Pg 14(1), ‘Human Furniture’, 2018 - Lucy Suggate. Presented at The National Gallery, London (UK) Mac Val, Paris (FR) and Nottingham Castle, Nottingham (UK) Arken Museum of Modern Art (DK) Image courtesy of the artist.

Pg 14(2), ‘Full Service’, 2018 - Adam Linder. Performed at Mudam Luxembourg. Installation view at Wattis Institute, Choreographic Service No.2: Some Proximity, 2014. Pictured: Josh Johnson & Justin F. Kennedy. © Photo: Allie Foraker.

Pg 15, ‘Work/Travail/Arbeid’, 2014 - Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, image courtesy of Rosas Dance Company.

‘one second it’s there...’

Movement, time, space and the art dance in galleries and museums

A response to the event by Emmie McLuskey.

A record and response to a day of talks, provocations, lectures and performance work instigated and produced by Tim Nunn, Elisabeth Schilling and Simone Stewart on the occasion of Schilling’s performance of ‘FELT’ at Glasgow University’s Hunterian Gallery.

As with any event, it’s hard to relay or communicate an explanation or response to whole day of discussion, performance, participation and lectures in a written form. In the programme for the day I was listed as the rapporteur, after googling what this meant ‘a person who is appointed by an organisation to report on the proceedings of its meetings,’ I tried to think what that might look like. Knowledge and the accumulation of it, is so often built into hierarchies, a written one being privileged over a visual, a visual being privileged over a felt one etc. Documentation of performance practices posing endless problems and solutions. I wanted to attempt to record and pass on the information shared that day as best I could, a subjective perspective on what surfaced for me, my thoughts appearing throughout, exploring formally how these knowledges intersect and depart from each other.

*Emmie McLuskey*

Introduction by Simone Stewart

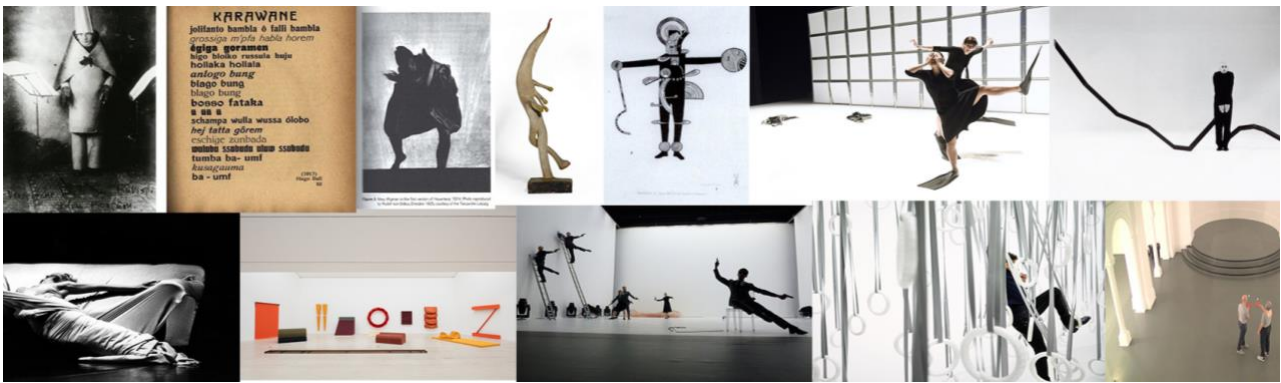
Simone Stewart's introduction to the day detailed the thinking behind the symposium, she touched on the discussions which lead to and informed the proceedings of the day, highlighting the importance of Dr Nele Lipp's exhibition making and writing practice within her thinking as a curator and Elisabeth Schilling's as a dancer and choreographer. Schilling and Stewart worked together on the presentation of FELT in Scotland, they put together the day of discussion in order to gather artists, thinkers and arts professionals who are debating the challenges of performance work and the gallery space.

Stewart described the process behind working with Schilling and her exploration of bodies, textures and space. The experience of choreographing work that responds to space and its demand for a renewed blocking every time it enters a new location. Each performance bringing forth new restraints and questions to be embodied and examined. Pivotal to Stewart's thinking is the writing of architecture curator Kate Goodwin, her thoughts around how meaningful experience is built and unbuilt through people's reciprocal and evolving relationships to the architectures they inhabit. Stewart reminded us of the history of art spaces, starting with those which resemble the ground floor of Glasgow University's Hunterian Gallery to the White Cube which depicts a more contemporary hang, each one posing its own set of problems. We were invited to not just observe the day but to also feel it.



A lecture by Dr Nele Lipp, '100 years of Dance'

Citing works of art and dance centred in a European, primarily German, history over the last century, Lipp addressed space, time and movement simultaneously, leading us through a selection of examples that were concerned with the space where movement and sculpture merge, a space that then begins to address the audience. Art and everyday objects eventually enter this space and become performative gestures.



Lipp's analysis starts with references such as Hugo Ball's *Karawane*, 1916 in which he lays down his 'cultural protest of overcoming the bourgeois concept of art,' Mary Wigman's *Zeremonielle Gestalt*, 1926, where we see Wigman's costume design rendering 'her a cross of human being and object,' as well as Kurt Schwitters' *Erschöpfter Tänzer* 1943 which opposed fixed definitions of genre. We begin to see the relationship between works made and the context of living and making in Germany during World War 2 The lecture then leads us through Kandinsky's *Gelber Klang* (Yellow Sound) and Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadisches Ballett* (*Triadic Ballet*) whilst highlighting the less well-known figure Lothar Schreyer and his work *Spielgang* (*Play Cycle*) *Kreuzigung* (*Crucifixion*). Art's relationship to theatre being a key exploration in these works, we see art objects being used as dance partner's in Merce Cunningham's *Rain Forest* 1968 and laterally William Forsythe's exploration of the choreographic object through installation.

Dance as a discipline feels heavily under analysed in writing, Lipp's meticulous work to draw lines through this history allows us to contemplate the shifts in ideology around dance and the gallery space and think through how that might continue to evolve.

A demonstration and reading by Mark Bleakley

As part of his presentation, Mark created a series of casts from heated elasto medical strips using himself and members of the audience as models. While the casts were made, he read a selection of texts which are listed below when creating the casts.

Whilst Mark cast and read, I thought about the interdependency of bodies, how we lean into and support each other in multiple ways which aren't solely physical. The changing states of the elasto mirroring the connections between bodies, some being held for some time, others falling away.



## Cast One

A cast made by two people, one supporting the other's arm with their hand, the cast responds to the heat of the body.

### Tim Ingold - The Life of Lines (extract from Line and Blob p3)

*'We creatures are adrift. Launched upon the tides of history, we have to cling to things, hoping that the friction of our contact will somehow suffice to countervail the currents that would otherwise sweep us to oblivion. As infants, clinging is the first thing we ever did. Is not the strength in the newborn's hands and fingers remarkable? They are designed to cling, first to the little one's mother, then to others in its entourage, still later to the sorts of things that enable the infant to get around or to pull itself upright. But grown-ups cling too- to their infants, of course, lest they be lost, but also to one another for security, or in expressions of love and tenderness. And they cling to things that offer some semblance of stability. Indeed that would be good grounds for supposing that in clinging or, more prosaically, in holding on to one another- lies the very essence of sociality: a sociality, of course, that is in no wise limited to the human but extends across the entire panoply of clingers and those to whom or that to which, they claim. But what happens when people or things cling to one another? That is on entwining of lines. They must bind in some such way that the tension that would tell them apart actually holds them fast. Nothing can hold on unless it puts out a line, and unless that line can tangle with others. When everything tangles with everything else, the result is what I call a meshwork. To describe the meshwork is to start from the premise that every living being is a line or, better, a bundle of lines. This book, at once sociological and psychological in scope and ambition, is a study of the life of lines.'*







## Cast Two

One person is being cast by another person; one arm is supported by another arm.

### Karen Barad - On Touching (extract)

*When two hands touch, how close are they? What is the measure of closeness? Which disciplinary knowledge formations, political parties, religious and cultural traditions, infectious disease authorities, immigration officials, and policy makers do not have a stake in, if not a measured answer to, this question? When touch is at issue, nearly everyone's hair stands on end. I can barely touch on even a few aspects of touch here, at most offering the barest suggestion of what it might mean to approach, to dare to come in contact with, this infinite finitude. Many voices speak here in the interstices, a cacophony of always already reiteratively intra-acting stories. These are entangled tales. Each is diffractively threaded through and enfolded in the other. Is that not in the nature of touching? Is touching not by its very nature always already an involution, invitation, invisitation, wanted or unwanted, of the stranger within?*



### Cast Three

A cast made by two people supporting each other's weight through their hands.

#### Jane Bennett - Vibrant Matter (extract)

*A dead rat, some oak pollen, and a stick of wood stopped me in my tracks. But so did the plastic gloves on the bottle cap: thing-power arises from bodies inorganic as well as organic. In support of this contention, Manuel De Landa notes how even inorganic matter can "self-organize":*

*Inorganic matter-energy has a wider range of alternatives for the generation of structure than just simple phase transition... In other words, even the humblest forms of matter and energy have the potential for self-organization beyond the relatively simple type involved in the creation of crystals. There are, for instance, those incoherent waves called solitons which form in many different types of materials, ranging from ocean waters (where they are called tsunamis) to lasers. Then there are... stable states (or attractors), which can sustain coherent cyclic activity... Finally, and unlike the previous examples of nonlinear self-organization where true innovation cannot occur, there [are] ... The different combinations into which entities derived from the previous processes (crystals, coherent pulses, cyclic patterns) may enter. When put together, these forms of spontaneous structural generation suggest that inorganic matter is much more variable and creative than we ever imagined. And this insight into matter's inherent creativity needs to be fully incorporated into new materialist philosophies.*



An engagement by Ashanti Harris in the Hunterian's Picture Gallery at Glasgow University. There were around thirty-five dancers present.

Whilst moving around the room, I had time to contemplate my own body's relationship to space and the art object. Often the proximity of people and art has a speed limit, we are taught to be slow and cautious, an acknowledgment of how you are feeling in your own body can sometimes be overlooked. Whilst walking, pointing and moving, new views from the gallery could be observed, different perspectives, times and levels brought into the act of looking.



Imagine your 100%

How do you walk when you are at 100%

Start walking

75%

When I say 'look' stop and look someone directly in the eyes

100%

Look

100%

When I say favourite, stop and look at your favourite part of the room

Favourite

100%

90%

25%

Look

When I say fold, fold yourself. When I say unfold, unfold.

Fold

Look

50%

Favourite

When you are past the object you have the control

*'What is the difference if what we put into the gallery space is called dance or choreography or if it's called live art or performative installation? Is it just a question of terminology or do we think differently? What is the difference between being in the museum space with a determined meaning or how does the space change our relationship to the object and the movement.'*

- Michael Bachmann

*'My body builds spiritual states that materialise themselves through the original virtual space, the imagination and that's how I enter a gallery space, I'm interested in altering my state of consciousness and other people's states of consciousness and the objects too, because the objects stare back.'*

- Lucy Suggate

*'She took an existing show and stretched it to the gallery space. Her approach was communicated through the event, come and see dancers in the museum, come and see dancers in the white cube and what that looks like. Come and see dancers that are usually on stage and be up close with them. We are in a museum, we are in an exhibition space, but the only thing we keep from the museum space is just the white walls and the fact that the place is open from 10am - 4pm so there is no relationship with actual works of art, the dance becomes the work of art and the setting of the museum becomes the setting of the play. There is no end and no beginning, the dancers work in shifts.'*

- Vincent Crapon

A Panel Discussion between dance artist Lucy Suggate, curator Vincent Crapon and lecturer Michael Bachmann. The discussion centred around questions of performance and how it is categorised in relation to the gallery space, whether this categorisation impacts the way we encounter or think about performance and the museum object and how each individual has dealt with these questions practically.

Bachmann, Crapon and Suggate explored the difference ways they have approached the process of putting performance work in the museum as artist, curator and academic. Suggate described her experience of working in museum spaces such as the National Gallery and the Louvre, being



excited by the potential of the moving body to disrupt the narrative of Western Art History when placed in the museum, allowing past, present and future to exist alongside each other in the performative moment. Crapon spoke through his experience as a curator working with the differing approaches of artists Adam Linder and Anne Therese de Keersmaeker. Linder questioning the way dance is used in museums, the place and purpose of the dancer in that specific space and developing his own economy in relation to this set of questions. De Keersmaeker occupying the space by taking a pre-existing piece of theatre and ‘stretching’ to the architecture of the museum, dancers are viewed close up and audiences are invited to walk among them.

The conversation opened up questions around the practicalities of dance in the museum, the culture of acquisition, who is allowed in the museum space and



the archiving of dance. Bachmann brought up the politics of ephemerality that dance brings forward as an art form. Our attentions turned to what a dance space of the future might look like or what it might hold. Questions around how we are required to behave in galleries and the categorisation of work was brought into question, the care around artwork and bodies, the differing approaches to them and why. We ended by speaking through an idea of Suggate's, 'where there is movement there is change', in a society of political decline, dance resists being quantified, dance could offer us new ways of being and understanding.



The Long Table was the format used to finish off the day of discussion. Conceived by Lois Weaver in 2003 it came about in order to allow voices to be heard equally, disrupting hierarchical notions of expertise. The last line from the Long Table Etiquette reads, there is an end, but no conclusion. In light of this, I have detailed all the questions raised as part of this conversation.

Q How can we change the conversation from dance in galleries and centre a conversation about the artists?

Q Why don't we just make work for studios? Why do we need to go somewhere else to present the work? What is seen as negative about the studio space?

Q Maybe work isn't always made in a studio?

Q How can we attract audiences that don't always come to dance spaces?

Q How do we move away from definition and language that divides?

Q What is the difference between painting and dancing, the desire is the same?

Q Which bodies in which spaces, who is has permission to be and work in these spaces?

Q Dance as a function to activate an artwork or object, how can we move away from this value system?

Q How can the value in the dance and performance itself be given space?





- Q Is the moving body only valuable because it can speak after or in reference to because it's speaking in reference to, rather than a currency that's valuable in itself?
- Q How can dancers be commissioned to create something new from the artwork rather than in response to?
- Q The red herring is the physical space, the white space and how can we reimagine these collaborations between poets, dancers, artists etc how can we embed these collaborations from the onset?
- Q How can we move the conversation on from context to process?
- Q How do you distil someone's performance work into two paragraphs? You are always asked how can you communicate this into something thought provoking? How will this be talked about after the performance?
- Q How do you speak about an artist's work for interpretation purposes and that reaches different audiences?
- Q What are you seeing is the wrong question. We should be seeing what the body says?
- Q How do we get away from conversations about numbers and time in relation to institutions?
- Q How can dance exist in these spaces with a different relationship to time?
- Q How much am I giving up to be in that space?



- Q Can we move away from the general and in-principle?
- Q How are we going to fill that space and that time?
- Q The curators problem of how you monetise a space?
- Q What does the work need?
- Q Does it need rehearsal? How long are the rehearsals?
- Q How can we be more flexible when performance changes?
- Q What are the agendas that are being asked of artists?
- Q What's the difference between Scottish Artist Union rate of pay and Equity rate of pay? How are these decided?
- Q How do you account for the wind down period after an exhibition or performance?
- Q How do you put a quantity on time?



Felt and the gallery space -  
A written response to the work of Elisabeth Schilling

Sat, tightly perched, arms hugging knees, back supported by the white gallery wall, I shuffle across the floor, rocking my feet from side to side, trying to make myself as small as possible. The space fills with people, some choosing to sit, others stand, all hovering awkwardly in their attempts to find a corner. In front of us stands a large, tall wooden box, clad in felt. The dimensions of the box are human, there is the expectation of a body inside, the anticipation is enhancing the awkward shuffle.



The title Felt can be read as a noun, a verb and as the past tense and past participle of feel. These three uses congregate across meaning to provide space for material, physical and emotional

engagement, all touching or having touched someone. The noun felt, is considered to be the oldest manmade textile. Traditionally made of wool, fibres are matted, condensed and pressed together to make material used for clothing, housing, music and craft. The verb to felt is a tradition, the origin of which is heavily debated. Many cultures having their own story as to how the technique was honed. The way the verb is used in the East and West differs in function, with felt making being practiced across Central Asia, in the making of rugs, tents and clothing whereas in the West the textile is used in contemporary art and craft. To feel, I felt that, primarily relates to the sense of touch. FELT, as a work, deals with the haptic, both internally and externally, moving and residing between all three meanings.

The dancer inside the box begins to move to a soundtrack composed by Andréas Papapetrou, the sounds of the dancer and the piano simultaneously cushioned by felt. The absence of the visual of a human dancing body plays into the desire to know who might be performing this dance, the reading relying on context, timing, tone, shape and material. This sentiment is reflected in the choreography, with a lack of mirror or audience reaction the dancer is moving to the rhythm of touch, the touch of the structure, the felt, their own body, the floor. As she moves, we are forced to reflect on our own space and whom and what we are touching, the movement of the box working like a push and pull mechanism dictating how we disperse across the floor. As the dancer moves as does the shape of the box, at first structural, the wooden supports rigid and contained in their tipping. Slowly felt escapes the construct, the material movement becoming less predictable, the lines changing from straight to curved. As the dance moves down a corridor, more and more fabric escapes, unravelling across the gallery floor until eventually the dance is freed from the wooden structure and picks up speed and dimension, yet the visual of a body remains concealed and ambiguous.

The action of folding, changes something flat into something multi-dimensional. In Schilling's work we see multiple layers of laboured felt being folded again and again as she works with and against the heavy fabric, reminding us that touch has multiple directions and times. The fabric so dense it absorbs and deadens the sound and detailed silhouette of the body. Through this homage to the haptic, in space of the gallery where touch is so often prohibited, we see a deep respect for material and form and are reminded of the importance of touching and being touched.



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