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# Life in Lockdown: Elisabeth Schilling

[Life in Lockdown](#) | 23 March 2021



## **#GDLifeinLockdown Part 3**

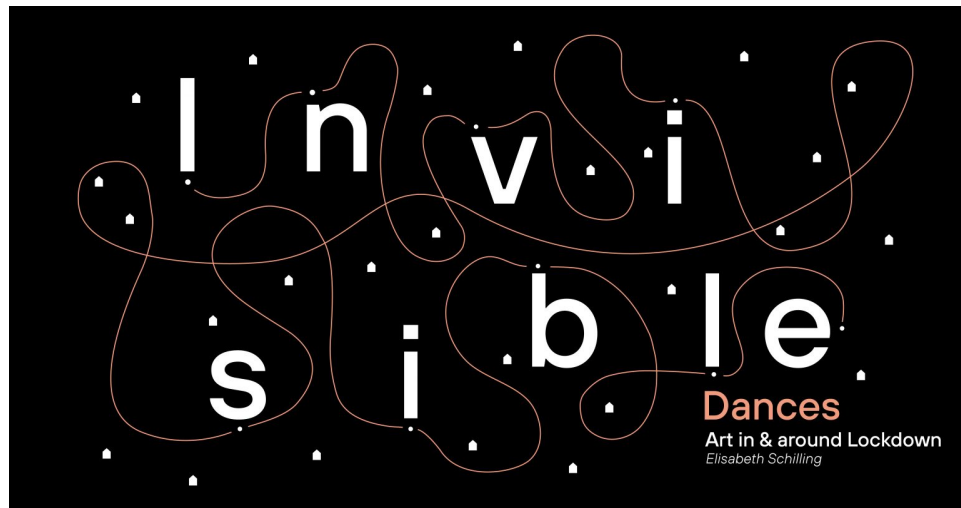
**Life in Lockdown is a blog series initiated by Greenwich Dance which features community and professional artists close to the organisation sharing how they are staying creative during these isolating times.**

### **MONDAY**

‘Let’s try to make the best of it’ – is the motto I have found for myself making my way through those various Lockdowns we lived through... Experiencing my friends getting sad and hopeless has initiated a bunch of ideas within me, one of which is called Invisible Dances: Art in and Around Lockdown – a project that has made its way through currently counting 28 Performances in 14 Cities across the world. What started as a little idea over breakfast keeps me on my feet since, as we get more and more artists approaching us wanting to participate.

Since summer I have been applying to many funds to be able to commission friends and colleagues, trying to give them a bit of hope and visibility. Currently, we are lucky as more and more institutions approach us wanting to execute the project in their cities, so I spend my days negotiating new ideas and partnerships, rethinking contracts, updating press releases, graphic designs, risk assessments and reconsidering our marketing. One of the biggest challenges is to make the work COVID-safe across the continents. Every country, every region has different regulations and thus it is a key to keep the concept of the project as flexible, yet as creative as possible. The nightly, unannounced performance, that leaves colourful traces in city centres has until now supported over 100 creatives globally. Even though we don’t directly hear back from our audiences like we used to in theatres, I genuinely hope this project brought and brings joy to people who stumble over it.

### **Invisible Dances**



### Life in Lockdown 3 - Elisabeth Schilling: Invisible ...



## TUESDAY

I am desperately trying to spend less time in front of the screen. I do believe that lockdown is a chance to pause, reflect and make time for things that you wouldn't usually take time for. So it is on my list to read a book, go for walks more frequently, spend time in nature and let my soul calm down. But as soon as I wake up, I am pulled to my computer – partly passion, partly excitement and curiosity, partly sense of duty. I imagine it is all just a habit, a habit one can train to reduce. As a dancer one has grown up with incredible discipline, but where is my discipline gone when trying to pull away from the digital? Well, when I second that thought I think that I think I am pulled to my laptop as it gives me a chance to

interact with people, to dream up new ideas and to make them happen, to make my life more colourful through that flat, light and shiny thing which seems to have become my partner in crime since lockdown. So, I accept my obsession with responding to e-mails in the speed of light, finding yet another application one could respond to, yet another idea which would make my website just that little bit more interesting...



**WEDNESDAY**

I keep my laptop closed and start cleaning. It's time to order all the documents which sat in that cupboard for yet too many months... Bills, insurance documents and here and there a glimpse of an old flyer. I start to reorder the archive of my work and I really enjoy all those memories of the tours: the beginnings with small stages and audiences, wild locations and innocent communication strategies. I think we were so lucky: we managed to finish creating my very first group work just before Christmas. While the world became increasingly locked down, myself and the dancers were able to rehearse in strict isolation and of course given we were tested negative... It was a tough and stressful time.

Additionally, to how pressurized it is already to make a work, to make work in Covid restrictions certainly didn't make a creator's life easier. I often think back of my wonderful team who were so supportive in that they stayed in isolation and proved their discipline, support and endurance in those months of creation time. While we weren't able to premiere in December, we strongly hope to be able to reschedule the performance and to tour it to our co-production partners over summer.

It has taken me three years to produce this work and I've had big plans and visions of how it should tour... the plans started to manifest vaguely already before lockdown and has now – needless to say – been put on ice. I wonder what future this work will have, which is so very dear to me. Will we be able to tour at all, share it with an audience as we had imagined and wished for? Or will it be swallowed by the big ocean that is one corona wave after another? We created an elaborate catalogue in three languages with commissioned texts by 6 writers. I am sitting in front of those 1250 booklets and wonder if they will ever find their readers? My friends say that I am the personification of optimism, so of course, I know, with a bit of luck and an open heart, the piece will have its life eventually...

**HearEyesMove**



## Life in Lockdown 3 - Elisabeth Schilling: Hear Eye...



### THURSDAY

My team is writing the annual report and it is the time for my contribution. Whilst I don't see my strength in writing text material, I do enjoy reflecting back of 2020 – a year with a surprising turn. A second later, my producer calls to double check the pianist's contract and asks about the project's financial report. Oh – there is an e-mail from a dancer saying they missed the last e-mail about dates and – ah – a moment later a mayor calls to discuss if the city is allowing us to perform the Invisible Dances in their city. I find myself thinking of how much I wished the other 15ish mayors would be as pro-active as this one. The Invisible Dances could bring so much colour, light and joy to their cities and support freelance artists. Mmmh – slightly frustrated I make a secret plan to call up those 15ish mayors right after this call. Back to the yearly report – my vision for 2021. Oh bloody hell – where shall I find 'generous co-producers' and 'international residencies' in the current climate... Heads up and continue Elisabeth Schilling. 'Cling' – a whatsapp from the marketing team: 'Is that image good for Facebook?' – 'Sure, go for it' I reply and start checking the updated risk report. Now translating it in German and then back to perfectionizing the new ideas for the graphic identity for the new project. Branding the company. We still don't have a name.



Afterwards a new Insta-Story- I recently got this new app, which allows really creative designs. Did that mayor add me? I wonder if that is a positive sign that she'd give us the rights for the ID's and ah the administrator wants a list of tour dates. 4pm – the radio is calling me for an interview. 'Live?'- 'Live.' – 'Cling' – another e-mail. And it goes on...

## FRIDAY

I do miss it, I do miss metamorphosing my identity through the diverse experiences I made working in art projects in different cities, many different countries throughout Europe before lockdown. My friends are spread across the continent. Zoom is not a replacement. I miss them. Still no light at the end of the Corona tunnel, but – hey its Friday and also on a Friday I try to make the best of it!

Time for some artistic research. I listen to music. Bach, Ravel, Debussy and Bartok. I draw as I dream up the textures that I feel in response to all of those... Lines, edges, circles, shadows, visions of spatial compositions. My favourite thing is dreaming dances up... The director wants a light and short clip. I am not so much into the light and easy music. I really love complex rhythmicities. It is predictable and one has used it so much in dance. Anyhow – that's the task today. I make a score and research textures, rhythms, spatial configurations through my body. The hardest thing about lockdown is to keep in shape next to all the admin.

Now, it is time, I think back to my favourite composer –  
Share György Ligeti. I choreographed the 18 Etudes for Piano last year on the group. I hope to continue creating my solo work on his music. I listen to his music again and again. 2023 is his 100th birthday and my current visions go directly go to this year. Will Corona be memory then? I truly hope it will...



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