

On An Animal | Capturing Dance | A Manifest

Let's attempt to grasp the nature of this dance.¹ This is an acknowledgment of movements toward the space where one can/could stand between capture and release. How can one fail at/succeed in ensnaring a mutable force? The desire is there, as witnessed by the morphic convergence of urges to understand/research/call into question the act of performance. How does it perform? Hold on. How does one hold on? How does it survive in service to? What is the document it forms in service to what end? - this repeated flurry of questions. There cannot be a document of until present passed. So this serves to be an offering in service to a present past - to be left behind. This will be something to be left behind the moment...gone. So now what is left? Let this be an invitation, contributing to later considerations.

*One can leave it.
Some can stand/sit/lie with it.
Many can see it.
All can forget it.*

To be practical:

*Read what one wants.
Leave when one wants.
Take what one wants.*

*Read how one wants.²
Leave how one wants.
Take how one wants.*

Take what for what what is.³

*Something is left behind regardless of.
What is left behinds adds to/subtracts from.
This is a manifest, a collection of, a scattershot.*

¹ Foreword

Forewarning

Four word

Foray...wait. Five.

² Page numbers are provided for those linearly inclined.

³ Don't stop get it get it. You can do it put your back into it.

the opening strains.

To imagine, for sake of argument or continuity,
that dance is a beast or that the body is beastly,
could prove beneficial.

To approach an animal with caution,
falter in hesitation,
leaves one swallowed whole.

To enter the fray full-hearted, asking
to be torn to shreds:
a wild shower of fragments as they splatter to the floor.

These pieces are ours to share, to take in, then mop up without a trace,
filed away as new notions to be revisited or forgotten.

To consider a metaphor of hunter and prey is rudimentary but when lost in the woods with thoughts, the crude can be conducive.

The notion of “capturing dance⁴” is unfortunate, the idea of which could be deceptively simple, but let’s saddle ourselves with this burden

to record, remember, recall
to replicate or reminisce.
to reconfigure or reposition,
to research
remainders of many things,
reminders of many things re:dance
to save
dance for posterity
for freedom from
for future,
reference
for future, funding.
for fault-finding.
A fast named few.

⁴ The engagement of “Capturing Dance” is a multi-institutional research project shared between Tanzfabrik Berlin, Academy of Media Arts Cologne, and the Inter-university Center for Dance (HZT, part of the University of Arts, Berlin) conducted over 2015 and 2016.

The importance of “action” in fact-finding could be key. Under different circumstances it would be undesirable to consider the word “capture⁵.” To give over to it or

⁵ The word “capture” was instituted before involved parties were invited to engage in research. This, however, provides a specific lens to work and consider from, which often offers equal parts challenge and perspective.

Give it import.

However, in this instance, as it looms overhead in an institutional spiral, the interrogative operations that come about surge from the center of it: a notion to capture the beast implies

an attempt to own
to cage
to tame
to hold hostage
its objects, its objectives, its qualities
its captors.

To ask “What is capturing dance?” is to some degree questioning: “What is dance?” Other useful derivations of these questions could be “Why capture dance?” or “Capturing dance. How?” Also revolving in the same arena could be “Why dance?” and furthermore, “How to dance?” To execute hindsight, one could extrapolate further as in, for example, “Is it dancing?” in the present, or “Was it dance?” brought up after the fact. There is a particular operation at play, that when a witness to dance experiences dancing, the dance has already been danced and one is forever chasing from behind. In which case, one logical response would be “I wish I could have captured it.” and in a continued thought, “Is that possible?”

Circular logic leads nowhere...

...but continues moving.

(if you let it)

One may easily relegate the idea of capturing said beast to the realm of impossibility - that dance and performance is ephemeral, the essence of which is hard to grasp, an intangible form. (And yet, to say “form” implies that it possesses a particular constitution.) Oversimplified, damning dance to the annals of the forgotten is demeaning.⁹ One must try to get closer because:

Dance is living, breathing [and]
there will be a struggle
there will be resistance
there will be an attempt to escape
there will be responsibility [and]
there is value.

⁹ Another stray thought is the work of Frantz Fanon in his analysis of the Black body in colonialist structures which is not say that his work and contributions have been forgotten but rather should be revisited.

To devalue the body in its existing time and in its mechanizations is undermining. To record the body, in its own undeniably ephemeral existence is an act of building upon the body, and the understanding of it. It exists as a living archive. Not (or not only) in woeful grief-riddled remembrance. It is to incite. To incite dancing. To continue teaching and reaching the body, as pedagogical tool, as social action, as a furthering.

Is this a letter?
A journal?
A joke?
A document?
A feeble attempt?
A catalog?

All of the above.

“I am accustomed to intelligent people asking about the condition of my body without realizing the nature of their request...In accepting both the chaos of history and the fact of my total end, I was freed to truly considered how I wished to live - specifically, how do I live free in this black body? It is a profound question because America understands itself as God’s handiwork, but the black body is the clearest evidence that America is the work of men....The question is unanswerable, which is not to say futile. The greatest reward of this constant interrogation, of confrontation with the brutality of my country, is that it has freed me from ghosts and girded me against the sheer terror of disembodiment.”¹⁰

¹⁰ The opening pages of Ta-Nehisi Coates from “Between the World and Me” could be considered a stretch in this context. However, there lies within something useful in his perspective on the Black Body in America in relationship to media, in relationship to history, in asking what form the body takes, whether we have agency over it and when it is lost. His “greatest reward” in the search for understanding the violence inflicted upon his Body could be, if one wishes, applied to understanding dance, this form that has been and will continue to be shaped by media (in the broadest sense) and history. What one can take away is that to ask a question, or continue to ask the question, centers the Body, and, in effect, offers freedom with respect to history. To consider what is capturing dance is “unanswerable, which is not to say futile.” To pose a question is to activate the body in inquiry and to maintain the vitality of dance itself. If questions end, so will movement. Asking questions operates as prevention - to steel the body from loss, from disfigurement, from insignificance. Accrued knowledge of the body is crucial - one must intimately know the traits of the beast to successfully capture it even if the task proves to be impossible.

What is the body extended?
How do we reach it?

Breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe
breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe
breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe
breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe
breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe
breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe breathe

breathe

breathe

breathe

breathe

breathe

breathe

breathe

(short pause)

The gloves are off.

Remove the skin that avoids contact.

Consider the flesh and what it offers.

The Pop-Up: To make a meandering offer (admittedly already long in effect), let us consider the world surrounding Beyonce, as her singular body, and the bodies that surround her happen to generate a somewhat incomprehensible amount of movement. The formation of Beyonce.

the intermediate gratification

video links

plagiarism.

superbowl. connecting 'contemporary' bodies to black panthers, connecting moves from this era to historical movements.

new associations, new movements, new vocabulary, new language.

Variation of body

Variation of document

The interplay between mediums forms a dance

How do we choreograph documents?

As we further the connection to our bodies, through media, what we know us what we have. A vessel to collect information, harvest, till the earth

UNFINISHED KEEP GOING UNFINISHED KEEP GOING

Beyonce what do I do with you.

We are held captive by the word capture. An immediate association is the phrase - captive audience. To hold an audience hostage for a moment¹¹ is an active state , the act of capturing. As an audience must always experience a dance, a body, in hindsight, to watch is to hold on to, to capture.

to watch is to capture.
to capture is to dance.
to dance is to watch.

¹¹ An audience could refer to a group witness to the dancing body, or gods, spirits, demons, that exist on a Y-axis that passes through and potentially emanates from the body. We are holding court, not to be judged but to be party to.

Watch this.
Not solely.
This is not a swag
bag of tricks
swaying softly in confrontation.
Do not solely soft sway to confrontation.

Drop floored out from under
a pelvic thrust

enter into a dry run.
mindfully probe
leave no sticky fingers fast in retreat.

(*Probe*, to steal from the German, could mean many things, more than
deep investigation, yes, yes, alien protrusions in cavities, but also:
pattern, challenge, rehearse,

example)
Take notes,
They can come in handy.
lean back sticky in situ-chew-ation,
fast referrals as insinuation.

Stay awhile
take a part
what next to come.
chuckle chuckle that was too easy,
cheesy fuck.

An initiated conversation with Sarah Maxfield on what is erased, on what is lost¹²¹³:

EW: hi sarah...!

so i am in portland at the moment and still writing this thingy, but i think there's something about the idea of erasure that you mentioned and the ideas of "capturing" that i would love to go further with.

would you be interested in having a few small email exchanges over the next couple weeks around the subject and I can place the words we share in some way into this manifest?

I just started a similar conversation with biba bell but on a slightly different subject: primarily on "locating" dance. "housing" the dance.

so if you are, that would be awesome! if you don't have time, i totally understand and I will see how I can weave our interactions into something regardless...

and here goes as a launching point.

I wanted to go a bit further into a notion that the body can be erased and that nature of dance, that beast, is in some form, a passive resistance. Riding against being caught or maintained or owned is its inherent strength. However, as historians, as witnesses, one must still apply the proper accreditation as it is crucial to the preservation of the body itself in its time of existence. The queries become two-pronged. I'd like to go further into this first idea of erasure and into the practice of categorically indexing the body.

¹² Sarah Maxfield investigates contemporary performance and its history through practice, discussion, and critical theory. She creates live performance and, with equal focus, creates structures for viewing and discussing performance and its context. Maxfield's work has been presented by The Chocolate Factory Theater, P.S. 122, and the Museum of Arts and Design, among other venues in NYC and beyond. Maxfield has contributed writing to *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Performance Club*, *Contact Quarterly*, and the *Movement Research Performance Journal*, and she was a Context Notes Writer for Dance Theater Workshop's final season. For nearly a decade, Maxfield curated *THROW*, a performance development series she created, presented by The Chocolate Factory Theater. She also launched *Now and Then*, a performance reading series at The Abrons Arts Center at Henry Street Settlement, where she was a recent Fellow. In addition, Maxfield is collecting an artist-driven archive of experimental dance and performance in New York, titled *Nonlinear Lineage* and is a founding manager of ArtsPool, an administrative cooperative for nonprofit arts management. She also spends a lot of time improvising with her three-year-old.

¹³ *Nonlinear Lineage* is an auto-ethnographic project organized by Sarah Maxfield in collaboration with Elliott Jenetopulos. Linking artists by self-defined influences, and grounding the stories within the context of NYC's ever-changing landscape, the project explores an artist-driven history in form and content that reflects the impact of artists on the city and vice-versa. It also takes into account the imperfect nature of memory and the importance of context to present a mapping of history that is fluid and contains multiple points of view.

SM: Yes, please!!!

To me the crucial question is "who decides?" Who decides what is indexed? Who decides what is highlighted and annotated and credited and who decides what is left out of the edit? How can we find more ways for individuals to be in charge of their own indexing? How can we find ways to show our bias and margin of error when indexing others? How can we overlay multiple points of view simultaneously to come closer to a whole and also emphasize the imperfect nature of representation relative to experience?

EW: Regarding who decides...I would agree that this is a crucial question but I also wonder about its importance. On a certain level, anyone who is consciously making a mark or erasing one, is engaged/invested enough to do so and therefore should be valued. Including people who carry information, and hold it until surfaces again. Maybe a simple comparison would be the carriers of oral traditions, of stories, and then the scribes that cement them in physical forms.

Is it worthwhile to value one process over the other? Erasure is inevitable, as understanding is reconstituted and evolves into the personal. However, subscribing to or descending into nihilism is not fruitful. The approach and desire to contain or capture is the value and the action. Any contribution to this action and extending its movement or inertia becomes part of the dance.

Jennifer Monson's Live Dancing Archive comes to mind. I understand the potential for the body to exist as an archive itself. I have not seen the work myself but I cull together the traces it leaves and sculpt my own personal understanding of the dance (Thus returning to the importance of consciously searching further.

Have you seen it live? Maybe you have a different awareness of the project? Are either of our impressions less valuable in the continuum of the work itself?

SM: I have seen *Live Dancing Archive*. I loved it. I thought it was a very important work. I know others who saw it and agreed. I know others who saw it and didn't think it was interesting at all. I know others who did not see it and still found it interesting. I know you. Or do I?

I think the reason I think "who decides" is important is because a lot of my feelings about this are in reaction to a certain power structure around these decisions historically. I'm not advocating that we privilege special, authorized gatekeepers or experts. I'm advocating that we recognize that nothing exists without a point of view, and that no point of view should be taken for granted as a default and therefore unquestioned.

I'm thinking of *The People's History of the United States* versus the history I was taught in school - for example. I think that loss is inevitable, but erasure is not. Erasure, in my mind, is a very specific, intentional, and violent act that is perpetrated by power in order to assert power. It's not the same as loss. It's not the same as fading from view. Erasure is violence.

But then, maybe it's also other things too. If I erase something that is causing me pain - is that violence? I think maybe yes, it still is in a way...

How are you thinking of the word?

EW: Erasure. I approach it less specifically although I would share in your point of view that the intentional act of erasing can be violent or is violent in ways that are disfiguring or disembodiment. If we consider the notion of unintentional erasure, that one may simply forget or may fail in leaving any trace or impression, then is that violent? In which case, if no information was transferred or carried over, is that the natural selection of the dance for that one particular spectator? Do we have agency in deciding what is left behind? Or does it rely on the agency of others? (Of course, a maker can supply specific language that shapes or indemnifies the work from being lost in which case is the idea of capturing or avoiding erasure ultimately an act of prevention?)

To prevent something from happening to something that has already occurred. Are we always in pursuit of something and is that valid? To paraphrase Jose Munoz's *Chasing Utopia* in saying that the considerations of what is queer in performance point to a future that does not yet exist and as a result can be viewed as utopian or idealistic. Is this applicable to performance as a whole and that it is due to its willowy nature that it remains powerful? If we could capture it, or erase it completely, will it lose potency?

SM: Now all I can think about is Rauschenberg's Erased de Kooning...

More response when I'm at a real keyboard. Does the absence of typing ability erase my response? Erase this moment?

I do want to say the I don't see forgetting as a form of erasure. I think for me the idea of erasure is active and forgetting is passive... hmm...

I need a keyboard. More to say, but for now unsaid.

sent from tiny, virtual keys

EW: please continue.

SM: Ah, yes. Thanks for the reminder.

You're¹⁴ take on "erasure" as an element of what transpires in a communication (between performer and audience, between writer and reader, between two performers, between/among....) is interesting. The more I think about it, the more it approaches nihilism. Though, I guess that's only true if you privilege what is lost over what is not lost. (I still feel there is an important difference between "lost" and "erased.") This kind of privileging can lead to an idealized nostalgia. It's a tricky balance - to search for what was erased or lost in an effort to learn layers of complexity that may have been omitted, without getting lost (ha) in an overly romanticized version of what was or could have been.

Are we always in pursuit of something? I think I am. It's a pursuit of something - knowledge, understanding, connection, honesty - that drives my making. Should we be? I don't know. What would it be like to just be calm and content? Is there a making in that state? Does there need to be?

Now I'm thinking about entropy, and how nothing is really lost, just rearranged. If we weren't pursuing something, what would happen to that energy? It has to go somewhere.

¹⁴ Please take note of Sarah Maxfield's following response.

EW: "I guess that's only true if you privilege what is lost over what is not lost."

There is something valuable in this statement. I don't want to add more.

Let's imagine that the energy, following laws and physics, does not disperse or disappear but in fact just transfers forms, Similar to the transfer of a dance from live to archive, from markings to tracings to be reconstituted again in some form. Perhaps this becomes too broad or utopian but these days I am constantly turning back to Jose Esteban Munoz and his words that surface/resurface over and over again. A couple days ago Andy Wachowski of the Wachowski "Brothers" came out as trans, and Lilly, formerly Andy, in her open letter, quotes Munoz as saying "'Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality for another world.'" Something feels potent within that. Could we apply this proposal? That dance/live performance, in its state of resistance, from being captured whole, enacts a potential energy that is channelled into the 'potentiality for another world?' That perhaps the idealised nostalgia, or the acceptance of things lost/kept, etc etc, is all part of things in process. Something set to evolve and change in ways that we aren't able to grasp. And thus the act of erasing intentionally becomes inherently more violent, a snuffing of potential, a disembodiment. What one can pin down, in words, in objects, leaves concrete and irrefutable evidence that points in cardinal directions. Visual art, writing, images. In performance, the lack of such offers greater movement, more mutability, more potential for radical interpretation, for newfound physicality,

This sounds idealistic and I do not think i have a problem with that. (Who, what, who is talking?!) Kazuo Ohno comes to mind, forming new forms, even when he lost the ability to walk, his hands continued to dance in directions unimaginable. And your project, Nonlinear Lineage, might just be enacting a similar energetic transfer.

SM: Ugh. I meant "your" not "you're" in my prior email ("Your take..."). I can't even blame my phone keys. Can we erase that? Or maybe erase my outsize shame over grammatical typos? :)

Meanwhile, yes. YES: *That dance/live performance, in its state of resistance, from being captured whole, enacts a potential energy that is channelled into the 'potentiality for another world?*

This is part of what is so important to me about Nonlinear Lineage -- it's an attempt to somehow make this resistance transparent, active, and present, even in a presentation of the past. It's a resistance of commodification and being sold (once safely dead) by the Art. World. It's an effort to stay moving and fluid and floating in and around the margins, which aren't really margins at all -- just space that isn't recognized by some median of loud voices.

Why not be idealistic? It leads to action, no?

What if Martha
What if Xavier
What if Boris
What if Merce and John
What if Lucinda and Philip, Robert, Sam and Chris
What if Trisha
What if Trisha (Babette)
What if Alvin
What if Bob
What if Pina
What if Wim
What if Yvonne
What if we said No or Yes to No or to know at all.
What if we took the time
What if we took the time to
erase the lines
assume otherwise?
What if what did did not
What will become
What if we reimagine history
What body is reachable, what will that body
some body
somebody take
Take two
To shape and slide
What will fold in two
What if they moved as fast as the present
What passed
for legit or legible
was something else
Whatever will be will be
The future is not ours to see.

We could be comrades in arms.
Arms of other kinds,
lengths of which to be devised.

This becomes a divisive moment
but that which to hold each other
to push into,
as prey to pain,

pressing oils on skin,
expelling pearls into palms,
leaving innards intact.

Swallow whole this grain compressed,
its whispers to be hung on garlands high.

While we look on at those above,

(We could be
(We could be
(We could be
(We could be
(We could be

hand locked in your
arms stretched up from shoulder to shoulders,
a condensed contact heated hot
The steam also rises
views in lengths on clouded corners

okay)
okay)
okay)
okay)
okay)¹⁵

¹⁵ *looking on* a speed freewrite during Berlin/Cologne exchange week, February 3rd, 2016. Possibly related to(o).

(start over)
(start again)

To complicate matters,

It may well be that our sense of the presence, power, and authenticity of these pieces derives not from treating the document as an indexical access point to a past event but from perceiving the document itself as a performance that directly reflects an artist's aesthetic project or sensibility and for which we are the present audience.¹⁶¹⁷

¹⁶ Auslander, Philip. The Performativity of Performance Documentation, *Performance Art Journal*, Nr. 84, New York 2006, p.1-10.

¹⁷ comment comment comment.

something on the each of the terms?
taming feels useful to consider.

Erasure, not the band, always i want to be with you and make believe with you

(AFTER) MANIFESTOS

<i>No Manifesto,</i> Yvonne Rainer, 1965	<i>A Manifesto Reconsidered</i> Yvonne Rainer, 2008	<i>After No Manifesto</i> Andrea Bozic, 2009
No to spectacle	Avoid if at all possible	Yes to transparency
No to virtuosity	Acceptable in limited quantity	Yes to imagination
No to transformations and magic and make-believe	Magic is out; the other two are sometimes tolerable	Yes to generation, confusion and questions
No to the glamour and transcendence of the star image	Acceptable only as quotation	Yes to presence
No to the heroic	Dancers are ipso facto heroic	Yes to courage
No to the anti-heroic.	Don't agree with that one	Yes to mistakes
No to trash imagery	Don't understand that one	Yes to the absurd
No to involvement of performer or spectator.	Spectators: stay in your seats	Yes to involvement of gaze
No to style	Style is unavoidable	Yes to clarity
No to camp	A little goes a long way	Yes to inappropriate
No to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer	Unavoidable	Yes to confusion of spectator
No to eccentricity	If you mean „unpredictable“, that's the name of the game	Yes to enthusiasm
No to moving or being moved	Unavoidable	Yes to staying here

These are
mutable
structures
to be morphed,
to translate,
to re-envision,
reenact,
redact, adopt,
borrow,

return,
put to rest,
to reanimate from ashes.

Stratification and layering

An understanding, an understatement.

Biba!¹⁸

i am writing a little something, poetic manifest (not manifesto) for a symposium called "capturing dance" (blah.) and I was reading your CC article on dwelling and "resisting capture"

would love to refer to it in some way or if you have anything specific you would like to mention. I am basically trying to understand the notion of documentation/tool or documentation/medium in relationship to dance. The group consist of a group from berlin and a media school from cologne and tanzfabrik berlin.

so far, people are making 'movement' videos. and i hate it. so i am just compiling and writing on the notions of capturing dance or the body, and what that capturing, or inability to contributes to the furthering of dance.

would love to start a conversation with you if possible!

x

¹⁸ Biba Bell (b. 1976, Sebastopol) is a writer, dancer, and choreographer. She has a Ph.D. in Performance Studies from New York University where her research focused on contemporary choreography's geographic interventions within dance's architectural, disciplinary, and artistic homes and theatrical houses. Bell's performance work has most recently been seen at the Kunstlerhaus (Bremen, Germany), the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MOCAD), the Cranbrook Museum of Art, and in an apartment in Detroit's Lafayette Park. Her work has additionally been shown at Times Square Arts and the Clocktower Gallery NYC, Visual Arts Center UT Austin, Insel Hombroich (Germany), NADA Fair NYC, Detroit Institute of Art, The Garage for Contemporary Culture (Moscow), Centre Pompidou (Paris), The Kitchen (NYC), Roulette (NYC), Performa (NYC), Dixon Place (NYC), PaceWildenstein Gallery, Jack Hanley Gallery, Callicoon Fine Arts, Human Resources Gallery, amongst others. She has performed with choreographer Maria Hassabi and collaborated with visual artist Nick Cave, visual artist Davide Balula, musician Robert Aiki Aubrey Lowe, performance artist Nicola Kuperus, and composer Frank Pahl, and was a founding member of the performance collective Modern Garage Movement (MGM Grand) between 2007-2011. Bell was a 2015 DAAD guest professor of Experimental Performance at the University of the Arts (Hochschule für Künste) in Bremen, Germany, and currently teaches in the Maggie Allesee Department of Theatre and Dance at Wayne State University in Detroit. Bell is on the editorial board for Detroit Research, a new journal of artistic thought and aesthetics, where she is currently guest editing its second issue on choreography.

enrico,
this sounds super interesting! sure, I'd love to be in conversation with you about this! I have
some other work that is really about this too. But I guess sort of angle "capture" less in the
language of the simply choreographic in relationship to writing, and more in assigned spaces for
dance to occupy - a sort of domestication of dance and the body, but also about fidelity to
disciplinary "homes."¹⁹

I have some video/performance work that's about this and my dissertation talks about this a lot
too.
xx

¹⁹ <http://www.movementresearch.org/criticalcorrespondence/blog/?p=101531>

biba,

i would love to perhaps leave this as a document where the words we type in this back and forth...sampled and joined together to form part of this paper i am writing. if that sounds okay to you. like whispers and redactions...

a few points that really struck me:

your use of the word domestication, in describing dance and the body.
and the location of home.

to extrapolate what I am thinking in this context is the idea that in order for one to capture dance in whatever meaning that is (i am relating the idea of capturing to capturing a beast, that involves taming, caging, ownership, and also acknowledging the strength and value of the beast itself.)

therefore in order to capture, one must first locate dance. and when it resists location or nesting, the procedure around "capturing" must be treated in a wider consideration of the body, that one must cull information from several sources, cast a wide net, so to speak, as the nature of dance is slippery.

and the thrill of the hunt is what keeps the form of dance shifting, escaping, and alive.

(i can send you a link to the google doc I am working on, so you can get an idea of what I am putting together, if that would help. am also talking to/thinking about Sarah Maxfield, and Jennifer Monson re: erasure and the archived body/the body as archive.

are you by any chance in nyc end of March/early April?

xxe

Enrico,

Yes, I'd love to continue the conversation.

It is really neat how our ideas are tuned in in this way. Choreography has been referred to as an apparatus of capture (historically) by a number of thinkers and this is something that strikes me. But as you continue one, this problem of location, and the sort of paradox in referring to dance's capacity to *take place* is the accent that excites me about the scenario. In some ways it allows for a (somewhat) clear articulation between choreography and dancing, or, maybe instead it positions choreography as a kind of politico-aesthetic backdrop or *mise en scene* against which we might make out the traces of dancing as some kind of intangible feeling, rhythm, force...

The escape element is important to me and, within a history of (often feminized) dancing, the gendering of the *form* is crucial, or perhaps provides an interesting link, in terms of the *where* of this dancing's taking place. Here the home comes up as it becomes such a force for capture (and presentation) of the female figure within modernity's highly produced public/private divide. The disciplining of the dancer (training, rigor, athleticism) would be another track - there is a neat moment in Randy Martin's *Critical Moves* where he describes dancers in a studio, in class, in front of the mirror, like rows of newly potted plants in a greenhouse. The biopolitical implications, nurturing of the dancer, cues in another lens for the domestic.

But, then there is the house. And this is different (the theatre, the institution). I went to a workshop or a talk or something that Marten Spangberg was doing at Eden's Expressway a couple of years ago and after 2 hrs or something of his pointed ramble he said something along the lines of *how does dance get out of the house?* I think this is something (as a performer) that I've been working on for awhile...

I'll next be in NYC the end of april. How about you? will you be in town for how long?

xb

Biba,

I am a bit conflicted in which direction to take this in because there are so many variables and possibilities. My immediate thoughts towards technique and form/gender point towards what is housed within the body, as container, as my current investigations also hinge on the body as a vessel. Dictated not of my own volition but by what is placed there by the onlooking other. Particular to, as well, the presentation of my body as cis-gendered (to most people), as coming from Asian descent, etc. To consider that my body is not housed/furnished by me but is on some level domesticated by expectations/perceptions from the outside. In which case, how does one hone in on the personal awareness of the body when it is constantly and willingly offered up to others? How does one locate it in this larger constellation?

I mentioned a while ago in Critical Correspondence a notion that "home" is, personally, an uncomfortable place, an un-locatable space that is rife with struggle and perhaps the body is all that one can understand when inhabiting that space. Centering the body in the vortex does not offer a house, but a fixed point to look on from. This became a proposed starting point for continued research: If I start with an assumed location of the body in relationship to its parts then what can be seen and deciphered will be clearer - that investigation is an action of inside moving out rather from the outside looking in - the result of which can take on any form, hopefully less encumbered. (Maybe its just about confidence building strides.)

This is decidedly nonsensical.

If you would go further into the gendering of the form, I would love to hear more. Is dance binary? And further, it's an interesting moment in the ideas of housing, and the establishment of "houses" in the voguing tradition, taking in people, building communities and cultivating a sense of belonging based on developing movement and bodily skills. This comes in stark contrast to the dance/performance's desires for belonging/not belonging in the art world and perhaps ever-changing definition of "community" or rejection of?

oh and i will be there mid march to the end of the first week of April... so we will just miss each other. thought it would be cool if we could meet up... wah.

x

Enrico

you bring up so many things. the body as a container or vessel, there is a man who writes about it as a filter. But also the body as furnished, and what kind of furniture supports the body, what are its trappings, and how does it look if the body steps out for a quick breath of fresh air or smoke or run around the block? I wonder who would notice it's gone missing? Satie thought furniture (music) should be sort of invisible, not really seen or heard, but yet there is a transient quality to the act of furnishing. This body would be in the mix, neither here nor there.

When I refer to home of the dancer, it is, in a personal sense, conjuring up my relationship to being reared in the field so to speak. The kind of historical lineage I've come out of and aesthetic/technical ideas of what it looks like, feels like, and requires to be a dancer. It is a hat to wear, certainly, but as much as anything else, is formative, performative. A special grouping, we, the dancers. One's relationship to home is major, charged, complicated, and across the board. Home is an imaginary in a way. Or, it mobilizes and drifts across time and space to leech into pockets of the everyday or be starkly absent from it. For some people this is where they want to be to make work, and some it would be the paralysis of this kind of production. I've been working on a piece for some time and am going to the studio in a few hours to remember it. This is a dance in a modernist apartment in Detroit. It is about affective labor in a city historically hinged on material production and what has been for the past decades a city of increasingly empty homes. I wonder what the modernizing of the domestic sphere has to do with modern dance during the 20th century. How does an architecture of exposure and illustrious views influence a bodily shift in a woman of the house? The glass box, it is sculptural. I'm always impressed by the way performers, and especially dancers, have an innate ability to allow their bodies to be seen. This being seen is so important. And, what about dance's gaze? It's disciplinary lens? In many ways I like to dance in the fringes of dance's houses. And I mean theaters and proper venues. But not as a disavowal, it is a way that I can learn more about them in the first place. The ritual that is inscribed in their design and initiated upon every entrance. Flipping the house, shifting its temporality, including the audience, these are all strategies. False endings...

You've got me in this tempo, Enrico, a stream of consciousness sort of planning. I'm being vague and evasive but trying to find a sensual mode of relating to the subjects. Preparing to perform the apartment piece again, I realize it's time to get a wax. The silhouette is crucial.

x

hi biba,

I was sitting around with jen rosenblit and your name came up and we think you're pretty cool and smart and I feel i dropped the ball a bit on our conversation. so! time to try and reignite!

I'm curious about this statement that you ended with: the silhouette. And I keep imagining it similar to one of those traditional papercut images, oddly enough, today is the birthday of Lotte Reiniger, one of the pioneering women animators who made these papercut silhouette animations. (it's featured on google today, even.)

I've been pawing through Judith/Jack Halberstam's Queer Art of Failure and Jose Munoz and perhaps the idea of futurity is on the brain so I am imagining the silhouette, where features are not clear but the general shape of something is visible and recognisable. My question would be then: Do you have a proposal, a imagined reality that describes the shape of things to come? I am deliberately steering away from the word future, as it's sort of points towards a forward motion or linearity and I think from the conversations we have been having thus far, I could imagine the housing or capturing or releasing of these forms as a coalescing or a diffusion - omnidirectional rather than directional.

offering hypotheses or proposals could offer a means of approach. failed attempts are necessary. Attempts at what?

xxe

Where does the document lie?
So what of the future?

To tame a beast
To fell a giant
To unbridled joy, labor

As we further the connection to our bodies, through media, what we know us what we have. A
vessel to collect information, harvest, till the earth

the archived body, the body as archive.

This is nothing new.²⁰

²⁰ It is with full awareness that most if not all content in this document is borrowed, stolen, appropriated, reinstated as scattered shards to be reformed, reposted, repeated, reenvisioned, destroyed, to reanimate from ashes. And is in fact, encouraged. The curse and pursuit of understanding leads to further confusion. However, the value lies, as previously mentioned several times, in the intent. The act of questioning to further understanding and research contributes to the cyclical knowledge of the subject. Is dance something that one can contain and what is the purpose of that container? Striving to maintain ephemera is a backwards approach. What one could strive for, as one of many possible proposals, is to maintain ephemerality, allowing for it, the richness of content that can affect change, affect thought, are fleeting as thoughts themselves and yet impact can be everlasting. To acknowledge this, is to give oneself over to this power, to give it power, give it import. A document exists in traces, in physical forms, in memories, in an indescribable feeling. The urge and desire to recreate or retrieve this feeling and the inevitable failure of these acts is what propels and pushes us further into the dance. It allows space, it allows for evolution. The moment our capacities of pursuit end, is when the dance ends. To which one may ask again, "Why capture it at all?" A question that asks us to be continued...

[ongoing]