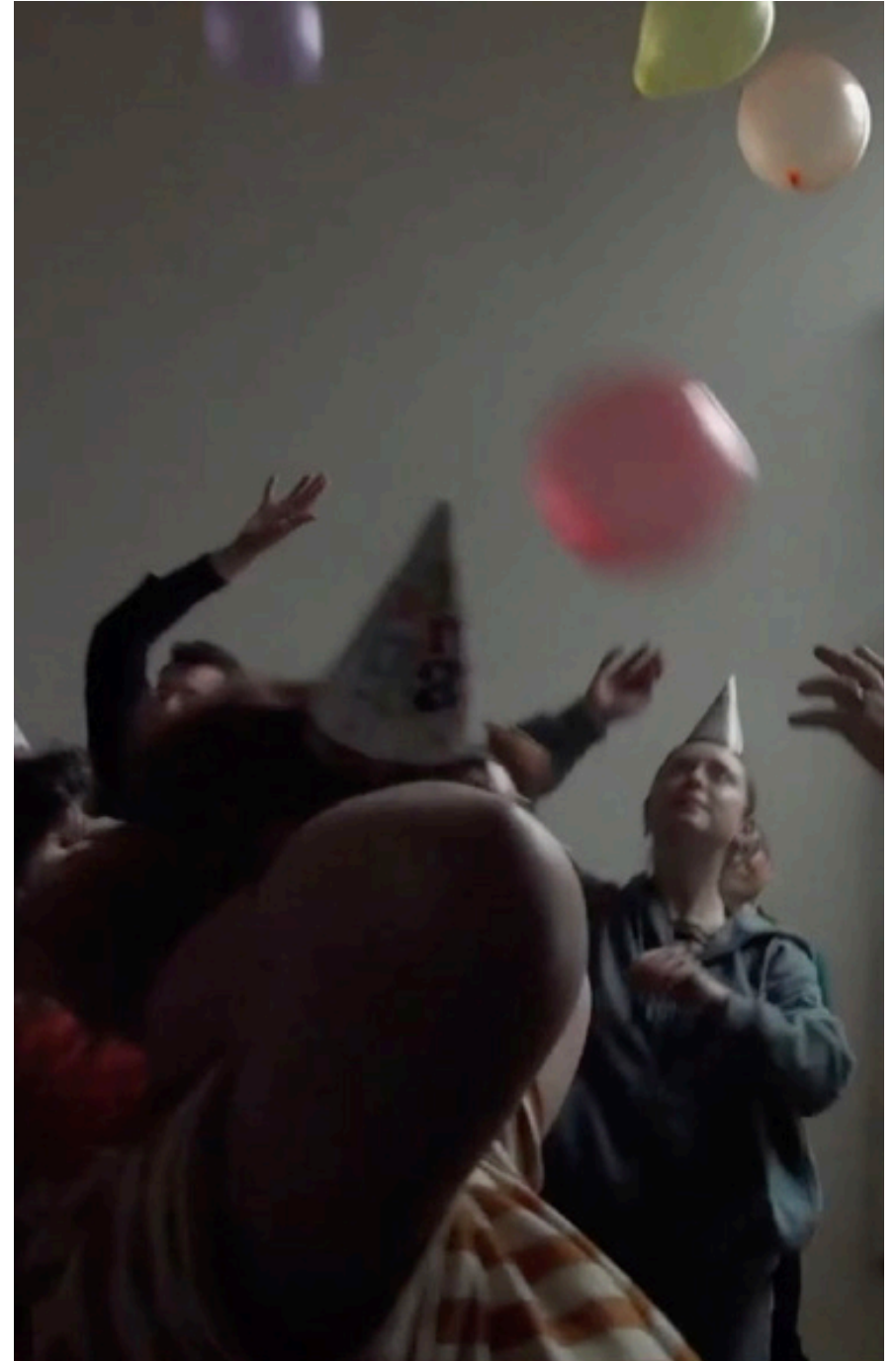


# DOCUMENTATION OF PaR OUTPUTS AND CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

## Transgression and Dissensus in Participatory Performance

University of Essex



## CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

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# CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

### Brief Description

*Transgression and Dissensus in Participatory Performance* is part of the exegis of Caroline Mueller's practice-as-research (PaR) study, conducted at the LiFTS department at the University of Essex between 2018 - 2024. This document presents the practical performance instances that were produced and presented as part of this research. This document sits adjacent to and is best explored in conjunction with the main written thesis under the same title. However, it could also be regarded as a stand-alone documentation of a series of individual performance examples. The documentation is designed to give easy access and context to this PaR research. Certain aspects, such as an overview of the research as well as the most pertinent research questions are therefore offered on p4-5 in a summarised form.

### Supporting statement

*Transgression and Dissensus in Participatory Performance* investigates moments of transgression and the emergence of dissensus in participatory performance. The research postulates that autotelic motivation in the form of play is an integral aspect of spectator-participants' experiences and responses in participatory performances. Transgression can similarly stem from an autotelic experience, hence can be compared to play.

Transgression is an integral possibility within playful activities; the thesis therefore proposes that transgressive audience responses are an integral possibility within participatory performance. Acts of transgression can facilitate the emergence of dissensus, a socio-political concept first articulated by Jacques Rancière in 2010. Both transgression and dissensus lead to a deeply self-reflective experience that is rooted in a kaleidoscopic multiplicity. The thesis therefore calls for transgression to be celebrated as both antagonistic and creative force. This proposition is what has informed the development of the praxis presented here.

This documentation presents five performance instances that explore the above through an interdisciplinary, experimental and research-based studio practice. The performances have been written, choreographed and directed by Caroline Mueller, at times in collaboration with performers, technicians and student collaborators. The documentation of these works is here presented in a creative manner in order to give insight into the praxis, which was based on Robin Nelson's concept of '*doing-thinking*'. Each performance addresses a range of practical hypotheses, which were developed via the synthesis of extensive theoretical research, a dissemination of a range of case studies and critical reflections emerging from explorative studio experimentations.

Whereas together, these instances of practice have developed the overall research's insights and final propositions, each of these performances needs to be looked at as individual and singular occurrence, akin to how each instance of transgression is context-specific and often dependent on subjective perspectives. This documentation therefore focuses on the individual performances, whilst the written thesis synthesises discoveries comparatively in-between the works and places them in relation to relevant theoretical research.

### Research questions:

- What motivations, activities or stimuli might lead to transgressive responses in participatory performances, and how can such knowledge inform the makers of participatory performances?
- How might a reframed understanding of transgression and transgressive play in participatory performance develop more diverse practical methodology that embraces and celebrates multiplicity in audience experience?
- How can participatory performance offer new ways of negotiating difference, conceptualise compromise and facilitate multiple and indeterminate responses.

**Creative / Intellectual context**

*Transgression and Dissensus in Participatory Performance* departs from a belief that many participatory performances are developed with an ideal participant in mind. This research however explores audience responses which work against or beyond expectations of makers and artists. Such responses are here labelled as transgressive.

Transgression is defined by a double-sided quality of either being disruptive or explorative. Of high interest is the manifold, often subjective and context-dependent attributes of transgression: transgression emerges not just within an act of *doing* but also with an act of *perceiving*. For this research, spectator-participants that transgress are of interest as much as those that feel transgressed against.

The thesis articulates not just an intricate relationship between play and transgression; it also argues that moments of transgression can facilitate the emergence of dissensus as articulated by Jacques Rancière. The research pushes an understanding of this concept by exploring the multiplicity of experiences that transgressive responses can conjure within participatory performances; it therefore argues that dissensus should be understood as a concept that synthesises multiplicities within an experiential moment of recognition and reflection, and that, within this synthesized multiplicity, lies the potential for an in-depth reflective, transformative and creative force.

*Transgression and Dissensus in Participatory Performance* invites artists, audiences and scholars to celebrate the unruly, the unexpected, the non-compliant and the disruptive responses occurring in a participatory work. And by doing so, recognising how the consequential moments of negotiation and compromises are powerful opportunities for reflection and agonistic recognition of self and others in relation to a shared space and time.

**Research Methods:**

The practical aspect of this research aimed to develop a practice that encourages transgression and allows for the unexpected to occur. The research is therefore based on an paradoxical conundrum: it's main objective is to develop participatory frameworks that a) invites audiences' interruptions and experimentations within such frameworks and b) facilitates unexpected responses without *expecting* such unexpected responses.

In order to navigate this paradox, the studio practice worked towards testing individual propositions, or so called 'hunches' in a series of smaller, separate performance works.

Paramount to the development of these hunches was Robin Nelson's triadic, multi-modal epistemology of *know-what*, *know-how* and *know-that*. For this research, this model meant the synthesis of theoretical and contextual readings (or 'outsider' knowledge), with case study analysis and studio experimentations (or 'insider' knowledge),

leading to the testing of instinctive and intuitive hunches, and the critical reflection and dissemination of those in writing. Additionally, pertinent to this research is what Mueller terms the *know-why* - the motivations, objective, reasons and situational conditions that lead to the emergence of transgression in the first place. For this research, the *know-why* is a stepping stone towards the *know-that*, and rests exclusively in those that transgress or experience being transgressed against. Audience discussions, questionnaires and informal feedback was therefore paramount for the dissemination of the practice and the articulation of the exegesis.

**How To Guide:**

This documentation will present the research performance instances in chronological order. The documentation of these works offers adjacent information and give insight into relevant starting points or hunches, artistic and creative methodologies as well as an overview of the studio-based processes behind each works.

Each work will be presented as such:

- 1) A creative representation of *hunch words*: a selection of the intuitive and instinctive queries that drove the work in early explorations.
- 2) List of cast members and collaborators as well as a weblink and QR code for easy access to a full video via smartphones.
- 3) A brief introduction to the performance and its creative content. Words pertaining to 1) will be indicated in **bold**.
- 4) References to pertaining appendixes in the main thesis.
- 5) Contextual information: a brief introduction to adjacent theoretical considerations that impacted the creative approach behind the work. These considerations are complementary to those that are discussed in the main thesis.

6) A creative overview of the performance: relevant notebook images and sketches, indicative of the thinking process in the studio, are interlinked with images from the performance itself. Explanations pertaining to the images are at times accompanied by relevant extracts from the script. Extracts from script will be indicated by being in blue font.

7) An overview of the most pertinent insights, cross-referenced to relevant sections within the main thesis.

# DOCUMENTATION

*ROUGH - AND - TUMBLE*

## BALLOONS (2019)

The innocent act of popping balloons

# FLOW

*COERCION*

MUSIC TO DEVELOP TRANSGRESSIVE ATTITUDE

Inspired by childhood memories

*play*

*a crying child*

PARTY HATS FOR ROLE PLAY

# PINS

SPEED OF ACTIVITY

*Audio-instructions . . . a performance with no performer*

## Balloons

Performed at:

Clarence Mews, London (April 2019):

<https://vimeo.com/708615583> (17m36s)

Performed by: Caroline Mueller



Balloons conceptualises the somewhat innocent and easily recognisable transgressive act of **popping balloons** deliberately.

The performance commences with spectator-participants seated in order to observe Caroline Mueller performing a dance sequence. This is intended to not only settle them into the space but also to give them a false expectation of what is about to happen, **coercing** them into a sense of comfort. After some minutes the performer exits the room unexpectedly, from which moment on she addresses the audience via a voice recording. The aim was to lead spectator-participants through an experiential journey of various emotional and physical states of being; the recorded voice therefore, under the excuse of explaining the motif for the dance, talks them through a movement improvisation based on the image of air and flow.

The script then links these images to balloons and the voice introduces a son named Noah (pictures of him are scattered in a corner of the room, and the audience is invited to go and look at them).

This son's impending birthday is the overall frame in which audiences are asked to conduct a dress-rehearsal for the celebration, put on **party hats** that emerge from a window above the studio, blow up balloons and **play** with already inflated balloons that also appear through the window. The activity in the room is driven partly by continuous **instructions** and encouragements from the recorded voice as well as **an uplifting and energetic birthday song** from the Beatles. It is in the midst of the **party atmosphere** that a string, to which small Tupperware containers, each containing two pins, are attached, is lowered into the space. Spectator-participants are not given any instructions, but it is left to them to embrace the invitation for transgressive behaviour by taking hold of or distributing the pins and **popping the balloons**. The moment the containers with the pins arrived, there was a palpable sense of suspension spreading in the room, with those spectator-participants not having access to the containers somewhat unsure about what was happening until the popping of the balloons commenced, an activity that **rapidly** spread across those spectator-participants who had managed to get hold of a pin.

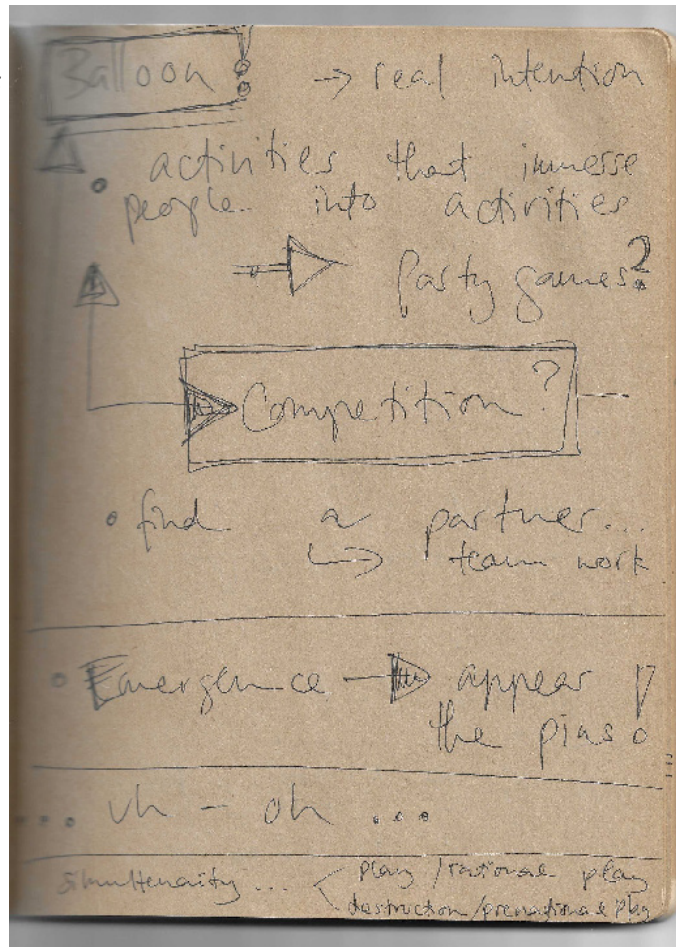
The performance concludes with the recorded voice directing the audience towards another set of pictures, this time depicting a series of images with Noah crying, explaining that in fact he was scared of balloons, because of the possibility that they might pop.

*For the full script of Balloons, please see Appendix 3 – Balloons Script.*

*For completed audience feedback questionnaires, please refer to Appendix 3.1 – Balloons Audience Feedback*

**Contextual information:**

A starting point for the creative approach here was the aim to contextualise transgression in play as an inherent aspect of the work. A particular inspiration was the so-called **rough-and-tumble behaviour** in children, which consists of highly physical activities, often with bodily contact and, as a type of play, has often been placed in a discourse of child development and adaptation. Studies on rough-and-tumble in early childhood found the prevalent opinion amongst educators that this type of play was viewed 'as a mechanism for learning to make judgments' (1), whilst also being beneficial for its physical nature, 'both in terms of a means to promote physical fitness and as a venue for energy release' (2). Without expecting spectator-participants to engage in potentially aggressive physical rough-and-tumble with each other, the performance aimed to facilitate a physical activity that could contain a potentially aggressive element, whilst ensuring that any possible energy-release activity displayed is not directed directly against other spectator-participants in the room. The balloon seemed to be an ideal prop for this experiment: universally recognised for its instant playfulness, it also contains the non-threatening but nevertheless risky (and for some people very unpleasant) aspect of the possible pop.



Sketch book entry depicting thinking process behind aspects of *Balloons*:

- How to develop an autotelic experience for spectator-participants?
- How to get them to engage with the activity as *play* (Autotelic Experience)
- first consideration of emergence - an *appearance* of transgression and dissensus
- coercing - *real intention* here relates to the intention inherent with the work, that popping the balloons might be a *desireable* response. However, I consciously avoided implying such
- no instructions were given, in fact, a suspension in music and a surprised vocalisation in the audio prepare the audience for the possibility that popping the balloons might carry an element of controversy and might elicit strong responses from some. Instead, the work aimed to test if preceeding activities might contribute to a level of *flow* as conceptualised by by Mihaly Csikszentmihaly (3) that engages a pre-noetic response mechanism which disengages a reflective awareness of the possible effects of immediate actions. Fast dynamics and rhythm in the birthday song and playful, competitive activities contributed to facilitating this sense of flow, whilst party hats and blowers contributed to a festive and joyful athmosphere.

**References**

- (1) Michelle T. Tannock. "Rough and Tumble Play: An Investigation of the Perceptions of Educators and Young Children." *Early Childhood Education Journal* v. 35 (February 2008): 360.
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Jeanne Nakamura, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, M. "The concept of flow," In *Handbook of positive psychology*, ed C. R. Snyder and Shane. J. Lopez, (New York: Oxford University Press., 2002).



*Woman dances a solo for about 1 ½ minutes to an industrial sound scape. The movement she performs is fluid and involves a lot of rotations and gentle turns. She abruptly stops and runs out of the studio, shutting the door to the studio behind her.*

*On an audio recording, her voice appears:*

Arrgghhhh . . .this is so difficult . . . I'm sorry I apologise

I haven't done this for so long now, and my mind is not quite here . . . I do apologise. Oh, dear, I just walked out, didn't I, oh dear I am sorry this is not working for me.

So . . . I think I need to try a different approach ... I am really, really sorry but it doesn't work for me to just stand in front of you, move about, my mind is not here, I can't focus, and I need to try something else. So, I really hope you will be able to help me out.

I need you. You guys. You just sitting there . . I know I know you were expecting something else . . But then hey, I did show you something, didn't I. . I mean you did have a moment where you were just sitting down, and I showed you a little bit of a dance and a bit of movement and I hope that was alright? But maybe let's take this as a starting point to try something else . . .

Something new . . .



Let me just maybe explain why I am stuck with this image of the balloon, and floaty airy movement. See, it's my son's birthday, really soon. Noah, yes, his name is Noah. He is born on the 27th April, very, very soon and so I soon have to throw a big children's birthday party.

Oh yes, if you look towards the door of the studio, right below the light switch, there are some pictures of him on the floor . . .

If you want to go and have a look and see how cute he is . . .





p. 14 and p. 15: party hats and the instructions to blow up balloons as well as instructions for keeping the balloons off the floor contribute to an overall party atmosphere.

This is aided by the song *Birthday* (1968) by the Beatles



*Birthday* (1968)  
The Beatles

p. 16 and p. 17: Tupperware on strings are being lowered into the studio. There is a moment of suspension before the tupperware are being handed out by a spectator-participant. Soon after, a 'popping frenzy' ensues.









Thank you so much guys.

Did you pop any of the balloons?

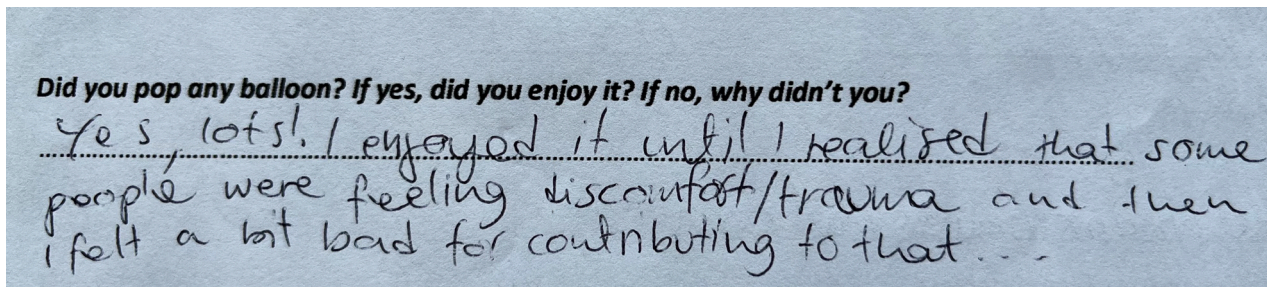
See the thing is that Noah is scared of balloons. On his first birthday, one popped into his face and since then, as soon as he sees them, he starts to scream and shout and is absolutely petrified of them.

If you look over there, to the other side of the studio under the mirror, there are some pictures on the floor of Noah when he cries.

This is what he looks like when he is scared.

Where you scared?

Did you pop any of the balloons?



**Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?**  
Yes, lots! I enjoyed it until I realised that some people were feeling discomfort/trauma and then I felt a bit bad for contributing to that...



**Where to continue reading:**

- 'Chapter 5.2 - *Balloons* (2019)' p.103  
'Chapter 5.2.1 - Considerations for practical methods applied for *Balloons*' p.104
- Music to enhance a transgressive spirit  
in  
'Chapter 6.2 Site-specific and spatial boundaries' p.141
- The emergence of subgroups due to a refusal of participating  
in  
'Chapter 7.3.4 Refuseniks' p. 177  
and  
'Chapter 7.4 Shifting allegiance - the participatory and participating community' p. 184
- Stepping out of the participatory activity / the experience of 'breaking'  
in  
'Chapter 8.3.3 Breaking' p. 197-198
- Pre-noetic and spontaneous gestures in response to 'rupturing'  
in  
'Chapter 8.4 Towards an aesthetic of indeterminacy in participatory performance' p. 200

PLAY

WOULD YOU #1 (2019)

creative and playful affordances

**power dynamics between performer and audience**

**priming**

instruction-based performance

**emergent systems**

IMPROVISATION

*writing letters*

*interactive performance booklet*

*COLLABORATION*

TRIGGERING

TOYS

manipulation of preconceived choreography

## Would You #1

Performed at: Clarence Mews, London  
(December 2019):

<https://vimeo.com/405935560> (17m12s)

Performed by: Makiko Aoyama

Devised and directed by: Caroline Mueller

Would you #1 invites an audience into a playful encounter with a sole dancer, who's performance is instigated and transformed by the activities and contributions of the audience.



A core concept for this performance is the question of 'will you lead or will you be led?'; a question which relates on one hand to the ability of the spectator-participants to affect and alter the performance materials through a range of **interactive** and **triggering** activities. Simple verbal commands as well as potentially more complex activities such as moving, singing or making sounds or noises with a variety of props aim to alternate and manipulate the performer's performance. On the other hand, it refers to the **power** of the performer in the space, who, in written form, addresses the audience, revealing information about herself and by doing so, aims to influence the subsequent contributions of the spectator-participants. Additionally, the performer always has the choice to refuse the trigger activities of the spectator-participants and, by doing so, in turn re-influences what and how the audience contributes to the performance.

Would You #1 is performed by movement performer Makiko Aoyama and myself as facilitator. Spectator-participants enter a collaborative space in which they are able to contribute to the performance materials by triggering the performer to complete certain

actions, **manipulate preconceived choreographic sequences** or encourage improvised movement in response to vocal or kinetic clues.

Structured into five acts, the performance used a reciprocal, **instruction-based** participatory structure: Audiences receive **letters** by the performer with instructions on how they in turn can instruct her performance materials. These letters are received in the form of an **interactive performance booklet**, which offers further instructions on how spectator-participants can affect the performance material and engage with the performer. The performance tests to what extent audiences can interact with choreographic and movement-based creative materials. **Collaboration** and interaction function as choreographic tools with a meaning-making effect.

Spectator-participants were able to affect Aoyama's movements and provoke interactions through their own vocal and physical activity or through the use of objects, such as **instruments** or **toys**.

The audience therefore got involved in rhythmic and kinetic activities in order to enhance a sense of mutual incorporation and intercorporeality.

Each act encourages increasingly looser and more **improvisation**-based ways for the interactions between spectator-participants and performer.

*For an example of the interactive performance booklet, see Appendix 4 - Would you #1 performance booklet example.*

*For completed audience feedback questionnaire, please refer to Appendix 4.1 – Would You#1 Audience Feedback.*

**Contextual information:**

Would You #1 explores dialogical interaction between the performer and individual spectator-participants/spectator-participant groups. One such dialogical interaction approach was the application of triggering mechanism.

My use of triggering was inspired by Jama Harewood's question of *how far* would an audience go in affecting a performer, a question that has driven his own performance of *The Privileged* (2014). I was intrigued to test to what extent spectator-participants could challenge a performer's activity or push towards physical and/or emotional duress.

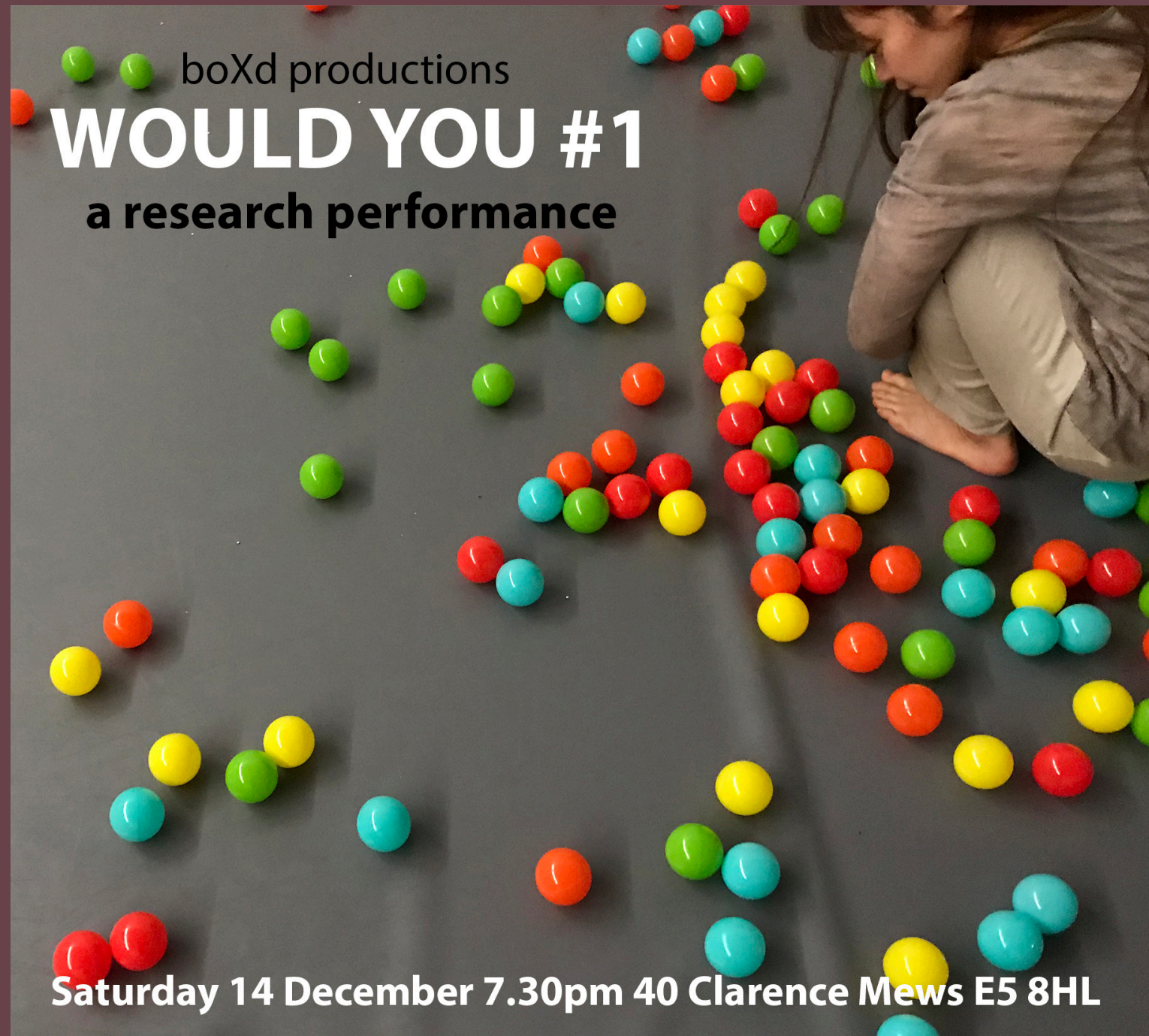
However, the performance equally aimed to observe how spectator-participants might explore the affect their offerings have on each other. To what extent would the vocal and kinetic **affordances** encourage them to collaborate towards choreographic or rhythmic constructions in the space? How much collaboration would emerge amongst the audience itself?

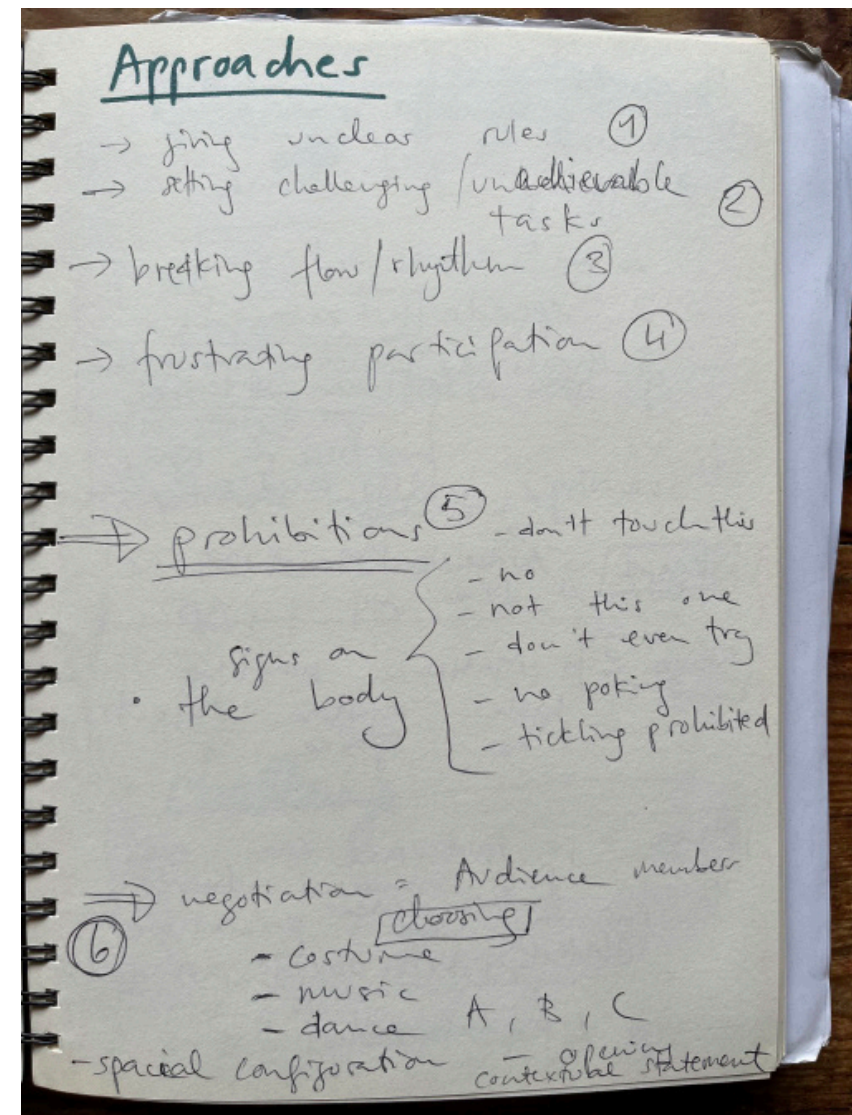
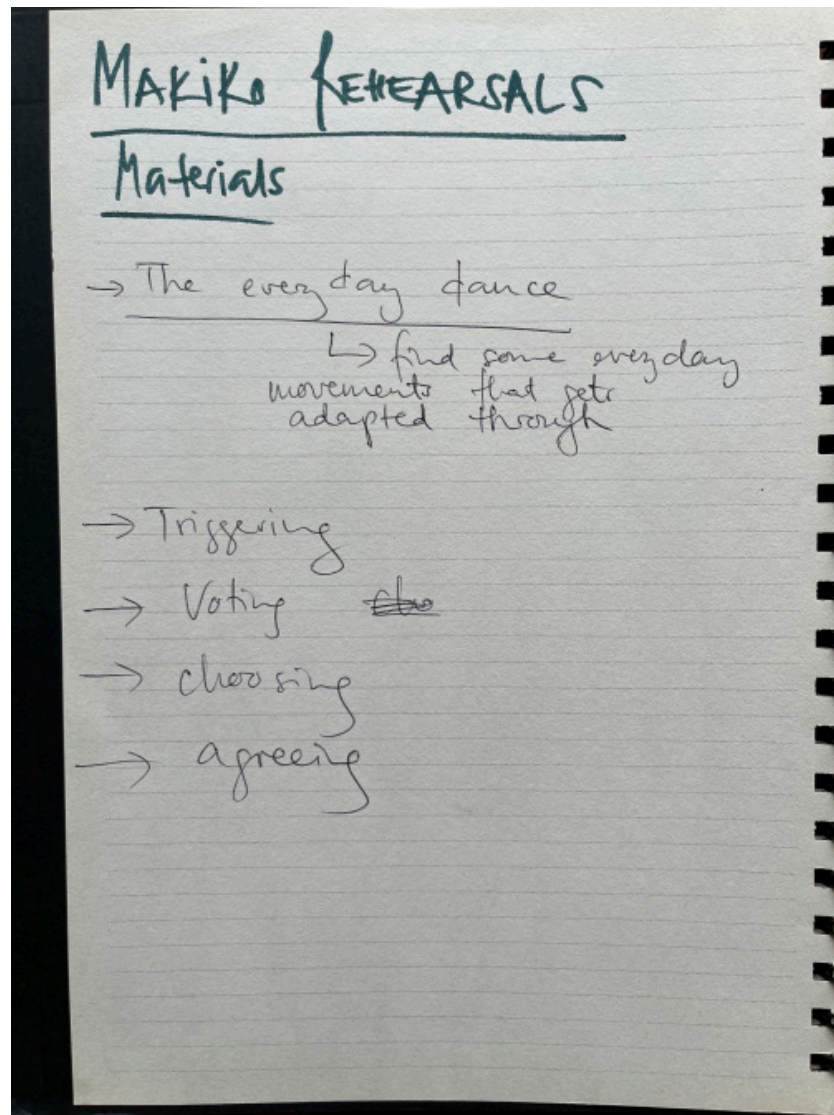
Act 3 and 4 used triggering activities to reverse the hierarchy between performer and spectator-participants. Employing an **emergent system**, spectator-participants did not know which one of their vocal or musical contributions triggers Makiko - they could only find out by experimenting with a range of contributions.

This returns power to the performer. Spectator-participants receive cues and non-verbal communication from Ayoama. Her movement and interactions make it clear that she responds to certain qualities of triggering more than others. In Act 3, when spectator-participants employ vocal contributions, such as humming, whispering, singing or any other kinds of vocal noises, she makes eye-contact and responds physically to those offering the most interesting sounds, which at times develops into a more prolonged interaction between performer and spectator-participant.

This performance instance is marked by its failure to facilitate transgression or elicit participatory responses that could be understood as transgressive. The opposite, audiences commented on a collective sense of care and responsibility towards the performer. In post-performance discussion, the direct-address letter to spectator-participants, using the performer's real-life first name, the calm music that was used throughout the performance, the one-to-one interactions and the tone of them, as well as the innocent nature of the toys and instruments, were all identified as contributors to this sense of care.

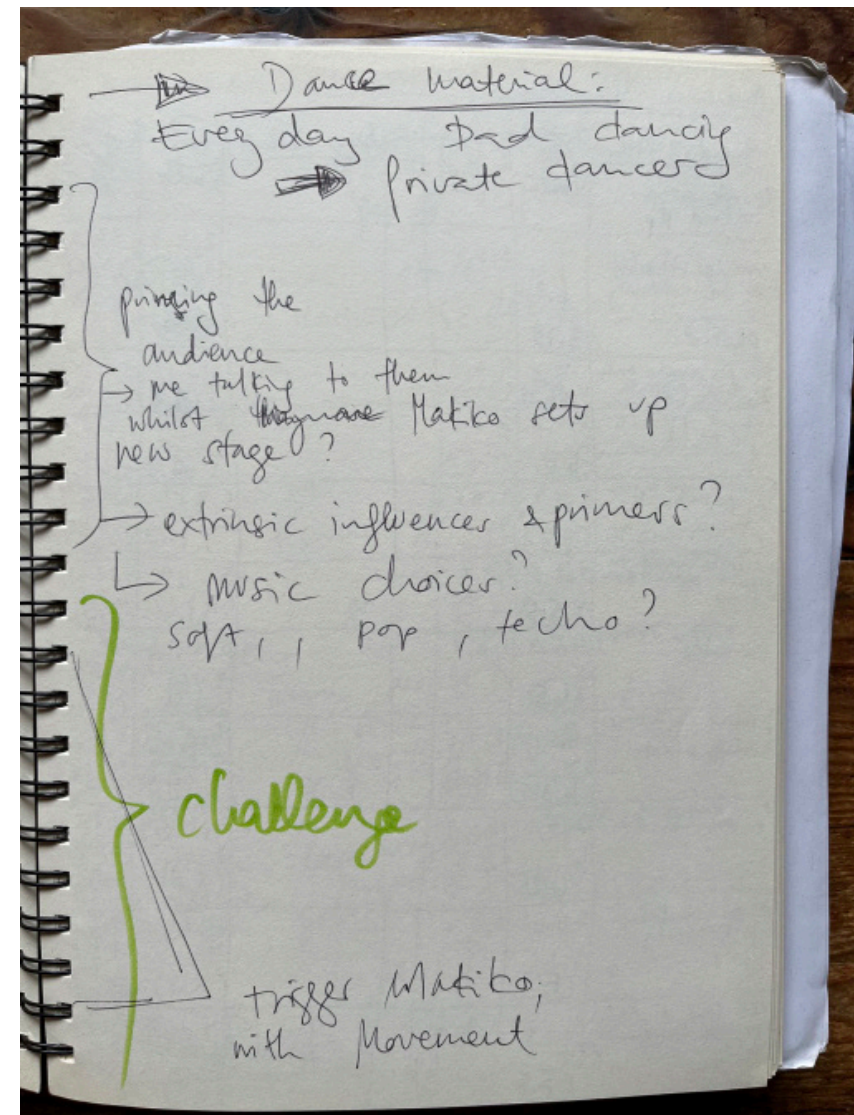
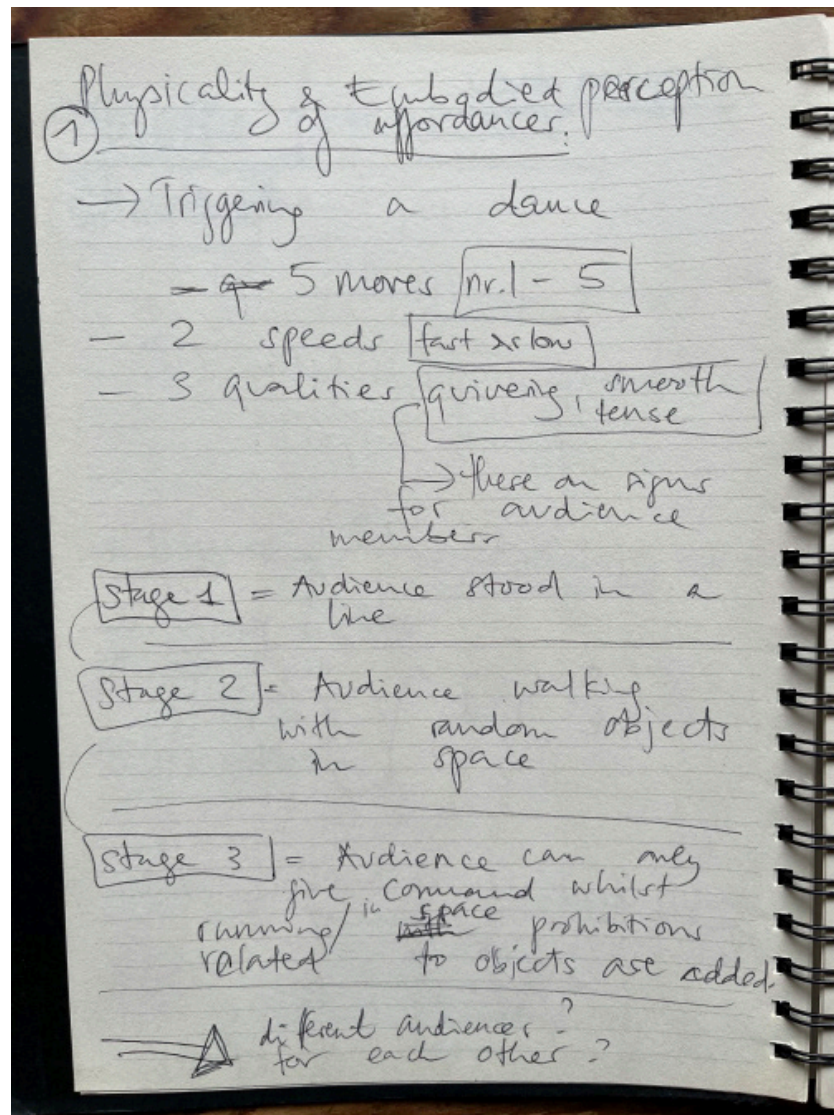
Please note: In the descriptions that follow, I, like the audience during the performance, will refer to the performer by her first name, Makiko. This to illustrate how using her name has contributed to a sense of familiarity, care and responsibility towards her, which hopefully will be replicated for the reader of this documentation.





p. 26 - 29: Early sketchbook ideas for *Would You #1*

p. 30- 39: Performance description and documentation (creative content taken from the performance booklet are indicated in blue font).



30 min

Makiko performance: what we have so far:

- Panning = the audience sees the performer from above the space...

(1.1.1.)

IN AUDIENCE NOTES → Audience note → two different stories aiming for the audience to interpret Makiko's dance in two different ways...

Audience in two groups:

the "lost" one	the "dangerous" one
-A	-1
-B	-2
-C	-3
-D	-4
-E	-5

Triggering

→ Audience groups to come into the space together: → stand opposite each other.

Competition: get a leader in each group

→ Different ways of disagreeing

Makiko → For audience to negotiate

→ try a different tone of voice

→ try a different place in the space

→ try to move yourself

→ try anything else in the space...

→ try anything else

INSTRUCTIONS in Audience Notes...

objects with instructions on them??

→ labels? prohibitions?

→ What does the audience do whilst Makiko is waiting...? = introduce themselves to each other → name tag?

WRITE A LETTER TO MAKIKO... (Each member of the audience writes one sentence!!!!) not saying other's contribution

→ first only the two groups... Until Makiko decides that this is boring now...

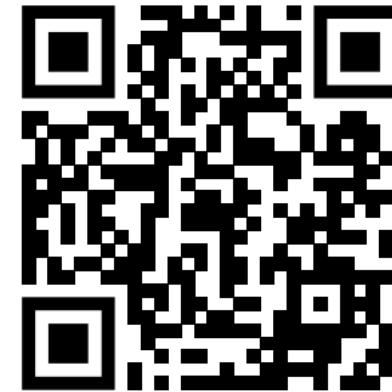
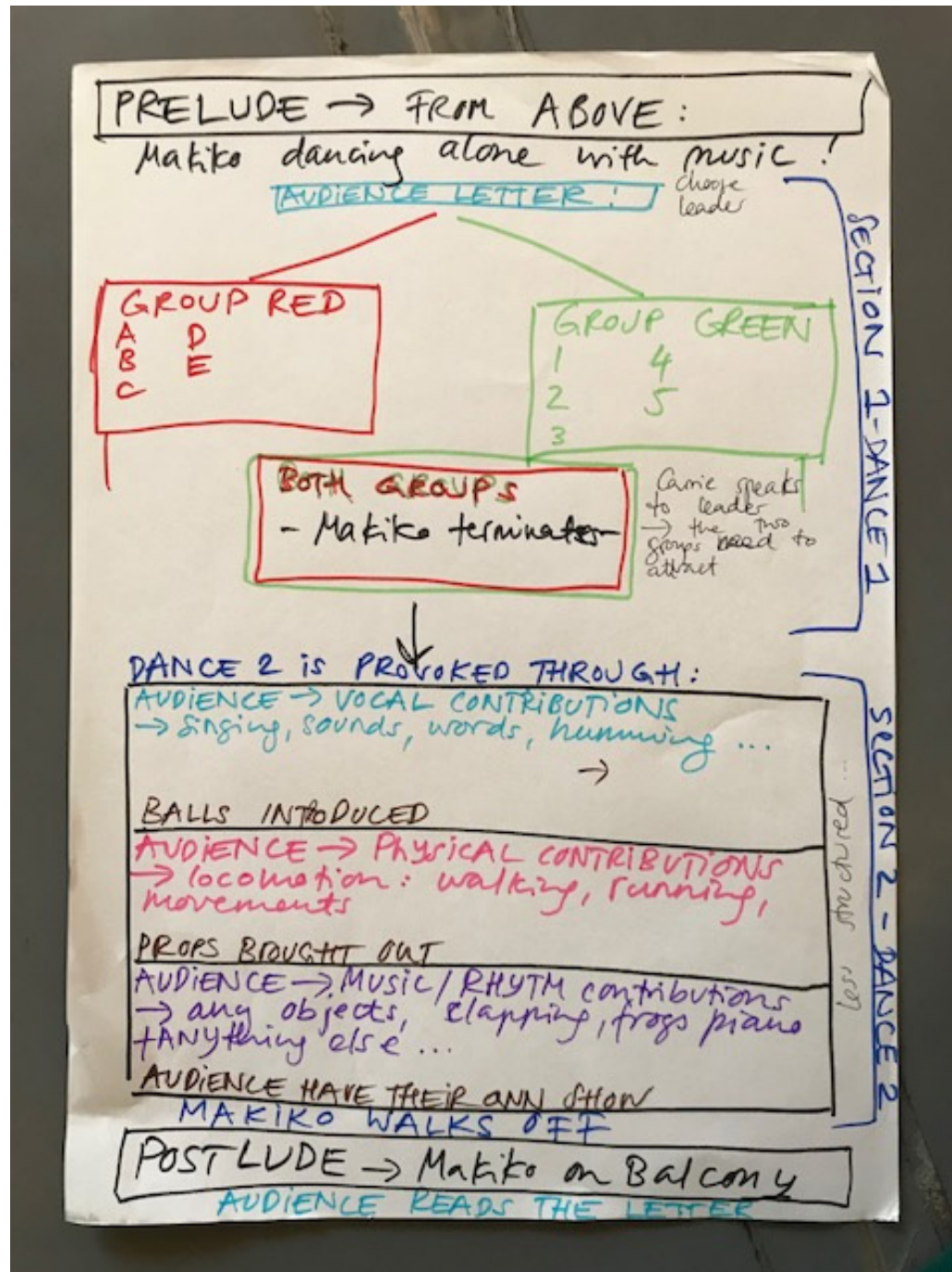
→ change the tone of the performance?

hierarchy in the group? Audience negotiation? → finding a compromise, a different aim?

→ 3 times = decrease time available to make a decision → more pressure..

find different movement material as a response to the triggers? WHAT ARE THEY TRIGGERING?

AND how does it all end??



*Them 'solo piano edit' (2015)*  
 Nils Frahm

Two different versions of the performance booklet aimed to elicit two different triggering attitudes within the audience.



please refer to Appendix 4 - *Would You #1* performance booklet example.

**Act 1:**

Audience members gather in the front room of the performance studio and are separated into either green group or red group, which each group choosing a leader. Every member of the audience receives a performance booklet indicated with either red or green on the front page. The booklets contain an introductory letter by the performer, with the red group receiving a different letter to the green group. The audience is then encouraged to move upstairs and observe the performer in the space through a balcony window. She is dancing to a relaxed, perhaps melancholy piece of music (Nils Frahm – *Them Solo Piano Edit*), not acknowledging the audience. The staircase is narrow and means that only some members of the audience can go upstairs at any one time. Group leaders are asked to navigate their group's journey, making sure everyone is able to spend some time observing the performer. The audience is able to read the letter at any point in this opening act and many do so either before or after having been able to watch the performer from the balcony



**Introductory letter for red group ABCDE (stop start dance very fast, change music to Primal Scream, hug someone):**

*Hello*

*Thank you for coming. I know you are up there. Can you see me alright? Are you comfortable? It's a bit of a small space, I've been told. I apologise for that.*

*I haven't left this room for a while. I have entered this room voluntarily. And I am happy to be here. But I now really long for some contact. Some interaction. Something joyful. Something else. Someone else. I discovered a lot in here and I would like to share it with someone.*

*I very much am looking forward to you joining me in this space. I know you will change me. You might be able to support me. Or maybe you'll offer another perspective. Or something I haven't thought about.*

*I am looking forward to finding out.*

*Don't do anything you don't want to do. You are free to lean against the wall and rest and watch at any point.*

*Don't be afraid to investigate. This is an open space. It doesn't belong to me, so I have no authority here.*

*Don't be shy.*

*We will be ok.*



**Introductory letter for green group 12345 (stop start dance very slow, repeat aggressively, scream)**

*Hello*

*Thank you for coming. I know you are up there. Can you see me alright? Are you comfortable? It's a bit of a small space, I've been told. I apologise for that.*

*I am so glad you are here. I haven't left this room for a while. It was not entirely my choice to be here, but I got used to it.*

*Now I am fed up with being alone. I long for something to happen.*

*Something fun. Something a little wild perhaps. Something else. Someone else. I bottled up a lot in here and it's bursting to come out.*

*I am so glad you will be joining me. That takes courage. I think you and I will get along. We might be disappointed. But maybe we will entertain each other. Or find something unforeseen. I am looking forward to finding out.*

*Don't do anything you don't want to do. You are free to lean against the wall and rest and watch at any point.*

*Don't be afraid to investigate. This is an open space. It doesn't belong to me, so I have authority here.*

*Don't be shy.*

*We will be ok.*

The two introductory letters aim to subtly prime the respective spectator-participant groups. Particularly the sentences of *And I am happy to be here. But I now really long for some contact. Some interaction. Something joyful* and *Now I am fed up with being alone. I long for something to happen. Something fun. Something a little wild perhaps. Something else* should be understood as subtle instruction to the audience in regard to the quality of responses that are encouraged or acceptable. The expectation was that the first would provide more considerate responses, whereas the latter might provoke spectator-participants to offer some more courageous, play-based responses.

**Act 2:**

The red group is asked into the performance studio. They are now observing Makiko the performer from close distance. They are able to stand anywhere in the space and walk whenever they want to, although few choose to move during the scene itself. In the performance booklet, they are receiving the following instruction:

The letters A B C D E trigger the responses of 'stop', 'start', 'dance very fast', 'change music to Primal Scream', 'hug someone' within Makiko's performance. The audience slowly figures out what letter triggers what response but abstain from encouraging particular responses in a particular order; instead, they call out the letters randomly. The most often used command was the E = scream.

In the meantime, the green group is sat in the kitchen space at Clarence Mews, and are instructed by myself as facilitator to write a letter to Makiko in response to the introductory letter in the booklet and their experience of watching Makiko from above the space. They are constructing the letter collectively, in the form of an Exquisite Letter, inspired by the Surrealist drawing and word game Cadavre Exquis. One member of the audience contributes a line, which is then folded over before the next member of the audience continues the letter with a further line. The finished letter (when all members of the group contributed a line) is being passed to the group leader.

The groups are then asked to swap over, meaning that the red group is now in the kitchen space, writing the letter, whereas the green group is in the studio with Makiko. Like the red group, they can manipulate and trigger the movement by calling out the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, which relate to the commands of 'stop', 'start', 'dance very fast', 'change music to Primal Scream', 'hug someone'. Like the red group, the green group plays little with consciously triggering one or the other demand, instead seem to call out the numbers in a random fashion.

dear members of the red group

you will now enter the space

You are encouraged to give Makiko verbal instructions in order to find out a little more about her.

She won't tell much.

Please use the letters

A B C D E





**Act 3:**

The green group joins the red group in the studio with Makiko who at this point moves towards a suitcase and, slowly, starts to roll multi coloured soft play balls into the space. All members of the audience are receiving the following instructions in their program booklet:

Makiko has something else to share with you.

But she needs some encouragement.

Maybe try and use your voice in a different way?

can you try and hum?

sing a little tune?

maybe whisper sweet nothings?

call her firmly?

not everything will work, but some things will work for sure

Vocal contributions such as humming, whispering, singing or any other kinds of vocal noises are triggering a slightly amended version of the previously used dance. In this section the performer's behaviour is central to guide and encourage spectator-participants. Makiko is instructed to make eye-contact to anyone offering vocal triggers, but to respond only to those sounds she finds interesting and to pause when she becomes bored. This leads to some lovely collaborative contributions from the audience, such as when most of them join to hum Rudolph The Red Nose Reindeer. Furthermore, Makiko rewards anyone particularly courageous by approaching and sustaining what during rehearsals has been termed Private Dancer Mode, for the duration of the vocal offering.

Maybe just walk?

Or maybe try running?

Maybe wave or waft your arms,  
Or try crawling on the floor?

If you are very brave, maybe you can recreate some of her moves?

**Act 4:**

In this section, spectator-participants are encouraged to come closer to the performer and attempt to trigger her with their own movements. The instruction they receive is:

Unbeknownst to anyone else, the two group leaders receive a slightly different instruction from the others, in the form of:

GROUP LEADERS:

DONT LET THEM TOUCH THE BALLS

At this particular performance, many members of the audience are dancers or choreographers themselves, and soon an active exchange of movements and a sharing of some of the choreographic elements ensues. Other members of the audience are simply walking, kicking the soft play balls or choose to observe and not move at all. One group leader starts to frantically try and collect all the soft play balls, but no one knows why. Eventually, the facilitator will ask the spectator-participants to turn the page in their booklet to receive the next instruction:

and

just to make it really fun

maybe you can use any of the objects in the room?

At this point, I am bringing out a random selection of props and musical instruments such as balloons, table bells, recorders, tambourines, children's pianos, rattles, bongo drums amongst others, and soon much noise is generated as audience members explore the new possibilities opened to them. The instructions in the booklet continues to advise:

can you play the piano

use the flute

bang the drums

rattle the spoons

blow the balloons

find anything else

do anything else





Group leaders, unbeknown to the others, again have a specific message in the form of:

**GROUP LEADERS: FOR GOD'S SAKE, DO NOT LET THEM MOVE THE BALLS**

The different toys, tools and instruments are designed to offer interactive affordances particularly to those spectator-participants who do not feel comfortable using their own physicality in space. Alongside the noises and sounds, some of the dance professionals within the audience however are continuing to dance with Makiko, carrying the choreography through the space. Makiko allows the activities to continue until it reaches a natural crescendo, upon which she moves towards the door and exits the space.



#### **Act 4:**

As the audience believes that the performance has perhaps come to a close, I switch on the melancholy music from the beginning. At this point, Makiko slides open the balcony door above the studio, from where the audience has watched her at the beginning. From there, she returns to her solo dance from Act 1, now partly obscured to the audience's view due to the positioning of the audience in the studio and the framing that occurs through the window edges. I am asking the group leaders to read out the two letters that the groups have written at the beginning of the performance in the kitchen, as final words to Makiko, as she continues to dance.

HELLO MAKIKO

I'm part of your audience, enjoying seeing you move.  
Are you enjoying this performance? Hopefully not feeling intimidated  
with our eyes on you.

I hope that happiness finds you with strength that peace has  
ended me.

I had more questions to ask you but didn't  
know how...

Beautiful moves

You're so nice person

Beautiful

Yours SINCERELY

HELLO MAKIKO

Well done for deciding to reach out!

Enjoy what you can, whatever it is

I see what you see, cause we're both looking  
in the same direction,

Come in and have a mince pie, they're  
delicious

Live a life of colour.

Yours SINCERELY

The performance ends after the group leaders have read out their letters. The audience is exiting the studio, whilst the music still plays, and whilst Makiko continues to perform her solo in the space above the studio, partly obscured by the architecture of the space.



**Where to continue reading:**

'Chapter 5.3 - *Would You #1* (2019)' p.108  
'Chapter 5.3.1 - Considerations for practical methods applied for *Would You #1*' p.109

Exploration as part of emerging systems  
in  
'Chapter 6.3.1 Exploration as emergence' p. 147

Triggering  
in  
'Chapter 6.3.4 Triggering' p. 162-63

Example of mutual incorporation  
in  
'Chapter 7.2 Coming together - The communal experience in participatory performance' p.167

*Spatial construction, obstruction, deconstruction*

**W E B (2020)**

spider web

TWO TEAMS

developing different stages of involvement

**restrictions**

**reconfiguring choreography**

*installation art*

RECONFIGURING SPACE

manipulation of preconceived choreography

**GETTING ENTANGLED**

*twine, strings and ropes*

**power dynamics between  
performer and audience and  
between members of the audience**

**PLAY**

## W E B

Developed at Clarence Mews, London  
(March 2020):

<https://vimeo.com/405935560> (14m05s)

Performed by: Makiko Aoyama

Devised and directed by: Caroline Mueller

**This is a hypothetical performance analysis. The project was not performed in front of an audience due to COVID-19 restrictions.**



W E B is a research performance that concerns itself quite literally with the idea of affecting the performance space and the activities within by involving spectator-participants in spinning twine across a performance **space**. Two full wall-height nets made of **twine** are hung up on opposite walls in the studio. The audience is split into two groups facing each other and **each team is given a roll of coloured string, scissors and masking tape**. Spectator-participants can spin the string across the room by attaching one end to the netting behind them and using the tape to attach the other end to either floors, windows, door, four chairs arranged in a square in the centre of the studio and/or, as the performance goes on, other string spun across the room already. They can use as many pieces of string as they like, using the scissors to cut it to the desired length.

Makiko Aoyama is once again the main performer. She acts as facilitator as well as movement performer, and switches between giving instructions and props to audiences, performing abstract movement material or simply stands aside and observes the audience-led proceedings in the room (such as spinning the string across the room).

Over the course of the performance, the spectator-participant groups receive three instructions in envelopes: 1) shape the space; 2) fill the space and 3) conquer the space. The aim of the performance is to observe how the two spectator-participants interpret the three commands given to them, with the performer's involvement changing according to the command and to the responses in the room.

For example, whilst allowing the audience to respond to the command 'shape the space' for some time, Aoyama is offering a set routine, which may need to be adjusted as the twine **obstructs** her pathways. In the second, having seen how Aoyama's choreography adjusts, an encouragement to further fill the space is given, in order to create interesting spaces for Aoyama to interact with and therefore **reconfigure the choreography**. There is an anticipation that this leads the two groups to interact with each other's spaces, spinning string all across the room, potentially **becoming entangled** by doing so. Conquer the space is an open section, in which Aoyama will improvise to whatever ensues from the spectator-participants' interpretation of this command. The anticipation is that audience groups will behave more competitively, potentially further **obstructing** or **destructing** the strings of the other group.

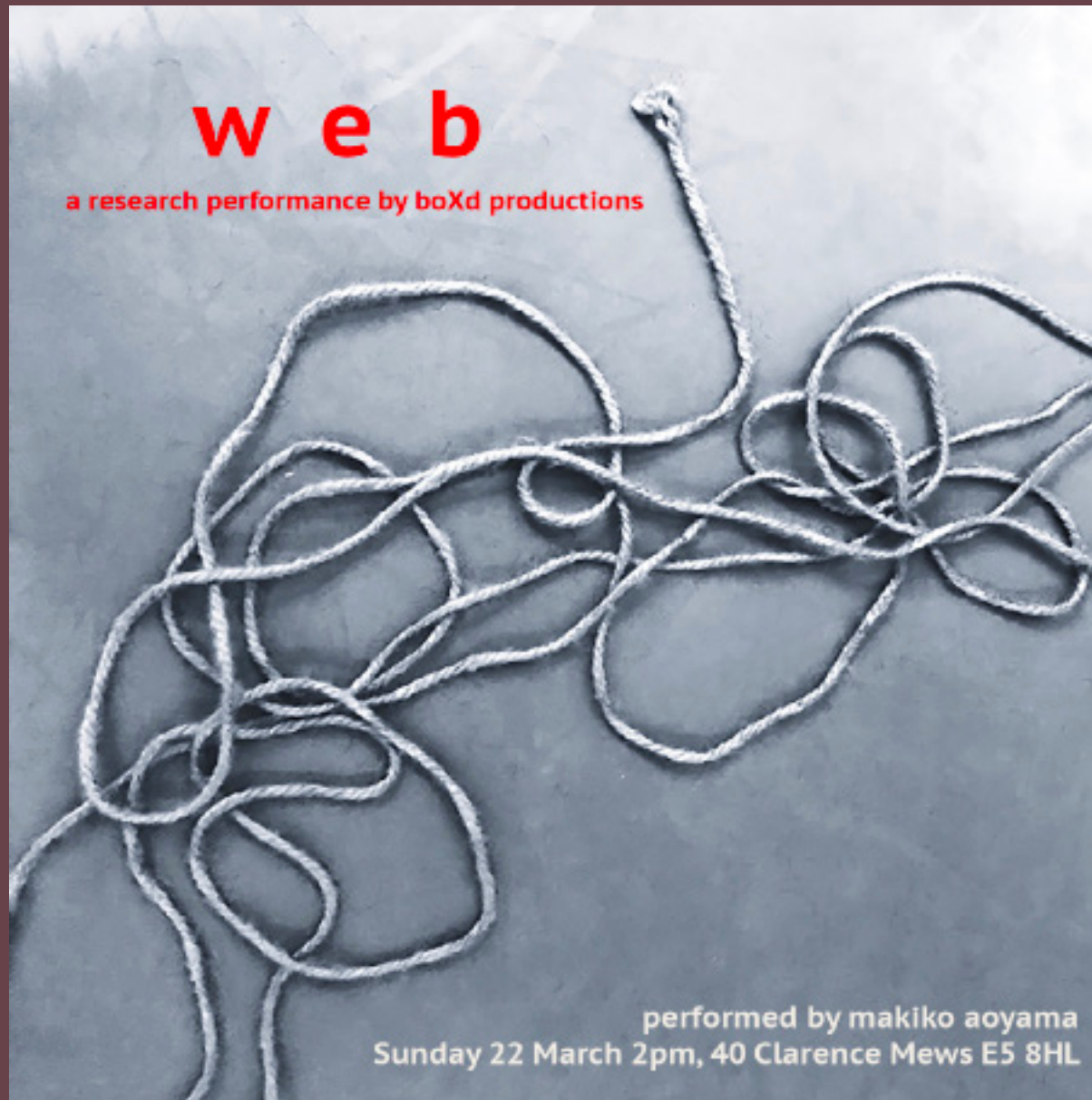
**Contextual information:**

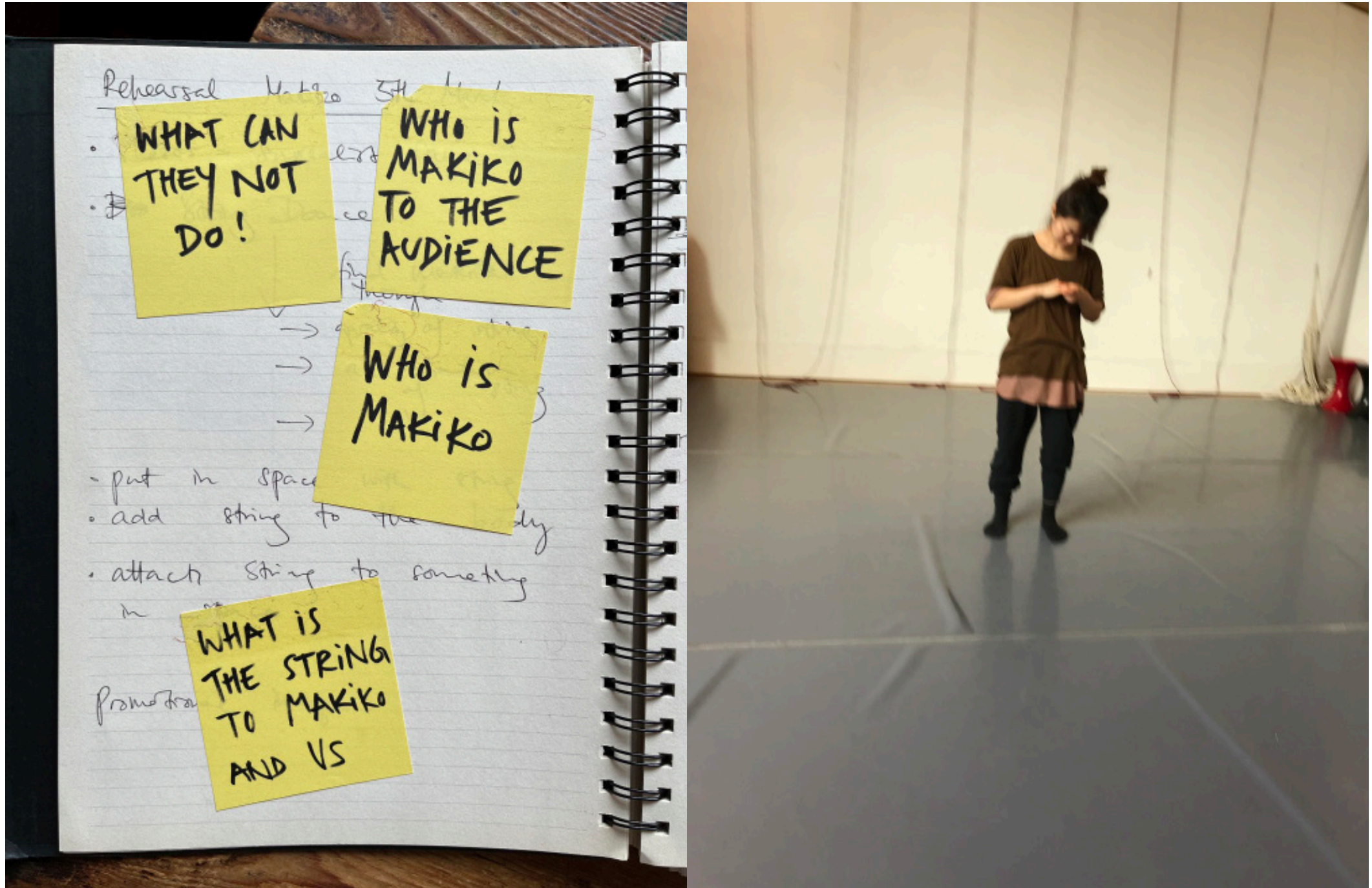
W E B has been inspired by a desire to return to a more **playful and experimental** research process than during *Would You #1*. In order to find playfulness, I decided to implement two changes to my practice: first, to reduce the ingredients that make up the materials of the performance; secondly, to leave entire sections of the performance open to be filled with the responses of the participating community, rather than offering suggestions (such as through the performance booklet in *Would You #1*) and/or detailed instructions (such as through the vocal recording in *Balloons*). The commands offered here are therefore purposefully left ambiguous and open to interpretation.

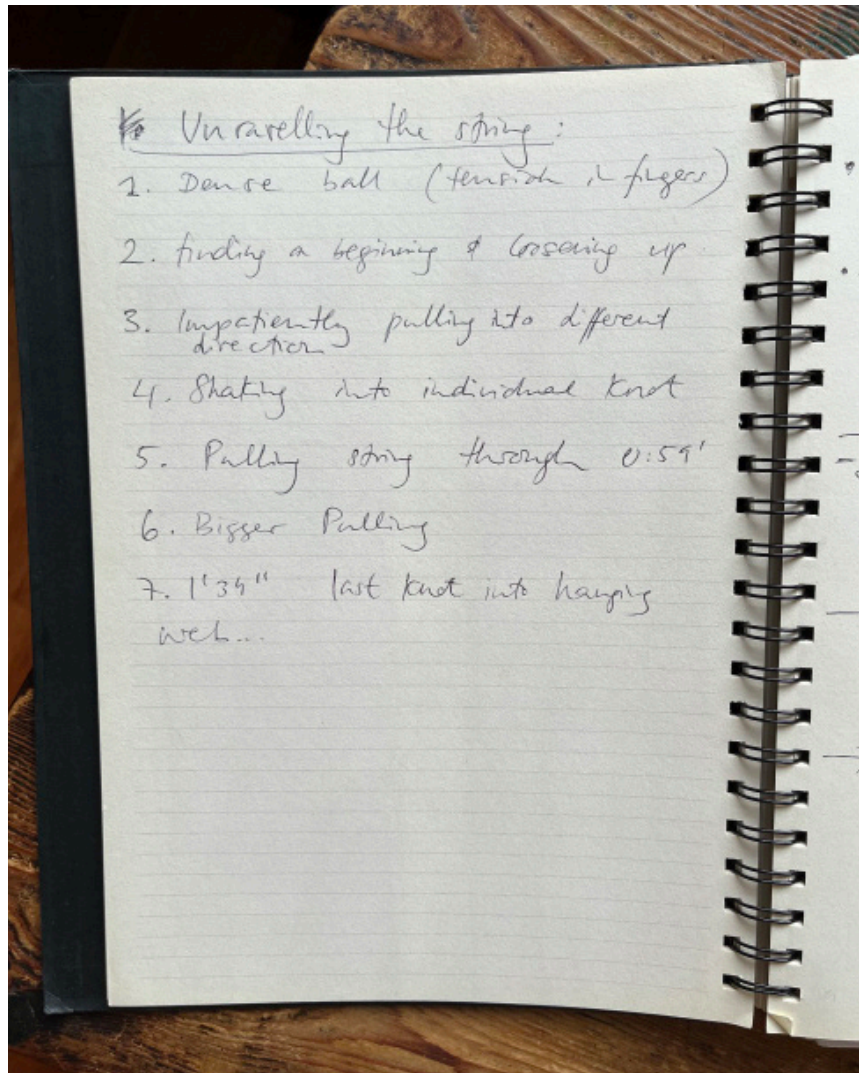
The idea for *W E B* developed from a workshop experiment conducted as part of the artists' residence meeting, where I first explored the ingredients of spinning twine across a space before including tape and scissors as additional tools for spectator-participants to interact with **(please refer to thesis Chapter 5.4 - W E B)**. An intention of the performance is to take the idea of participatory structure quite literally; by spinning twine across the room, spectator-participants inevitably create a spatial structure that will not only affect the movements of the performer, but also increasingly of themselves.

The performance is exploring the definition of transgression as 'overlapping others uncomfortably', or transgressing spatial personal boundaries.

Power dynamics once again play a key part of the artistic concept : to what extent will audiences construct and obstruct the space for the performer to develop manipulated versions of the choreography? And to what extent will this construction and obstruction become a hindrance for the audience themselves?







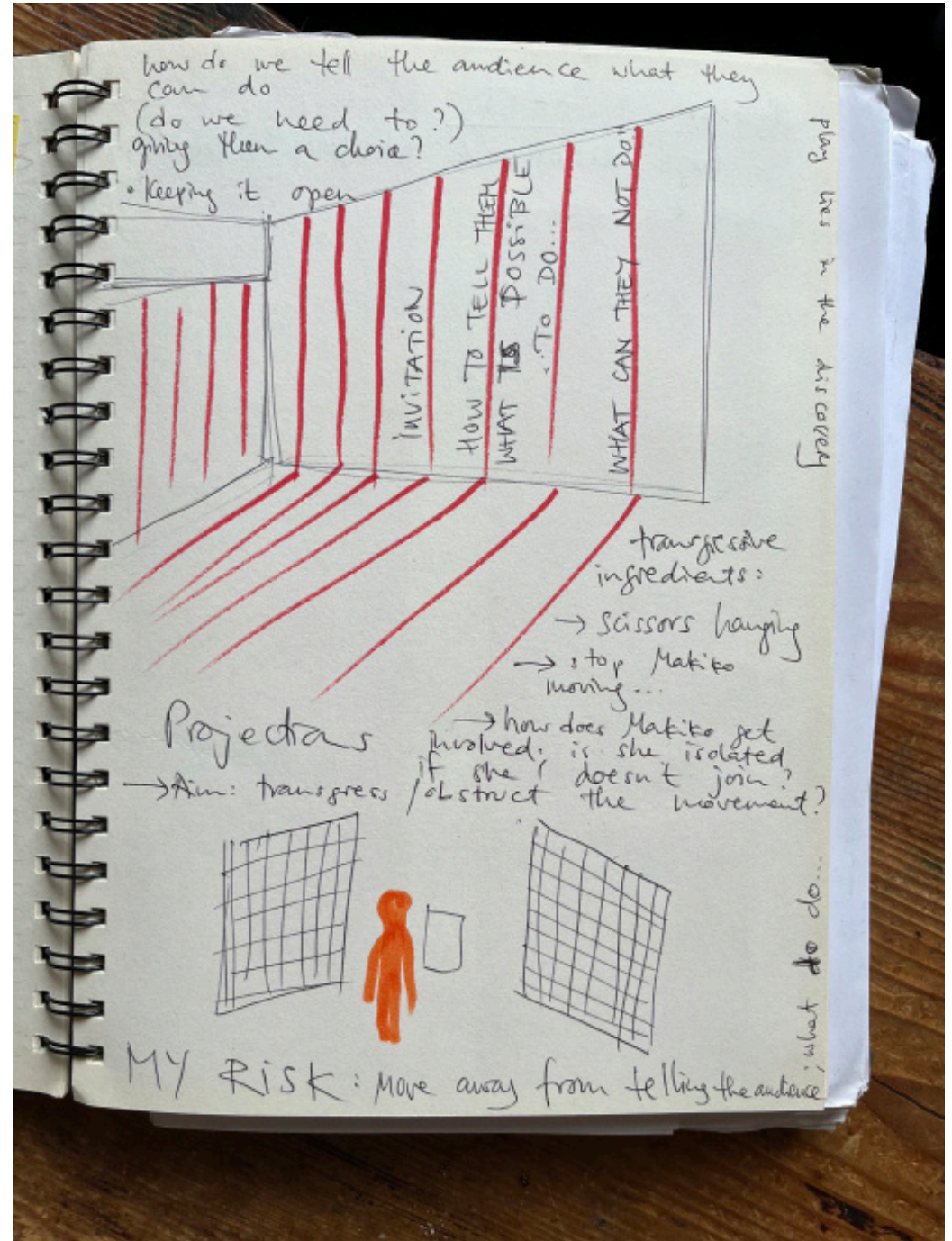
1. Unravelling the string:
2. Dance ball (fingers & fingers)
2. finding a beginning & loosening up
3. Impatiently pulling into different direction
4. Shaking into individual knot
5. Pulling string through 0:59'
6. Bigger Pulling
7. 1'39" last knot into hanging web...

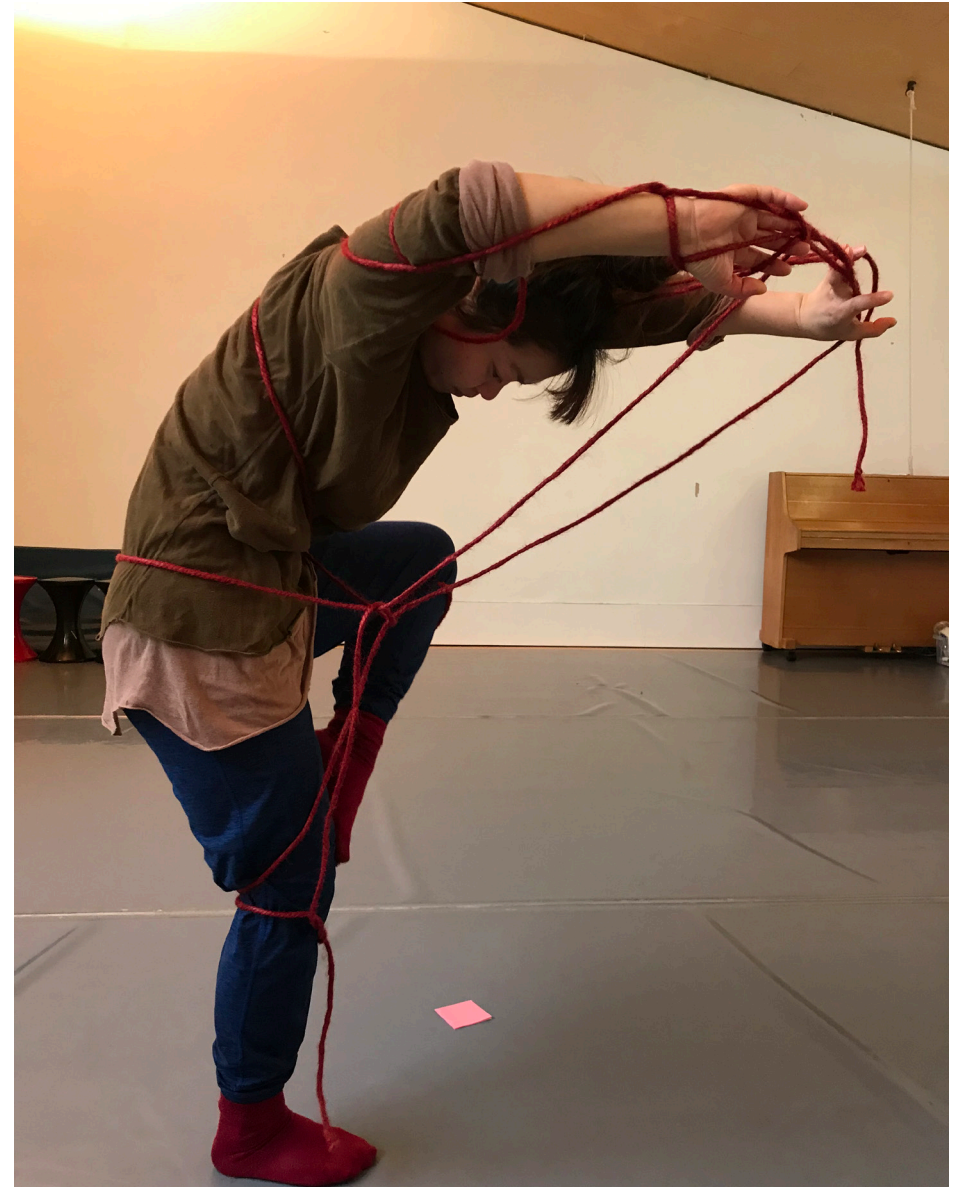
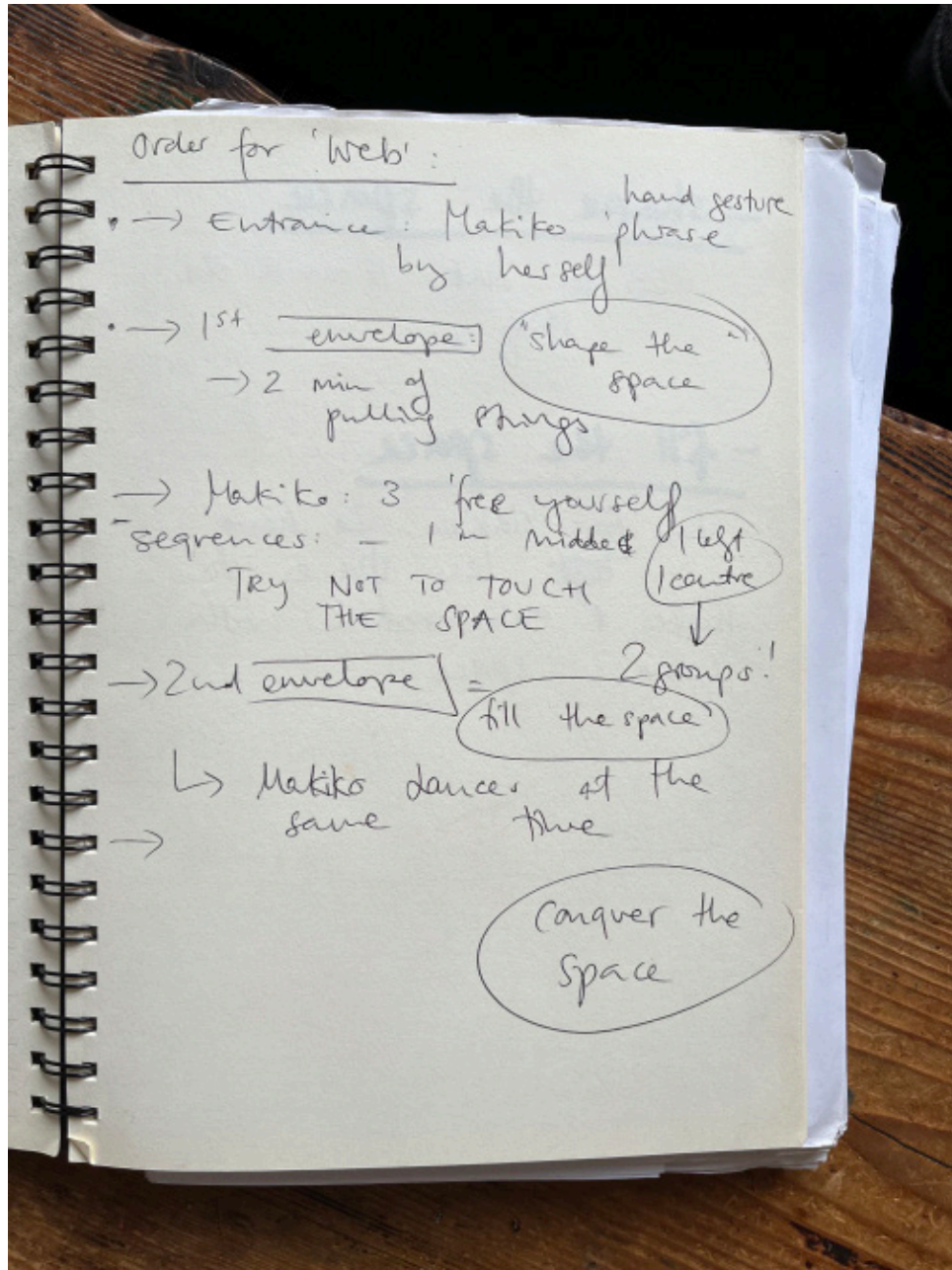


The choreography for *W E B* was developed in two ways: first, movements pertaining to handling string and twine were manipulated and embellished; second, the textural and kinetic qualities of string was explored and developed into abstract movement materials.

The final choreographic materials consisted of intricate and detailed gestures as well as travelling sequences utilising the space. The materials were designed so that there is flexibility for their adaptation according to the spatial obstructions via the string spun by the audience.









RISK

# And Then There Was Only One (2022)

WhatsApp as protest tool / WhatsApp as creative tool

**networked participatory culture**

*(a)synchronous performance spaces*

# DISTRACTION

hierarchy between performer and spectator-participants

WOLF PACK

*the invisibility of middle-aged white women*

**contagious acts**

*ANTS & BEES*

# swarms, hives and mobs

THE KEYED FRAME

## And Then There Was Only One

Developed and performed at Clarence Mews, London (30 April 2022) and University of East London, (20 May 2022):

<https://vimeo.com/405935560> (42m36s)

Written and performed by: Caroline Mueller  
Alex Standish-Murray, Lauren McCarty and  
Samuel Maxwell (WhatsApp performers)

Technical support:

Harrison Snell and Julian Shapter

Please note that the video is from the Performance at University of East London, 20 May 2022.



*And Then There Was Only One* is presented by a sole performer (the Speaker) and designed for a small group of spectator-participants (up to 10). The performance is shaped as a lecture-style recital facilitated by an unnamed organisation (the institution). It was performed in a studio space as well as in studio at the University of East London (UEL). It is presented by myself as the main performer, but involves several student collaborators from the BA Performing Arts Degree at UEL, who either pretend to be part of the audience or offer technical support. For example, my sound technician, Harrison Snell, was present in a back corner on stage throughout the performance, acting as ambiguous security guard, only to get involved in the final rebellious dance (see page 67).

As part of the live performance, spectator-participants are added to a performance-specific **WhatsApp group**. A specific WhatsApp script, delivered by the student collaborators, continuously encourages spectator-participants to contribute to the group, by responding to questions, become part of discussion, commenting on the live-performance aspects or by sharing media such as GIFs or web links.

The overall performance is structured in five acts, each act containing two scenes. Whereas scene 1 pertains to the lecture material, scene 2 utilises a more abstract performance style, using movement and music. The movement-based scenes are primarily designed to offer respite from the otherwise dense script; it is mainly in those moments that the student collaborators will offer questions and provocations to the audience in the WhatsApp group. Throughout the performance, the speaker also receives a series of phone calls, which interrupt her lecture/movement scenes and provide expositional background details for her character. **Distraction** is therefore a theme as well as an artistic trope, referencing the distracted, multi-tasking culture of a networked society.

*For the full script of ATTWOO, please see Appendix 5 – And Then There Was Only One Script.*

*For completed audience feedback questionnaires, please refer to Appendix 5.1 and Appendix 5.2 – And Then There Was Only One Audience Feedback*

**Contextual information:**

*And Then There Was Only One* is inspired by the reputation of WhatsApp as effective communication tool within socio-political protest and activism; for example, the use of WhatsApp for political discussion and exchange seems to positively predict activist political participation (1). In participatory theatre, mobile phones provide theatre makers with the possibility of being responsive and in touch with audiences and this at times beyond the actual performance event itself (2). A starting point for this PaR instance was therefore if a WhatsApp channel, used in a participatory performance, could offer a secondary realm for participation and function as space for transgressive responses.

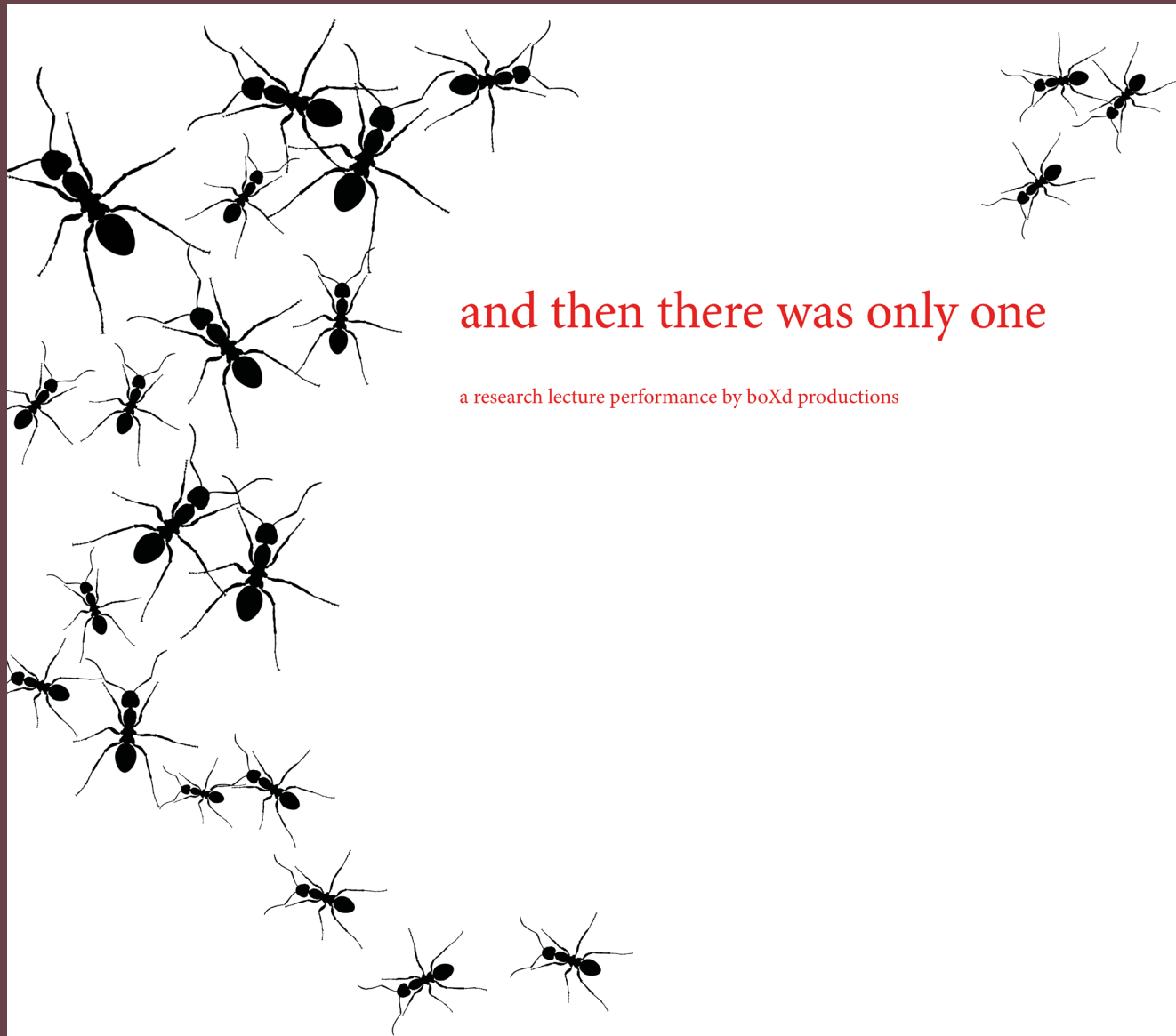
**The hierarchy between performer and spectator-participants** was once again an underlying interest; the role of the Speaker, derived from the concept of the **invisible middle-aged white woman**, is designed to offer spectator-participants a character to mobilise and rebel against. She is hapless, incompetent and clearly challenged with the demands of her professional as well as personal life. Additionally, the movement sequences were consciously reaching into the grotesque realm, such as when she transforms into an ant crawling on the floor to look for her glasses. Spectator-participants are continuously invited to comment on and critique the performer and her actions.

This performance instance is framed with research items such as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's **wolf pack** as well as Jussi Parrika's alignment of **swarms and hives** to digital networks. These readings have not only been a creative inspiration (for example, ants and bees are repeatedly referred to in the script), but helped to consolidate an understanding of WhatsApp as a tool for building a sense of community and solidarity within participatory performance groups whilst also recognising its potential for **contagious** responsivity, transgression and the experience of dissensus. For example, research into **WhatsApp as tool for protest** and activism, combined with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the wolf pack inspired the hypothesis that via WhatsApp, a sense of a temporary community under which pack-multiplicities 'form, develop and are transformed by contagion' (3) could be enhanced, and that becoming-wolf, described as a feeling of being outside and yet part of a movement or participatory event can cultivate individual as well as collective transgressive activities that reach beyond the mobile device or the performance itself.

Additionally, the insect organisation such as hives or swarms seemed a suitable analogy for a **networked participatory culture**, and enhances the concept of collaborative, leaderless structures, which the performance itself aimed to facilitate in relation to the WhatsApp communication channel, which the author (myself) had no seemingly direct control over.

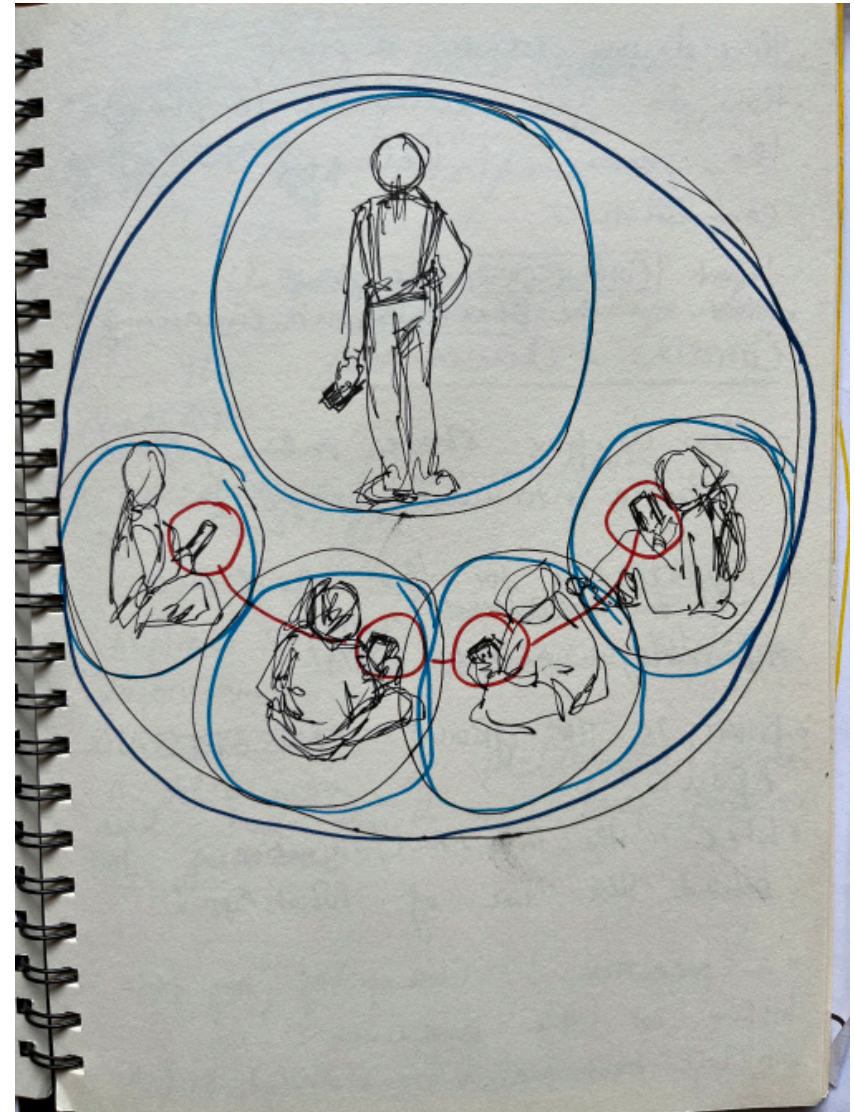
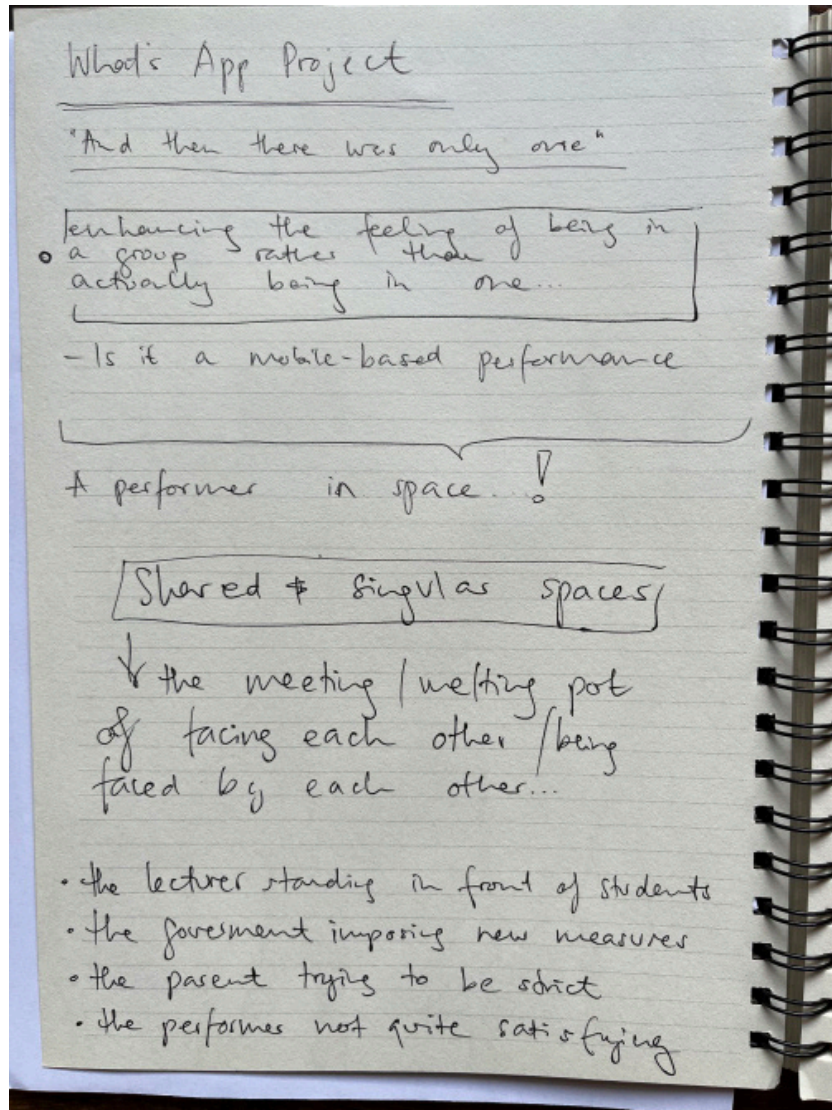
**References:**

- (1) Homero Gil de Zúñiga, Alberto Ardevol-Abreu and Andreu Casero-Ripollés, "WhatsApp political discussion, conventional participation and activism: exploring direct, indirect and generational effects," *Information, Communication & Society* (July 2019) DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2019.1642933
- (2) Josephine Machon, *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and immediacy in contemporary performance*. (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- (3) Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia* (London: The Athlone Press, 1988). 32.



p. 55, 57, 64 and 65: Early sketchbook ideas of *And Then There Was Only One*

p. 56, 58 -63: Performance description and script extracts



The framed textboxes that appear over the next pages are extracts from the script. The performer's text is in black font, WhatsApp communications are **purple** and stage directions are indicated in **blue**.

The performance begins as the audience enters the studio / class room. The speaker stands near a lectern, in a smart skirt and reading glasses to hand. She welcomes the audience into the room, clasp ing a pile of paper, seemingly nervous that not many people are attending. The atmosphere is formal, and a little tense. The opening scene and the small audience number are setting the tone, whilst a difficulty in the sign-up process sees the speaker collecting everyone's names and phone numbers, allowing Alex, the student aid, to then set-up a performance-specific WhatsApp group. The performance commences in the style of a conventional lecture, with the speaker introducing the subject to be the history of leadership.



- How do you create a group...?
- How do you enhance/emphasize the feeling of belonging to a community
- What CONNECTS the group?
- What is the FEELING we're enhancing?

### Concerns & Questions

- How do you share online / space  
(Pauses, Interludes, prompts)
- Multitasking for the audience  
(is it too much?)
- Monologue about WHAT?
- WHAT IS THE GROUP TRANSGRESSING ABOUT??
- What is the intention / objective behind the use of WhatsApp?
- a projection? = Close up of my face looking at the audience?  
(to look backwards, to be excluded, Big Brother)

## SPEAKER

- a middle-aged woman
- used to be somewhat pretty, but now clearly has 'drunk and lived live a little'. She is past her prime.
- she gets lost in her thoughts
- she drops things
- she smudges her make-up
- she snorts when she giggles.
- she needs reading glasses
- she drops her notes

Speaker:

I am aware that the sign-up process has been a difficult procedure and left some of you frustrated.

Was that the case?

Did you . . .

were you frustrated?

I am really sorry about this it doesn't really have anything to do with me . . . as I'm . . . well, it's part of the institution and I've been told I should forward it on to you . . . but then

I don't think I received the correct training . . . or maybe I missed it . . .

So I erh I do apologise

But I hope you've managed to sign up?

Have You. Have you signed up? Have all of you signed up . . .

It's quite important that you all have signed up because by now

You were all by now meant to have received the confirmation email about this event? And attached to that email were the materials relevant to today's session? So, it's quite important for you to make you sure you have got this?

Could you check? Do you have data that you can use to access your email? The WiFi here is not too great. And keep on phone volume on, so you will be notified when you receive the email?

Ping:

Hello. I hope you don't mind me contacting you, I have set-up a group for everyone who will join the event on the 24 April 2022. I got your message from the speaker. Do join so you can meet everyone :)

Over the duration of the performance, leadership theories, with a sole focus on Western, European and American leadership models, are introduced, such as the Great Man Theory (which approaches the study of history through the acts of eminent, great men, who were chosen due to attributes such as superior intellect, heroic courage, extraordinary leadership abilities or divine inspiration), the trait approach (which proposes that certain inborn or innate qualities and characteristics make someone a leader), behavioural theories (which evaluates leaders on their behaviour and actions in the workplace) as well as contingency theories (which supposes that a leader's effectiveness is contingent on whether or not their leadership style suits a particular situation). Most of the information presented in the lecture is taken from one particular webpage, which is revealed in a message on the WhatsApp space. This is designed to make the audience doubt the authority of the speaker and expose her professional capability and authenticity.

Speaker:

Historically speaking, . . . . and erm, I am here talking from a European perspective, as there are many different concepts in regards to leadership if we go beyond European culture, but erm

Thinking of the UK's history, specifically erm . . . well, I am here reminded of the fable of Arthur, who really became a leader because he pulled a sword out of a stone, . . . or so one version of the story goes . . .

There are many other versions . . .

Erm, . . . but obviously the monarchy and the role of the king and Queen is strongly connected to this idea of leadership . . . Because, anyone who knew the legend of King Arthur understood that it helped illustrate the concept that those who led were born and not made.

Early concepts of monarchy included the element that king was a divine choice and was bound to no earthly rules. The right to rule was derived directly from the will of God.

Ping:

has anyone noticed this is all taken from this webpage?

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wmopen-organizationalbehavior/chapter/the-history-of-leadership-theories/>

There are three reoccurring motifs that run through this lecture on leadership theory. First, at strategic moments in the performance, the speaker breaks into abstract movement material, which are designed to give insight into her mental state, whilst simultaneously offering a space for audience-participants to become more engaged in the WhatsApp realm as during those moments communicative prompts are sent into the group chat by my student collaborators. Second, the speaker receives a series of phone calls from non-disclosed others, although it is made discernible that some of these calls are from the institution itself, whereas others seem to be from close family members and dependants. Over the course of the performance, it becomes clear that there is an insurmountable amount of pressure that the speaker is exposed to due to personal as well as professional circumstances. Third, throughout the lecture, references to bees and ants are being made, in order to metaphorically align leadership theories to biological systems found within animal ethology. For example, the Great Man Theory and its focus on inborn attributes is here compared to being a fertilised egg and hence a worker bee, or an unfertilised egg and hence a drone within a bee hive.



The analogy to insect organisation and biological structures here serves several objectives. First, the theme of insects acts as analogy for the labour force, the followers; those who are affected by leadership as employees or lower status inhabitants of a hierarchical structure. Evidently, the speaker, who is employed by an obscure institution that imposes on the way she works, is part of the followers and therefore exposed to their demands and expectations. This exposure peaks at the end, when she receives a final phone call, learning about the termination of her teaching contract. Secondly, the script makes reference to either female or older insects, who tend to work harder (the female worker bees) or take on more dangerous jobs (the older ant, who takes on foraging duties away from the ant hive). Insect structure here relates to ageism as well as the gender pay and opportunity gap, which are adjacent themes within this performance, chosen not just because of personal experience or exposure to ageist and gender discriminatory situations within a professional industry; it also here is a creative trope that gives sub-text to the character's psycho-emotional narrative by further shedding light on the social and demographic pressures she might be exposed to.

And finally, the analogy to insect organisation serves as metaphor to the non-hierarchical, self-organising structure found within networked societies, therefore directly referencing the activities of the spectator-participants who engage in the WhatsApp group chat.



The metaphor of insect organisation, particularly the idea of the swarm, is often applied to collective collaboration found within open source, user-driven networks. Aristotle's famous phrase that 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts' here is aligned to the digitally connected society and communal, collaborative structures found within; as Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams explain: 'the collective knowledge, capability and resources embodied within broad horizontal networks of participants can accomplish much more than one organisation or one individual acting alone' (1). Here, as the speaker refers to ants and their ability to directly and instantly respond to their environment, she not only acknowledges how she responds to an increasingly pressurised work environment, but speaks to the spectator-participants who are receiving and responding to the WhatsApp messages in the secondary performance realm.

#### References:

(1) Don Tapscott & Anthony D. Williams, *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*, (London: Atlantic Books, 2006).

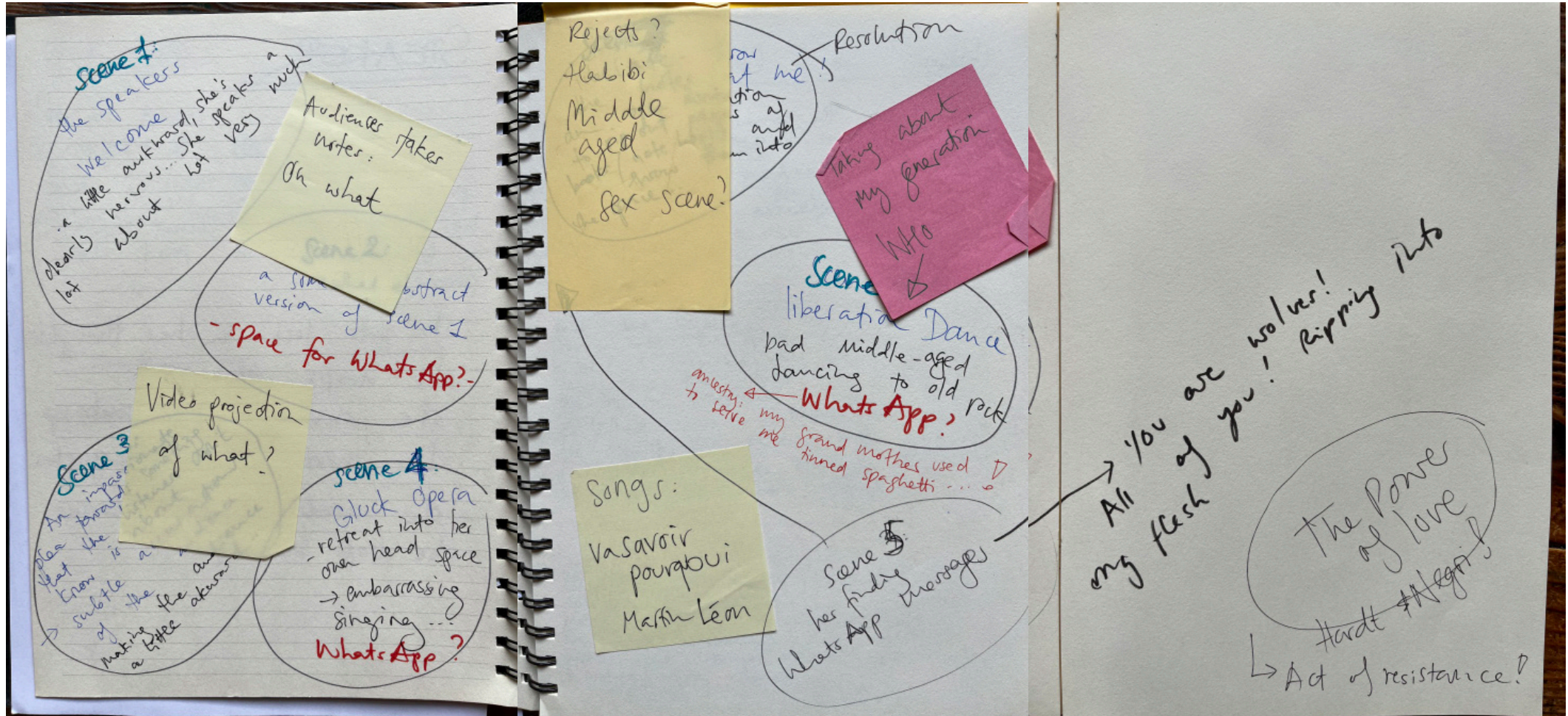


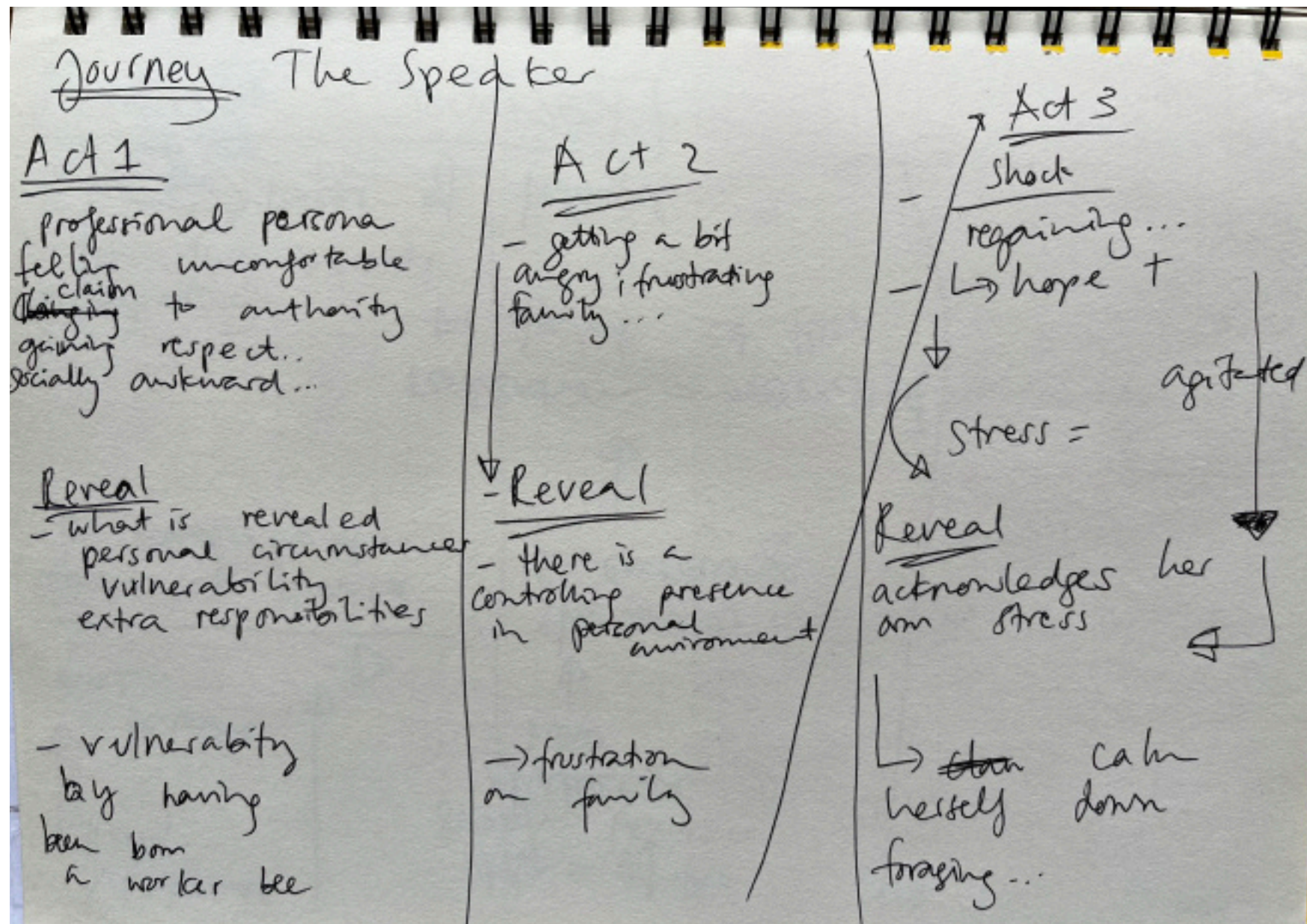
The reference to the ants as well as their leaderless organisation and level of collaboration extends to the concept of the swarm, which yet again is an analogy to the networked structure found in digitally connected social networks. As Karen Savage and Dominic Symonds explain, tags and posts on social media and in digital networks do not always become threads but, 'when they do, they seem to take on a life of their own' (1). Similarly, a swarm has both an internal logic as well as an 'external appearance which is defined by the collective energy of the group' and therefore is, as the speaker explains, unpredictable and hard to control. I here relate this to my proposition that, in communal and connected spaces, which here are both the WhatsApp group as well as the metaphorical swarm of the spectator-participant community, a contagious and transgressive force is always a possibility. In this spirit, the speaker calls for an end to leadership and a greater ability to connect and respond to immediate environmental conditions with experimentation, change and transformation. She proceeds into a final rioting dance, which serves at an invitation for the audience to join her and connect in the space, rather than on the group chat. This dance is interrupted by the aforementioned final phone call, during which she learns that she has been made redundant by the institution due to inappropriate conduct in the workplace.

**References:**

- (1) Savage, Karen, and Dominic Symonds. *Economies of Collaboration in Performance: More than the Sum of the Parts*. (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018): 222.





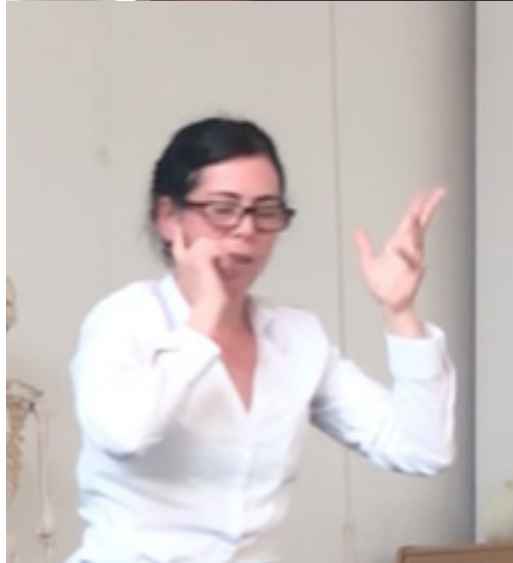




The sound technician, disguised as security guard, joins the final dance



The development of the role of the Speaker appropriated and embellished autobiographical elements. This carried a risk, as some of the themes explored (for example exploitative hierarchical work structures) could leave me in a vulnerable position, particularly in my personal real-life professional environment, where the performance was staged. Furthermore, the choreography for the abstract movement interludes was developed via a study of my own facial expressions and gestures during Microsoft Teams call during the global COVID-19 pandemic, further blurring the separation between real-world and fictional-world "representations of myself."



**Where to continue reading:**

- 'Chapter 5.5 - *And Then There Was Only One* (2022)' p.116  
'Chapter 5.5.1 - Considerations for practical methods applied for *And Then There Was Only One*' p.117
- Framing as device for dissensus  
in  
'Chapter 6.2 Site specific and spatial boundaries' p. 142 -144
- The Wolf as transgressive spectator-participant type  
in  
'Chapter 7.3.5 Wolves' p. 178 - 180
- Thinning the separation of extra-and intraludic realms  
in  
'Chapter 8.3.1 Thinning' p.194

**TRAILED (2023)**

traces and  
roads

AVATAR

COMPETITION

Decision-making processes

branching structures

MILESTONES

*collaboration*

TRAFFIC CONTROL

*WHO IS IN CONTROL?*

FEEDBACK LOOP

decades of life

GAMES

hierarchy between performer and audience

*WHOSE CHOICE IS IT?*

SPEED AND ALERTNESS

Witnesses, bystanders and manipulators

## Trailed

Developed and performed at Clarence Mews,  
London (4 February 2023)

<https://vimeo.com/405935560> (1h15m45s)

Performed by:

Lucy Scammell (Penny / Faye) and Caroline  
Mueller (The Other)

Technical support:

Technical support: Alexander Murray-Standish,  
Wiktoria Borowiecka



*Trailed* is performed by Lucy Scammell as the protagonist (Penny / Faye) and Caroline Mueller as technician, scribe, score keeper and The Other. In this performance, audiences are getting involved in the unfolding of a character's life by **making decisions** about her and her conduct in relation to key **milestone** moments within her journey from childhood to late adulthood. Through a series of **games** and **competitions**, spectator-participants decide upon who this character is and how she behaves and what choices she takes in relation to family, social and romantic relationships, professional life and self-care. Spectator-participants, split into two teams, have an opportunity to gain points by making the right choice for the performer. They therefore **collaborate** to **compete** against each other. Collectively as well as individually, they decide upon the trivial to matters of life and death, by being asked: what should she do? And by doing so, are encouraged to ask: what would I do?

### Contextual Information:

*Trailed* was designed to test **branching as a participatory structure**. The performance was designed to investigate how much a spectator-participants extra-ludic experiences and world-view would affect their intra-ludic responses. Marie-Laure Ryan expresses in relation to such choice-driven structures in immersive literature, that 'every time the reader is asked to make a choice, she assumes an external perspective on the worlds of the textual universe'(1).

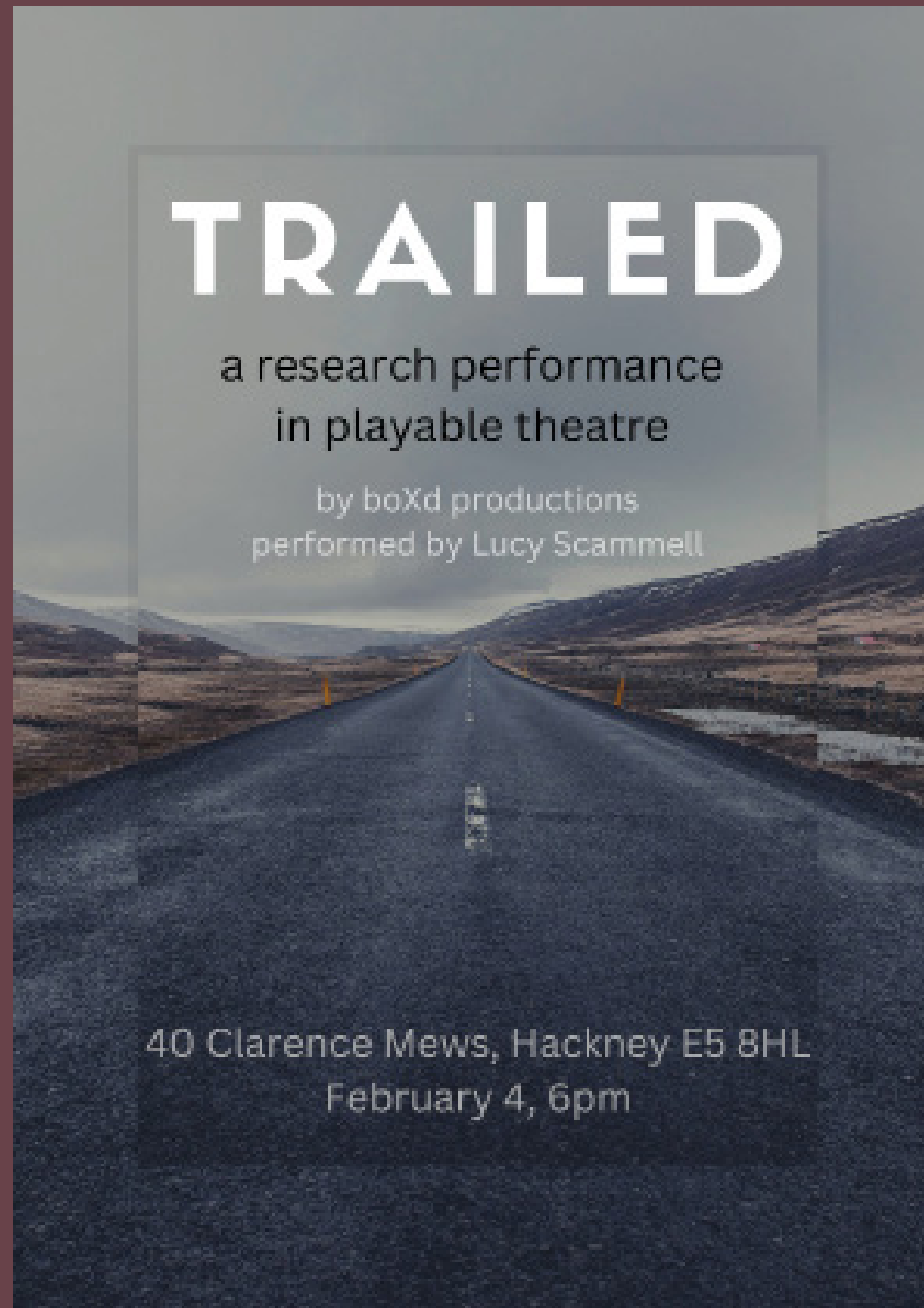
In *Trailed*, I tested if this statement can be adapted for the spectator-participant of participatory branching experiences: will participatory points of (seeming) convergence encourage spectator-participant to take an external perspective in order to contemplate on the **choice** to be made? To what extent will an intraludic choice/response be assessed through extra-ludic frames of understanding? *Trailed* aimed to test if intra-and extra-ludic moral, social and political compasses can be brought into conflict, facilitating audiences with opportunity for internal assessment of "the right choice". I argue that such points of confliction can facilitate an experience and embodiment of dissensus.

*For the full script of Trailed, please see Appendix 6 – Trailed Script.*

*For completed audience feedback questionnaires, please refer to Appendix 6.1 – Trailed Audience Feedback*

### References:

(1) Marie-Laure, Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality 2: Revisiting Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media*. (USA: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 12.



## IDEAS & BRAINSTORMS

• Creative text

① Text: giving overview of the history of roads, traffic & traffic control systems

② Performer: personal stories, to do with decision making and choices

↳ ③ Unfolding of which is determined by audience interaction

④ the idea of mapping the space: movement pathways for the performer

↳ ⑤ will also act as a way of keeping audience moving

• interactions audience > performer

• movement

• interactions performer > audience

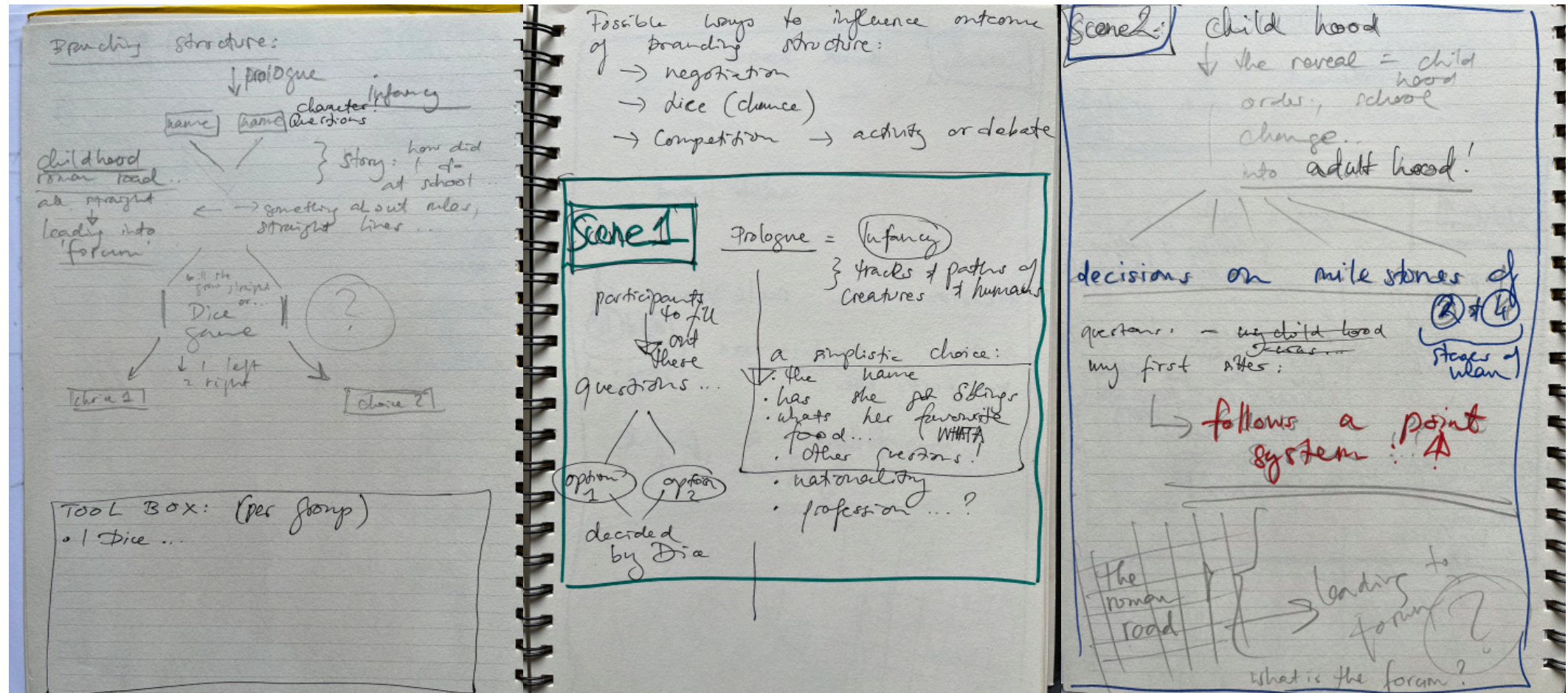
Ideas for spectator-participant & performer interactions:

→ inspired by table-top games  
→ Lucy as the figureine  
• Audience in 2 teams...  
= competition =

→ branching structure for the narrative for Lucy...  
→ a series of junctions which → audience decides which way she goes

Ample-system for audience:

Red = stop  
Amber = change  
Green = keep going / go



*Trailed* was designed to test branching as a participatory structure that I, derived from theoretical reading as well as previous practical experimentations, hypothesised as being potentially able to successfully facilitate a multitude of participatory experiences and responses, including what may be perceived as transgressive ones. The branching structure was first associated with interactive literary texts, where a reader chooses from a number of preconceived plot variations to develop the overall narrative and arrive at one of often multiple possible endings. Such books are often structured into smaller story units, also called storylets, that readers choose from and combine to develop the overall story.

Branching story books became popular particularly during the 1980's with the emergence of the Choose Your Own Adventure literary genre, whereas the advent of the world wide web saw an exploration of interactive online literature making use of multimedia hyperlinks as individual storylets.

p. 72: Early sketchbook ideas for the key concepts and creative ingredients for *Trailed*.

p. 73: Early sketchbook ideas for the branching structure applied in *Trailed*

### Roads as narrative structures:

#### Functional Roads:

- Local streets: adjacent properties and do not carry through traffic = brings us to an emotional objective
- collector, distributor, and feeder roads: carry only through traffic from their own area = brings us to a consequence of action
- arterial roads: carry through traffic from adjacent areas and are the major roads within a region or population centre = involve external factors and conditions
- highways: the major roads between regions or population centres = key changes

*Trailed* and the concept of branching was further explored through an adjacent investigation into the history of road infrastructure, traffic and **traffic control systems**. These topics were employed as metaphor for someone's life journey, imagining key **milestone** moments and related life choices as junctions in a system of possible narrative pathways (roads). Additionally, with the performance was presented in six acts, each act representing a decade in the character's life. Creative materials within the decades were related to the history of road development and traffic control; for example, the chess-board road building approach of the Roman Empire was aligned to the daily, rigidly timed school runs, whereas a later, more career driven stage of life were compared to the fast moving lanes of highway and motorway systems.

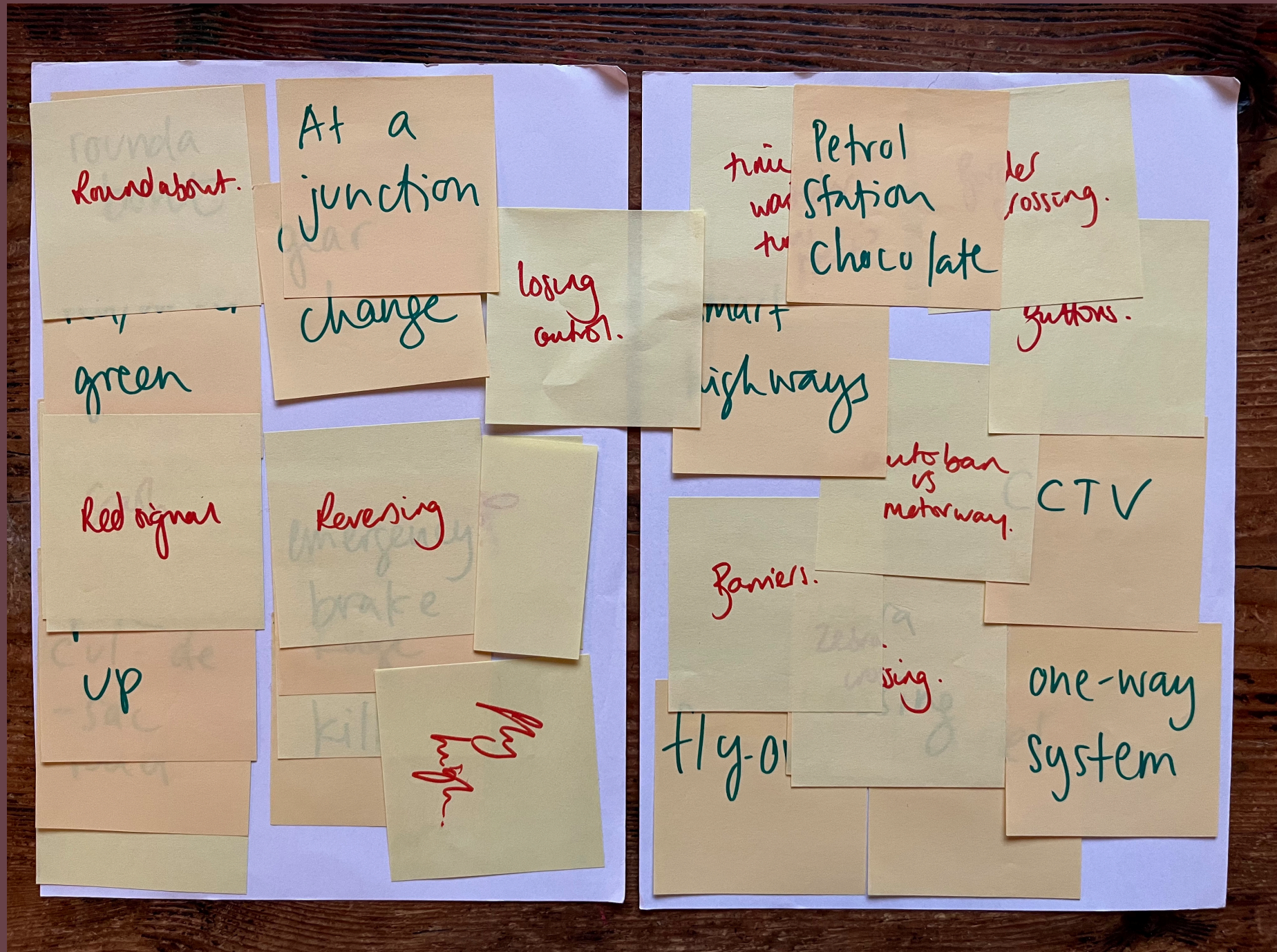


Analogy of participatory performance as infrastructures that often remain invisible?

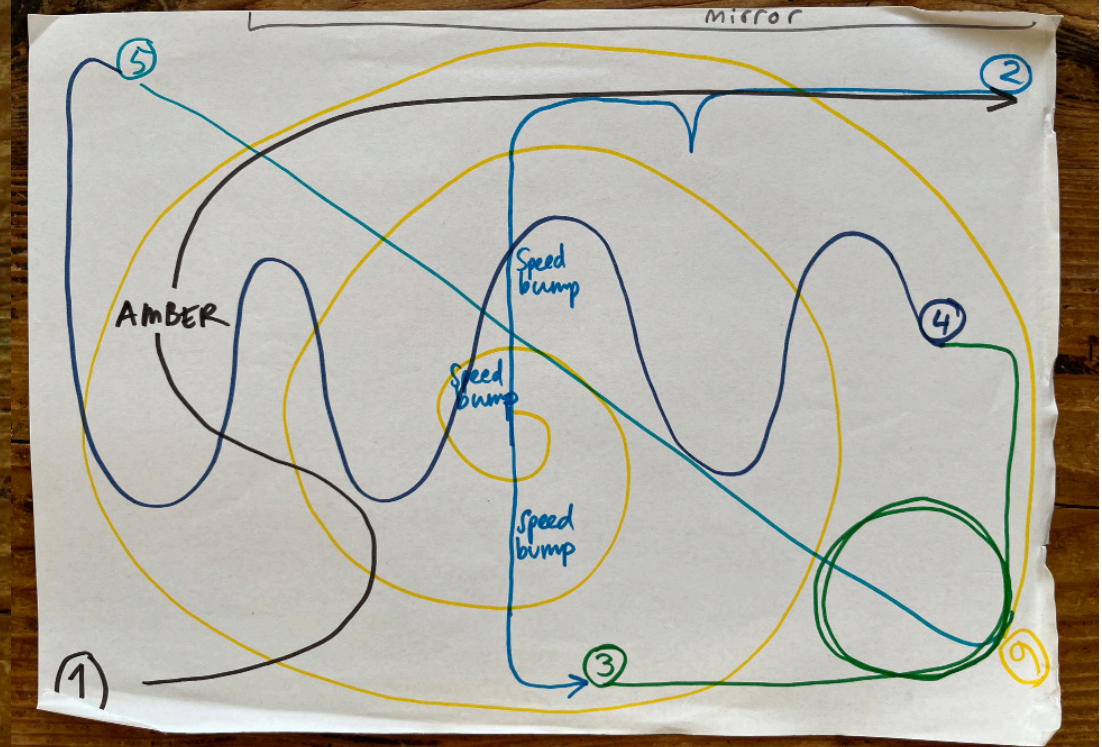
Spectator-participants as media?

Glitches in an infrastructure can bring to light the infrastructure itself. A dissensus that makes visible an organising and power-distributing structure.

p. 74: Using traffic and traffic control systems to develop creative materials and narrative structure of *Trailed*



- residential road (Speed bumps) ②
  - annoying
- cul-de-sac (Amber) ①
  - cheating in a rush
- open country side ⑥
  - wind in hair, sun on face
- dirt tracks ⑤
  - exhilarated, groovy, happy, excited
- country lanes (tunnel) ④
  - claustrophobic, working through something
- roundabout (exit lane) ③
  - trying to escape



p. 75: Brainstorm collection of traffic and road related terminology and words which were explored creatively into text and movements.

p. 76: Types of roads and the emotional response they elicit are used as a devising tool for choreography. The numbers on the image of the right correspond with the type of road/dynamic of movement. The pathway is partly inspired by the performers real-life school run.

## ④ young adults

- clubbing
- McDonalds
- A-levels
- University
- first job

first flat/house

• moving out

• bank account

• loans / taxes / National Insurance

• fills

• first love

yourself  
someone else.  
No choice.

## ⑤ Adults

• Children

• Marriage

• Independence → financial / emotional

• Supermarkets

• different sleeping hours

• Exercise

• Agency

• Individuality

• House / contents insurance

• anniversaries

Holidays

• seeing parents age

• Geats / check... reality check

• work

• M4 / P412

• promotions

• time passing quicker

## ③ first kiss

• first party

• first heartache

• first time // perm

hair dye

• first heartache

• mobile phone

• first school trip abroad

• first drug / alcohol

• first job

• first dinner party

• first demonstration / protest

• first staying out all night

• first time living alone / flatmate

• university

• first cat

• first degree

• first job

• first sexual adventures

• first job

• first job

• first job

period / wet dreams

• first time going into town on your own

• first gig

• first qualification

• first sex

• first sexual abuse?

• A-levels

• first sexual adventures

• first job

• first job

• first job

• first job

• first job

• first job

• first job

• first job

• first job

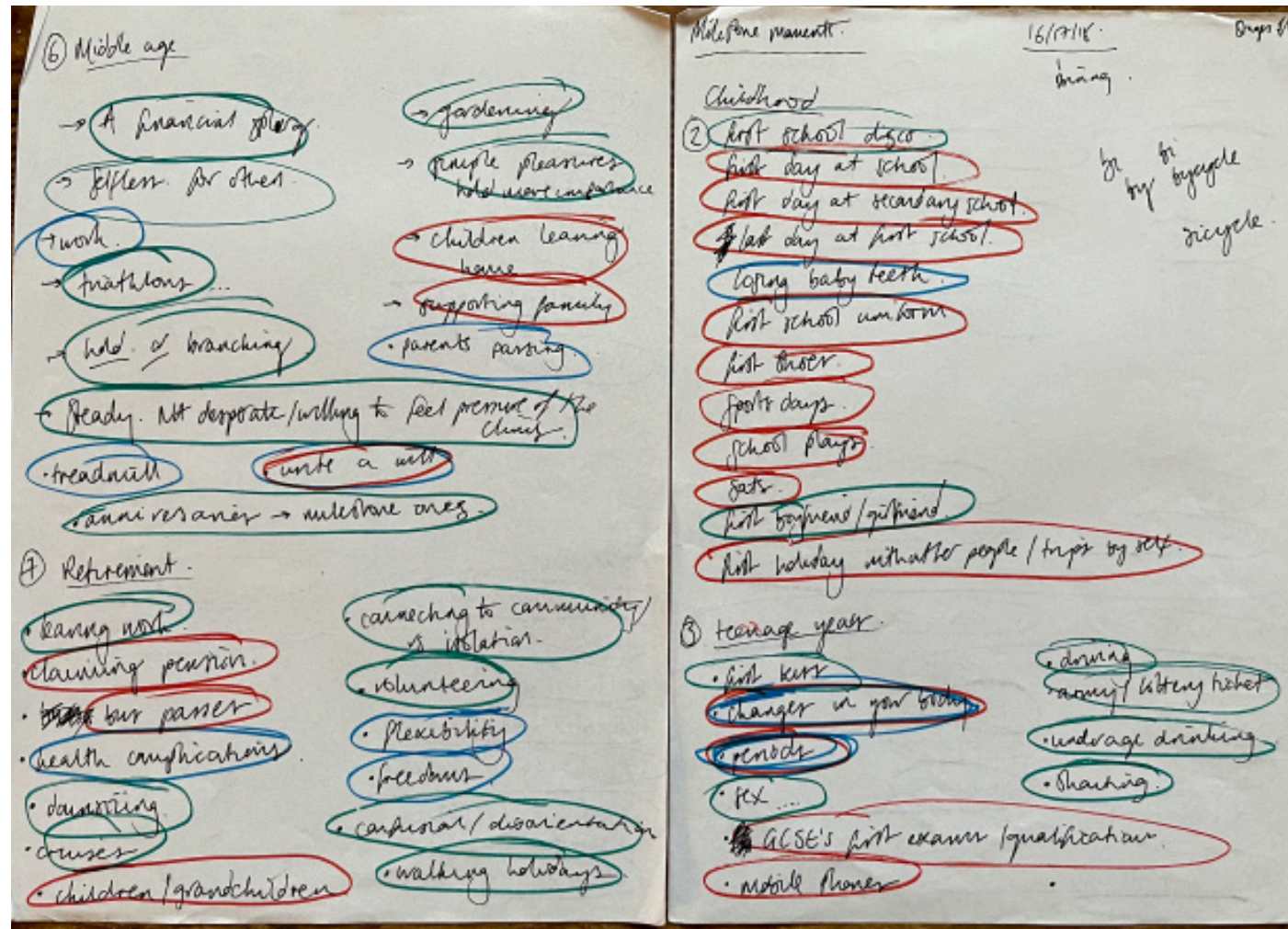
• first job

• first job

• first job

• first job

• first job



## LOOKING AT THE MAPPING OF SOMEONE'S LIFE AND LIFE CHOICES –

From childhood to adolescence to early adulthood . . . .

Audience: Helps map a protagonist's way through life and key life milestones.

What are these milestones . . .

**Who is this character?** Jane Everybody . .

Want to do better and strive and be more successful – fallen into the thrall of progress and involvement .

How did streets evolve and what emotional landscape can we draw of them?

p. 77 - 78: Identifying key life milestones over six decades: Key milestones were identified by surveying 11 female artists and practitioners between the ages of 24- 62 as part of my artists residence at the Clarence Mews Moving Architecture studio, Hackney, London. Their responses were collected informally and bundled, according to their feedback, into three categories:

Green indicates milestones, which are in one's own control (my own choice)

Red indicates milestones, which are decided by others (someone else's choice)

Blue indicates that no choice element was involved (no choice)

These milestones helped form the narrative content of the performance as well as some of the game-based objectives / choices to be made by audiences.

**TRAILED the Script**

p. 2; **Prologue AGES 0-2**

**ACT 1: AGES 3-12**

p. 4 **Scene 1 (The Game 1)**

p.5 **Scene 2 the outcome – school run**

**ACT 2: AGES 13-22**

p.9: **Scene 1 (The Game 2)**

p.13: **Scene 2 the outcome – the messiness of the early adult years – medieval roads, confused or too driven)**

**ACT 3: Ages 23-32**

p.15 **Scene 1 (The Game 3)**

p.21: **Scene 2 (The outcome – confusion – living life in the fast lane, getting lost in the network, hitting the brake)**

**ACT 4: Ages 33- 42**

p.22: **Scene 1 (The Game 4)**

p. 23: **Scene 2 (The outcome – settled in life)**

**ACT 5: Ages 43- 52**

p.25: **Scene 1 (The Game 5)**

p. 25: **Scene 2 (The outcome – ponderings about keeping control)**

**ACT 6: Ages 53- 62**

p.26: **Scene 1 (NO Game)**

p. 26: **Scene 2 (The outcome – therapy session)**

*Trailed* was performed in six acts, each act representing a decade in the life of the main protagonist. Each act was split in two halves: a interactive element which involved the audience, and a expository element in the form of a monologue/movement section. The contributions of the interactive elements effect and are incorporated into the expository element.



The performance begins with the audience entering the studio whilst the main performer (Scammell) is moving close to the walls and the floor in an abstract manner, pressing herself along and against the wall and the floors.

This is reminiscent of the crawling movements of a baby, but also represents the earliest forms of roads, which were traces and trails carved by repeated migration of fauna and early humans.



I pretended to be a leaf and trick the lady bird into being my friend  
 The garden was out of the left, but I wasn't allowed to go outside much  
 It was ok as long as I was in the garden  
 Bicycles, empty cigarettes packets,  
 A rusty slide  
 A washing line  
 When it rained I tried to get the washing in . . . but the stretch was too  
 much  
 The green carpet was really long  
 We had a Hoover but it never came upstairs  
 My dad collected the dust by scratching it with his fingers into piles of dust  
 balls  
 Shouting and laughing would wake me up in the middle of the night  
 And I remember the image of a fire . . it was always scary and felt like it was  
 really near  
 I always told everyone that I was left in the house when it happened al-  
 though I was never sure what exactly had happened  
 I liked the lady bird  
 It crawled over the glass bottle lying on the ground and I noticed how it  
 would not slide down its smooth surface  
 You were running down the stairs at tea time  
 Hoping not to have burned anything  
 I was there but you did not see me  
 I do remember the sound of shouting at night . . but I was always told it  
 was a dream  
 I don't think I had any friends. We were just in the playground. I don't re-  
 member who with  
 I was sick a lot. One Christmas I remember particularly. But we did not go to  
 the doctor.

p. 81: performance photograph of opening scene.  
 Script extract from Prologue

**Penny:**

Act 1, Scene 2 (the school run): performed as Penny

**The characters: Penny and Faye**

In the first game, the audience, in two groups, complete a questionnaire with basic information about the character, such as her name, her star-sign, her favourite food and colour. A throw of a dice decides which group's suggestion are going to be implemented in the show, with the winning group receiving a point. Furthermore, and unbeknownst to the audience, the chosen star sign determines if the character is born in the winter or summer months and if Scammell is performing the character traits of "Penny" (a winter born and more mature and confident primary school pupil) or "Faye" (a summer born and younger, more timid primary school pupil). Although "Penny" or "Faye" are not revealed to audiences, this early audience-authored choice strongly determines Scammell's performance throughout the rest of the show, as "Penny" and "Faye"'s are rehearsal characters that allowed for the creation of pre-conceived material. Their personality traits develop according to subsequent audience choices contributions.

Additionally, Scammell performs a more objective, more mature performance personality that looks back at what she remembers (which frames that which she is not able to remember - and therefore being determined by the audience).

**Faye:**

Act 1, Scene 2 (the school run): performed as Faye

**The characters: the Entertainer**

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome and thank you for being here.  
Today you will help me develop my story. I am an every woman, I might even be an every man. I could be you, which means you could be me.  
You will help me create my path. Through today's performance;  
In the little time we are about to spend together.

Let's start with you helping me to choose some basic facts about me . . .

May I ask you to form two teams:  
Maybe you and you? And you and you!

In front of you will find 2 envelopes . . .  
Please, if I could ask you, to, together, in your teams, if you could fill in the questions on the form in the envelope . . .

Oh it is just about some minor information about me.

Take your pick.

It not high stakes right now . .  
So no worries. .

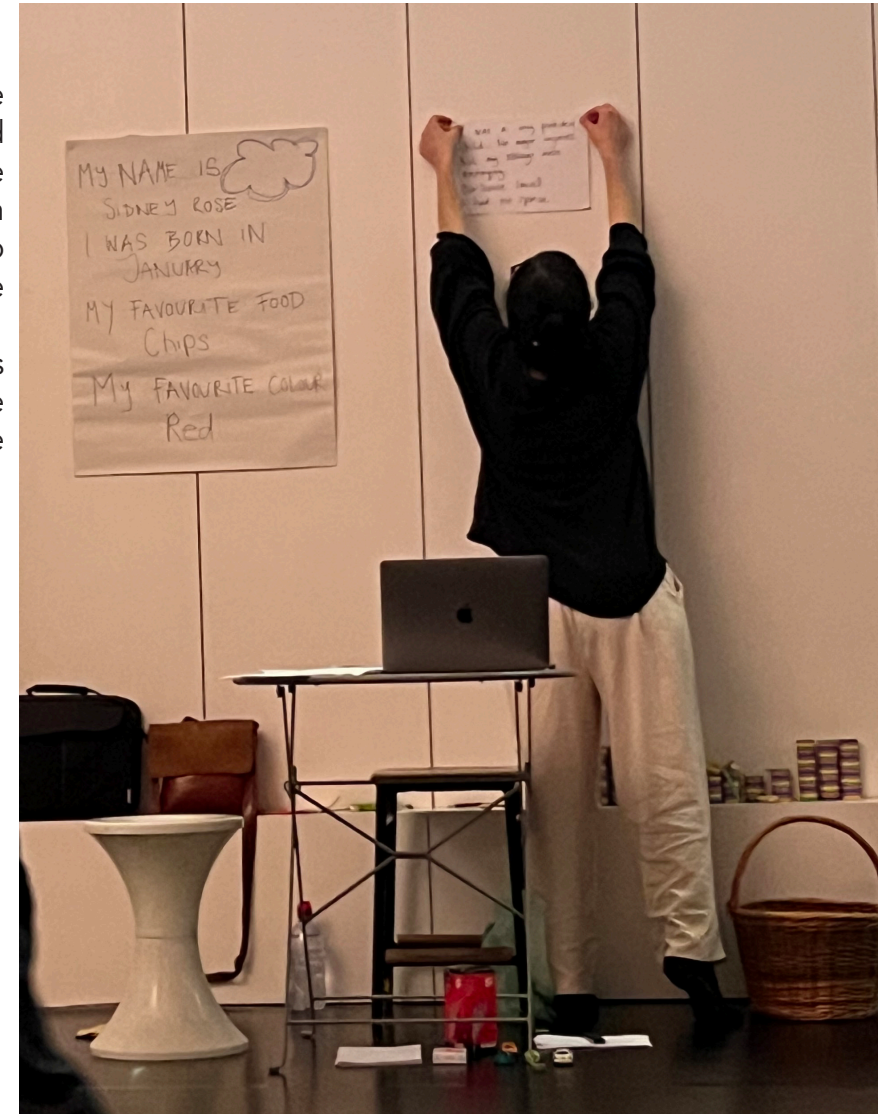


Exploring the hierarchical structure between audience and performer was once again a key consideration. Throughout the creative process, Scammell and I explored ways to balance the (at times illusory) power a branching structure to the participating audience. So whereas the aim of the performance was for audiences to affect and design the protagonists life, the overall performance structure, and particularly the role of the Ringmaster, was designed for the power structure to be reversed: in the role of the Ringmaster, Scammell directs and commands the audience. The ringmaster is a loud, obnoxious, sarcastic narrator of the proceedings and emerges during every single game element, acting as referee and moderator to audience's activities. The exaggerated demeanour of Scammell's performance singles out the participatory moments as a separate, meta-world to the performance world of the main character.

**The characters: the Other**

Throughout the performance, I myself sit behind a small table, with my laptop and the script and a collection of props. Disguised as the technical support, I operate sound cues and hand Scammell a range of props, such as pens or paper. I however also notate and document the audiences' choices and contributions, writing down their chosen life story for the protagonist on pieces of paper and sticking them on the wall for all to see. This acts as an instantaneous feedback loop. Furthermore, I awarded the Audience teams with a obscure point system (please refer to thesis p.????)

I remain in the background apart from isolated, ominous moments when I roll toy cars into the space, interrupting Scammell's performance. This references the overall theme of traffic and life paths, but also intends to hint at the possibility that my role could have some further significance.





### The games: from the frivolous to matters of life and death

The interactive elements in *Trailed* see a continuous progression as they explore not just a range of game- and contest-based interactions and collaborations (please refer to pages 129 - 130 in the thesis for a further discussion on the Games) but also develop in terms of topics and themes. For example, the first game asks audience groups to decide, amongst other, on a name and a star sign for the character. This is relatively low-stake for participants as well as fictional protagonist. In contrast, the final game sees audiences decide upon a medical termination of pregnancy. The interactive structures of the games reflect the potentially emotional and socio-political weight of the subject matter. Whereas most games are collaborative and executed collectively, the final game allows audiences to make a decision in private. The next pages document the atmosphere of the interactive elements of *Trailed*.

Game 1: Audiences complete a questionnaire to decide the identity of the protagonist.





Game 2: Audience groups compete against each other to answer questions about the protagonists early teenage experiences

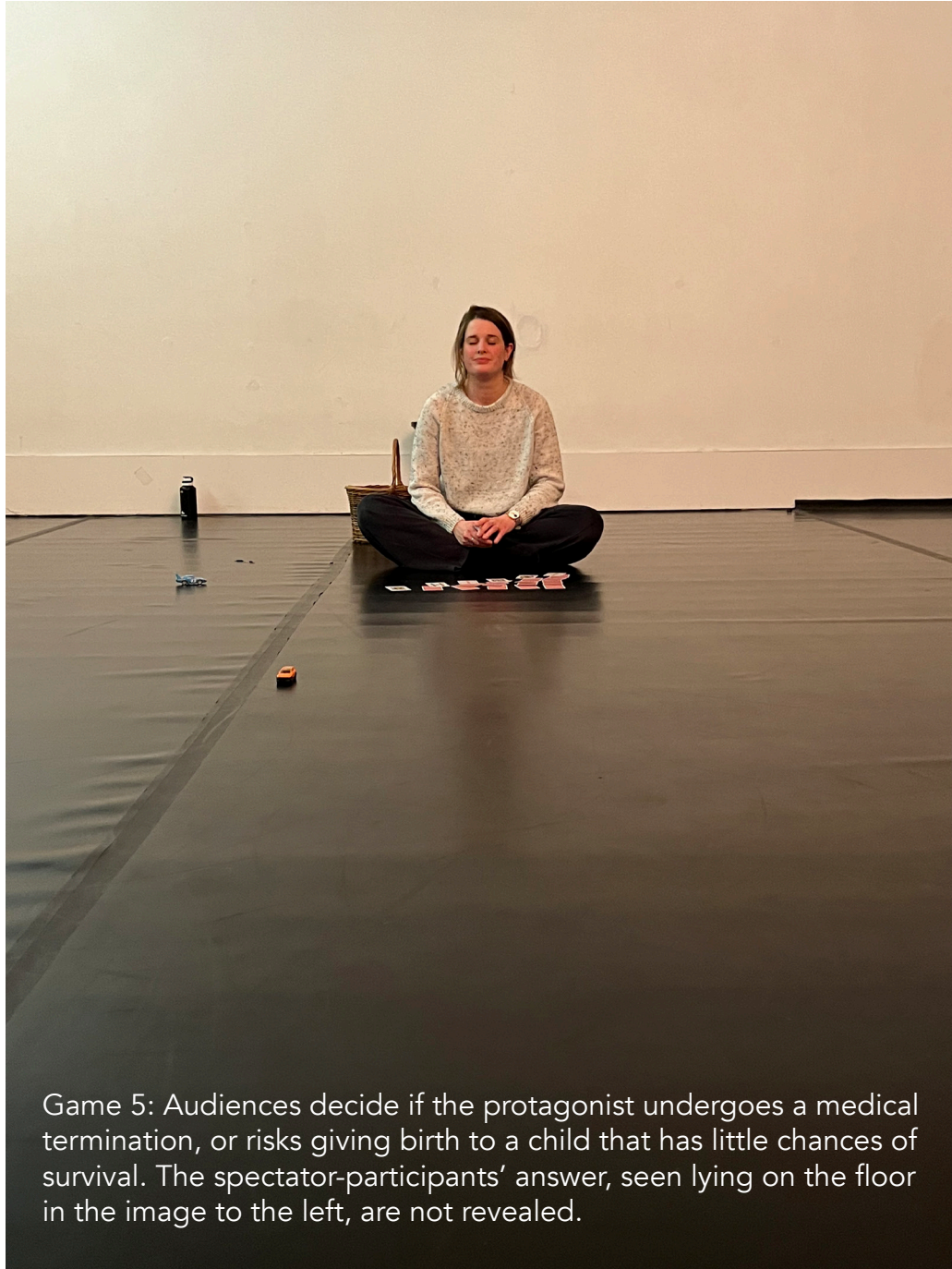
Game 3: Audience groups decide upon life choices as either the protagonist or as a significant social other (boss, flat mate, boyfriend, parents)

p. 87 - 88: Game 4: Audience members try to offer life style and health advise to the protagonist; the advice is revealed during a house warming and engagement party.

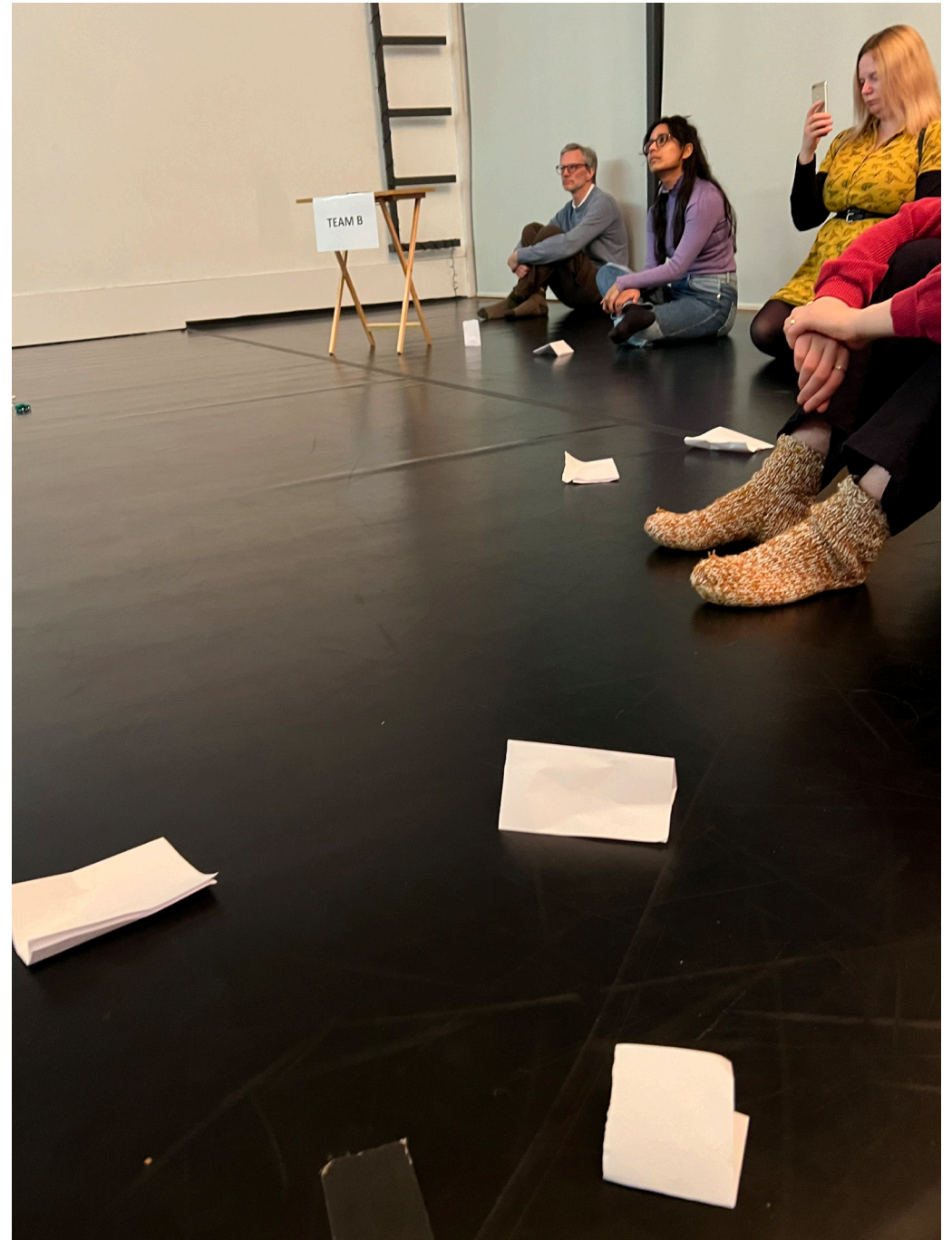








Game 5: Audiences decide if the protagonist undergoes a medical termination, or risks giving birth to a child that has little chances of survival. The spectator-participants' answer, seen lying on the floor in the image to the left, are not revealed.



No no I am ok, I am just . . angry you know?  
So fucking angry . . .

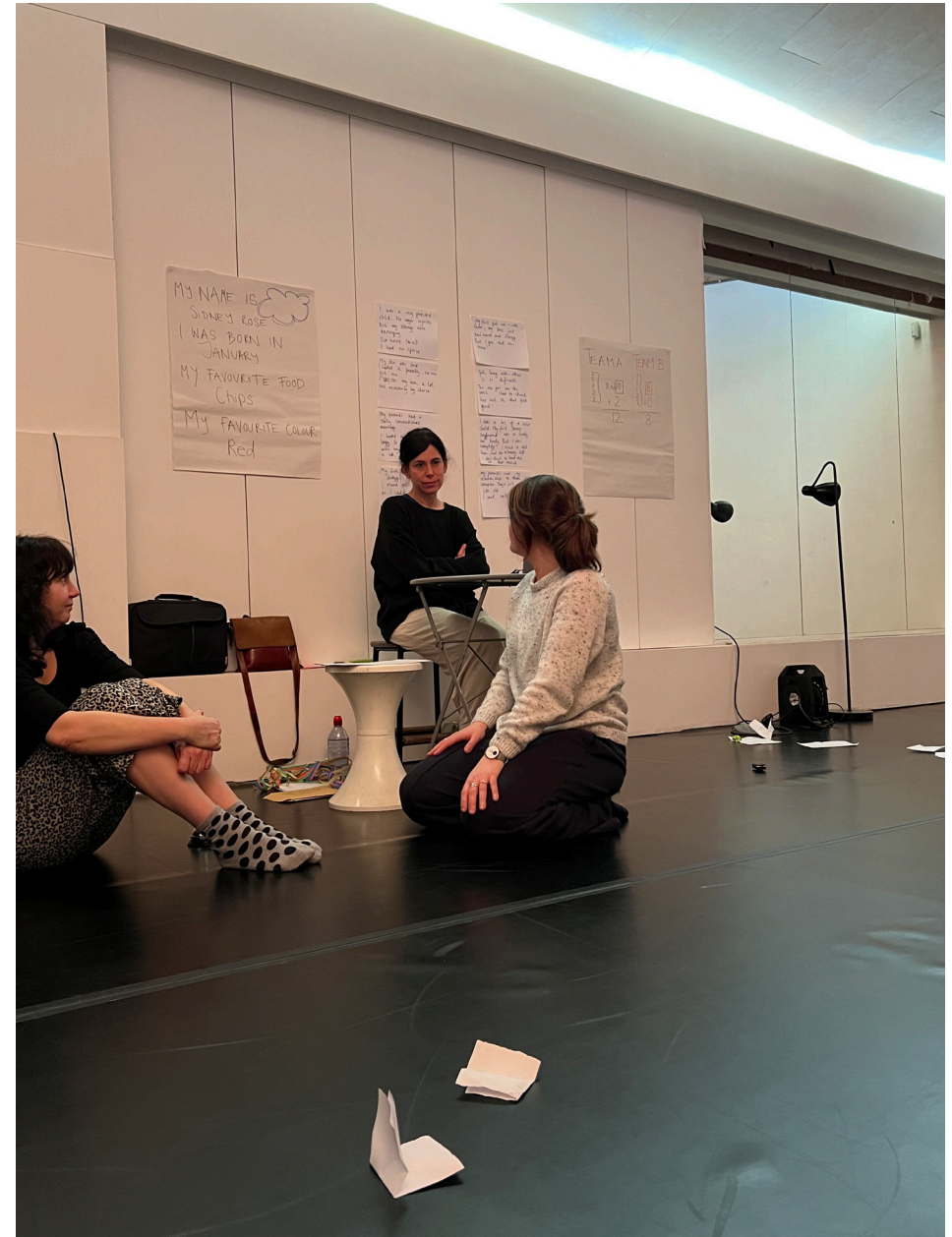
I am fucking angry because  
How can one person be expected to make such a decision?  
It will be worth in the long run, it will save you from pain, it will be for the  
best, don't worry there will be another one, time will heal, call me, whenever,  
I know its fucking hard, just look after yourself now,  
I am so sorry  
I am so sorry I am so sorry

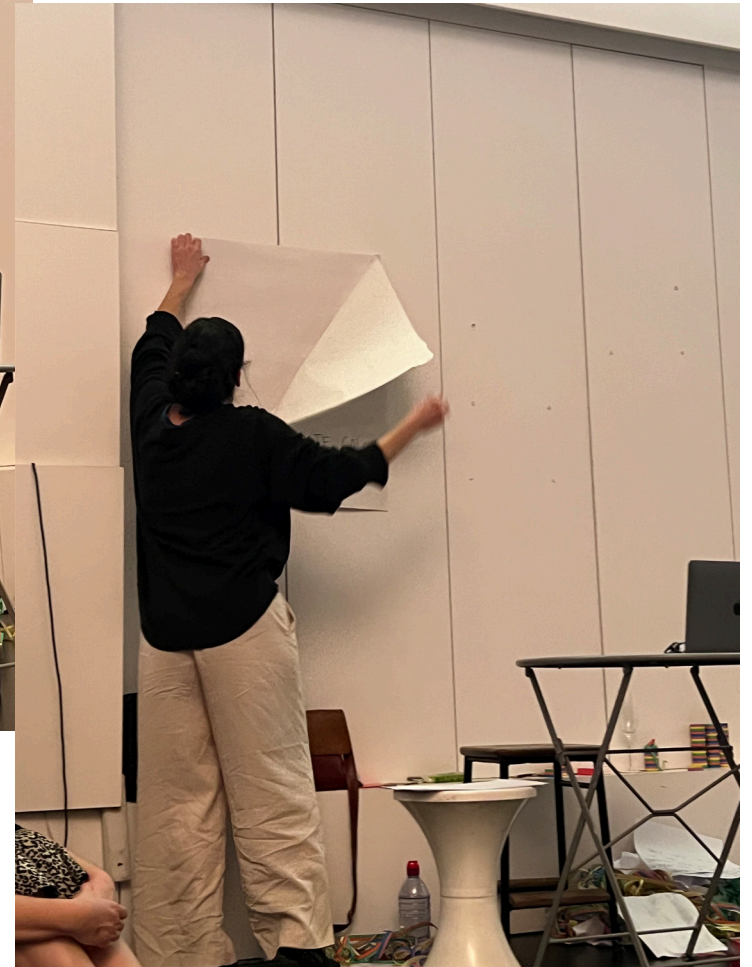
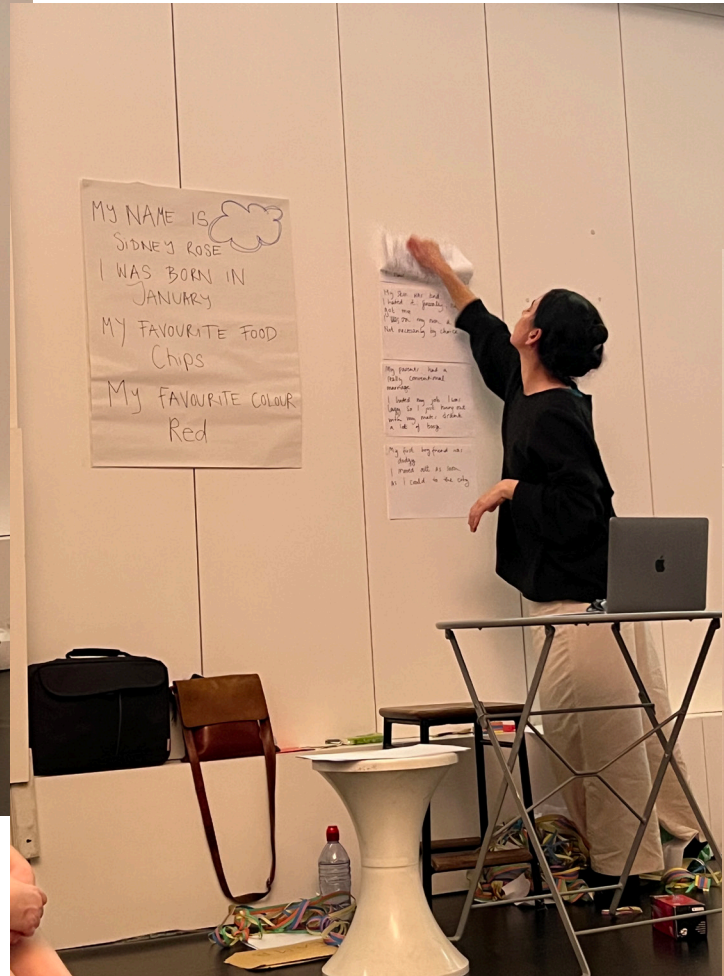
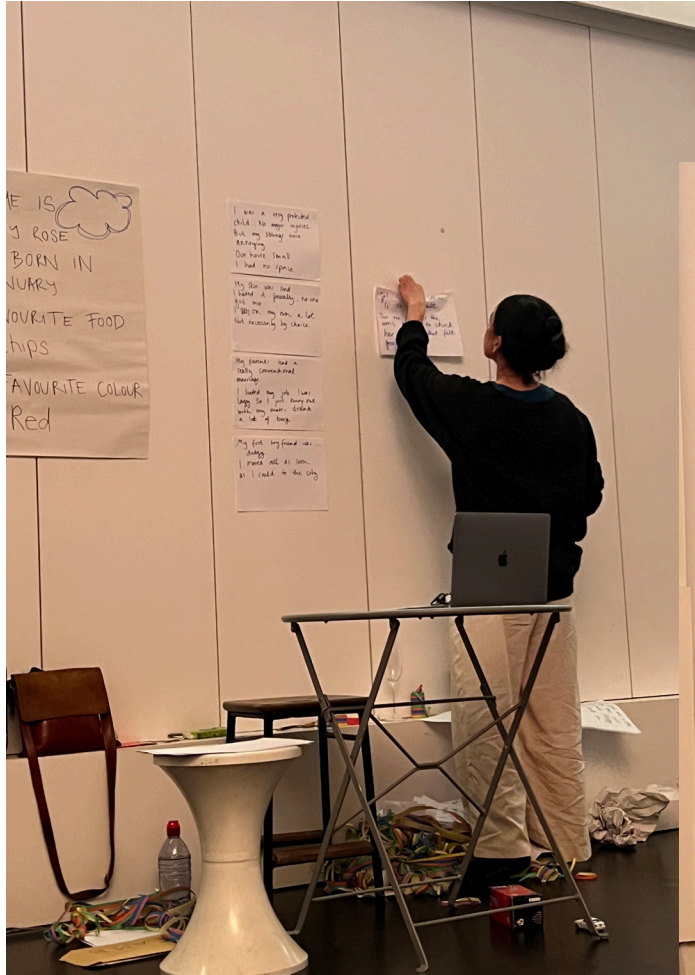
What else is there to say.  
I'll never know if it was the right choice. I never know if I made a mistake.  
What would my life be right now if things had been different.

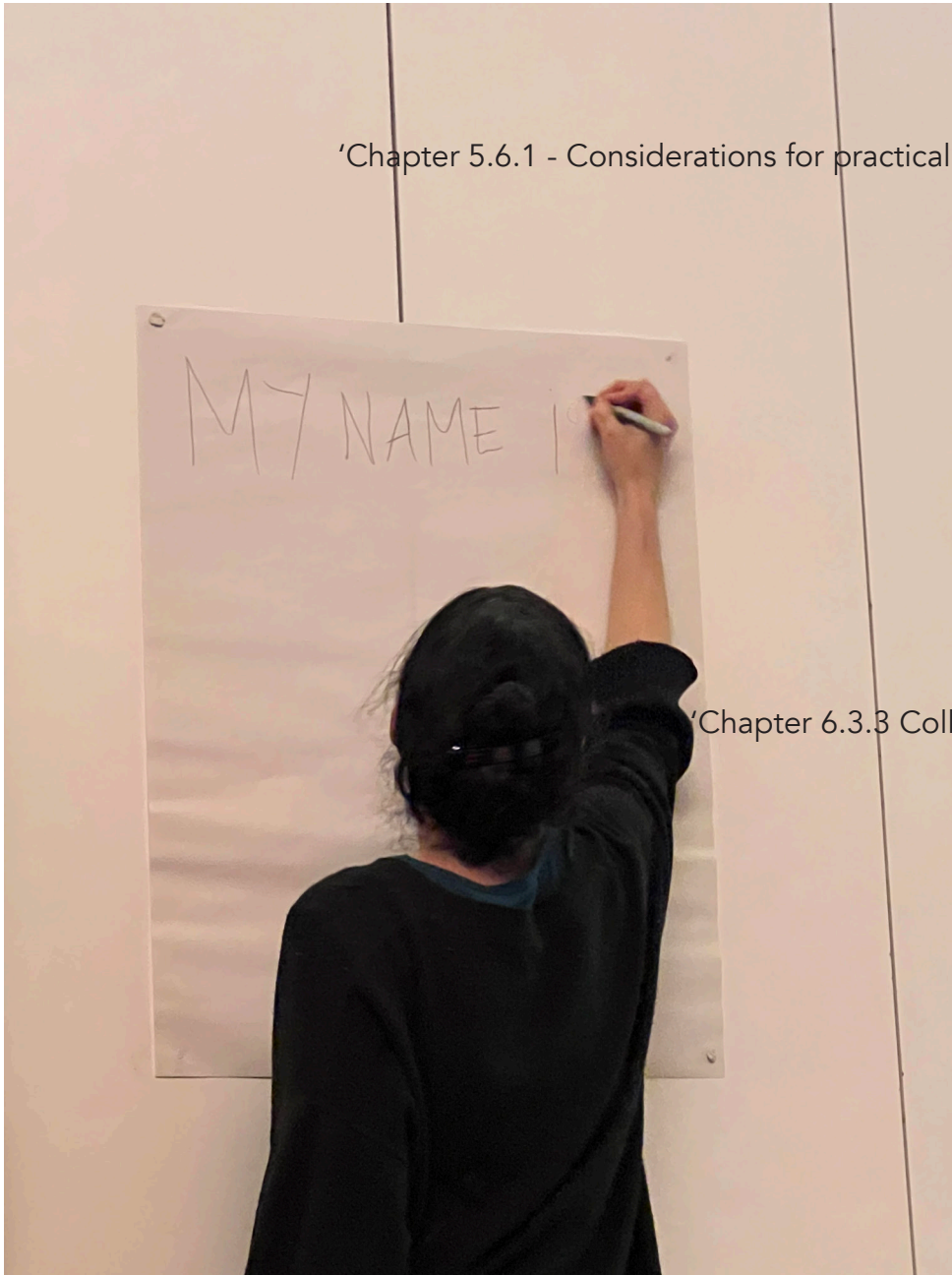
This concept of choice.  
It's an illusion, right? So many forces exist outside of ourselves. How can we  
ever know what choice is truly ours?

They say life is just like a game. You have to learn the rules and then play it  
better than anyone else.  
I don't like the rules.

The final sentence from the above speech is directed at myself, the technician, scribe and ominous Other. It is the first time Scammell fully acknowledges me. The overall theme of the performance, the question of how much control we truly have over the unfolding of our life, is addressed not just in the script. The performance ends with Scammell and myself cleaning up the performance space, returning it to how it was set up at the beginning. The papers documenting the contributions and choices of the audiences are removed from the wall. A blank page is set up, ready to be filled a fresh. Scammell returns to her opening movements, the door is opened, the audience is asked to leave . . .





**Where to continue reading:****Where to continue reading:**

'Chapter 5.6 - *And Then There Was Only One* (2022)' p.125

'Chapter 5.6.1 - Considerations for practical methods applied for *And Then There Was Only One*' p.127

non-seated audience  
in

'Chapter 6.2 Site specific and spatial boundaries' p. 139

Feedback Loops  
in

'Chapter 6.3.2 Competition and contests' p. 150 - 152

Collaboration  
in

'Chapter 6.3.3 Collaborative systems and collaborative decision making' p.158

Cheating  
in

'Chapter 7.3.2 Cheats' p.172 -173.

Humorous transgression  
in

'Chapter 7.3.3 Jokers' p.174

# ADJACENT EXPERIMENTATION

## ADJACENT EARLY EXPERIMENTATIONS

The creative materials on the following pages are some of the many practical experiments I conducted between 2019 and 2020. These practical and playful experimentations helped me to further explore hunches emerging from theoretical reading, case study analysis and critical reflection.

Not all of them have directly contributed to PaR instances; those that do, are discussed in further detail in the main thesis (with cross-reference given here). However, they have been a significant element in the development of my praxis and their inclusion in this documentation is therefore valuable.

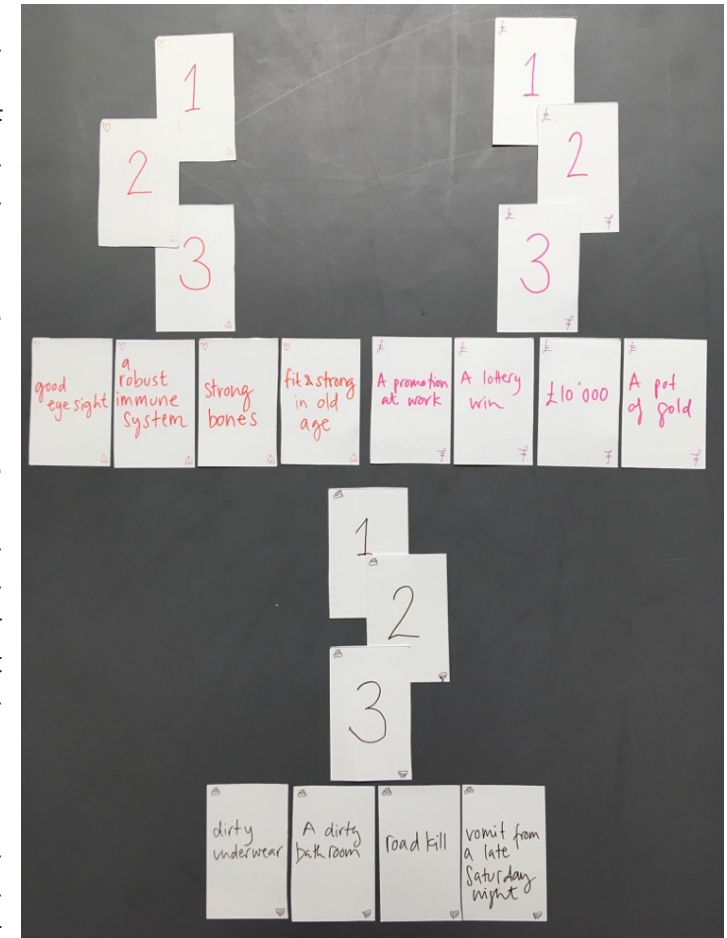
## GAME OF VALUE

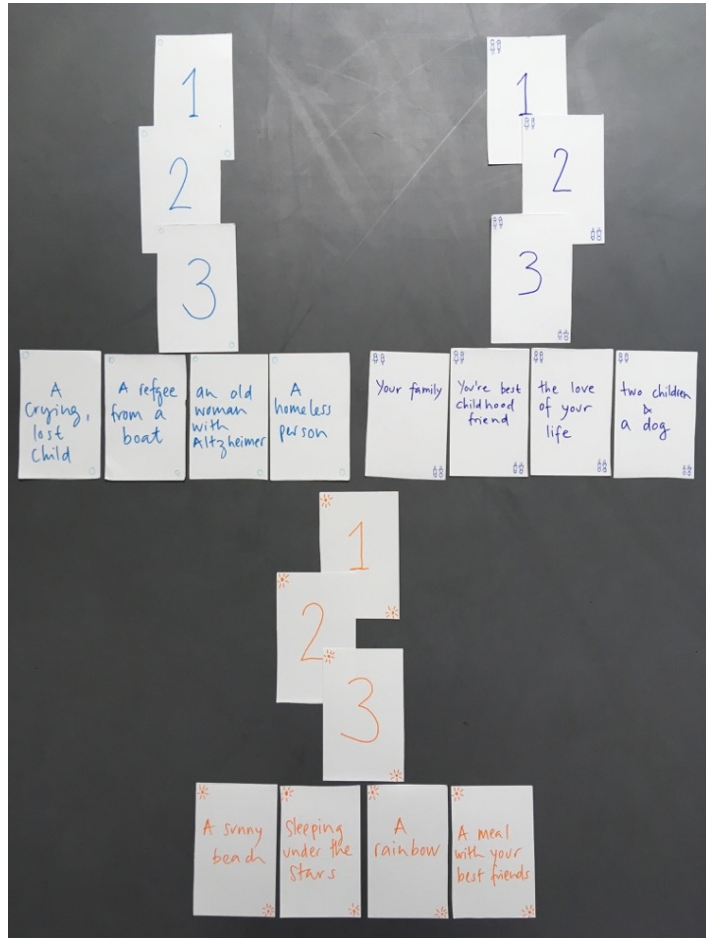
Developed in February, 2019, tested in workshops with students from the BA (Hons) Performing Arts course at the New Buckinghamshire University,  
3 March 2019

The Game of Value is a performative card game inspired by performances such as Coney's *Early Days (of a better nation)* (2014), Exit Productions' *The Mission: Occupy Mars* (2019) and particularly Kaleider's *The Money* (2013).

The three performances all conceptualise debate, confrontation and the negotiation of compromise whilst employing a democratic approach to making decisions. These performances inspired me due to the fact that, although they occur in a designated play-space akin to Johan Huizinga's magic circle, the separation between the real world and the participatory world is thinned, art times almost translucent. Particularly in Kaleider's *The Money*, there is potentially a real-life stake at the heart of the work, due to the debated amount of cash being spent on the decision made by the participating spectators. The thinning of the circle separating the participatory world from the real world is however not only facilitated through a tangible consequence resulting out of the work, but more so through a dramaturgical approach of appealing and provoking spectator-participants real-life social and political values and expectations. Confronting these values in performative situations amongst a group of strangers has the potential to give rise to Jacques Rancière's concept of dissensus.

The Game of Value aims to emulate this facilitation of dissensus through a conceptualisation of debate, confrontation and the negotiation of compromise. The game itself has been developed to consist of suits divided into the categories of family & friends, wealth, memories, health, undesirables and charitable instinct. Each card designates an 'object' of variable and at times subjective value. The game aimed to explore the facilitation of cheating and lying within participatory performance, as the idea of the game was to obtain the most valuable card available. This is achieved through trading cards with other players, with a trading transaction being conducted verbally: two players offer verbal descriptions of their objects and their value without naming the objects themselves. It is up to the players to decide if a given description designates an object of greater value and if the trade is therefore desirable; trading can be refused, but not reversed if agreed upon. At designated points throughout the game, opportunities to approach a central bank are given, where players are able to swap their current card for a new one; however, they are swapping their card without knowing what object they will receive from the central bank and once conducted, a swap cannot be undone.





### Reflections on playtests:

Although success within this game required the ability to describe the object on the card in the most desirable terms (which was simply best achieved by lying), players were hesitant to embrace the lying; instead, they aimed to find the positives for each designated object. For example, the object 'underwear' became an essential daily item with multiple use and significant ability to attract sexual partners. The game therefore somewhat moved away from my intended aim to facilitate lying but instead provided a platform for imaginative positivity and optimism. Nevertheless, the game successfully allowed players to question what they understand to be valuable and what worth means for each of the players present. In one version of the game, a player refused to trade her card early on, essentially exiting the game as she considered her card to designate the most valuable object available. Her conviction led to several other players at first trying their best to persuade her to trade, but her refusal eventually convinced them that the object was of emotional and personal worth, and they lost interest (Indeed her card was a designating a rainbow, which held a strong emotional value for this particular player, one that wasn't shared by any of the others). This moment nevertheless could be understood as a merging of two worlds and therefore an experience of dissensus. The object rainbow, so meaningful for one player that she refuses to participate in the game, makes other player realise that the object on the card

has a significance beyond the participatory world, and the player's real-life personal circumstances shift into the make-believe world of the game. This also occurred in a moment when players, who in this instance were drama and performing arts students with whom I was holding a research workshop, realised in the midst of trading with each other that their lecturer, who joined the game, held a card designating the object of a 1st Class Degree. The lecturer all of a sudden found himself surrounded by three of his final year students, all begging to trade their cards with him. A thinning of the magic circle separating play and real life was strongly observable here, the translucency exposing the precarious relationship between lecturer and student, raising the stakes and symbolic value of an ultimately worthless piece of paper. The players stopped playing freely and although they did not emulate the roles of lecturer and student, their conscious awareness of their real-life roles strongly affected how they played and experienced the game. In this moment dissensus was experienced through the merging of the performative participatory world with the real-world, which resulted in both lecturer and students reconsidering their personal as well as others' responses and their possible consequences in both participatory and real-life spheres.

## 3DIMENSIONAL HAND & FOOT TWISTER

Developed in February, 2020, tested in workshops with students from the BA (Hons) Performing Arts course at the University of Essex.

3Dimensional Twister is an interactive movement game that is played by a group of 'instructors' and a sole 'executor'. The game is an adaptation of the popular *Twister* game: instead of colours and a spin board, it employs printed sheets with images of left and right hand as well as left and right foot.

During the game, instructors' use those prints to indicate the hand and feet positioning of the executor. With a given pathway already on the floor, instructors used hand and foot prints to create physical shapes in the kinesphere of the executor. The game was purposefully left open and undefined in its aim, in order for participants to find their own objective within the given instructions. The assumption I departed was that instructors would enjoy offering *unachievable* points of positioning of hands and feet, executing a hierarchical power over the executor. This assumption was only partly verified: in verbal feedback after the exercise, instructors did admit that they at times positioned the prints with an aim of disrupting the balance of the executor. However, they soon noticed that their own positioning as well as their navigation around each other obstructed any superior transgressive aim towards the executor. In the video example, the instructor are clearly struggling to catch up with the rhythm, find a suitable position for themselves and the prints, and

handle the prints appropriately. The executor therefore ends up directing the instructors, reversing their intended roles for a brief time, transgressing against the original instructions.

3Dimensional Hand & Foot Twister was an exploration in interactive and collaborative choreography, experimenting with ways in which movement could be created collectively and via an instruction-based system. It was a precursor to the triggering activities employed in *WouldYou#1*.





## TRIGGERING IN IMPROVISATION

Developed in February, 2020, tested in workshops with students from the BA (Hons) Performing Arts course at the University of Essex.

Triggering in theatrical improvisation is being discussed in the main thesis in 'Chapter 6.3.4 Triggering'.



Improvisation scenario: a married couple on holiday as their marriage grows stale  
Each of the commands should provoke only a short response

Person 1:

- 1 - Pretend you haven't heard what the others are saying
- 2 - you suddenly can't remember where you put your credit card
- 3 - have a massive sneeze

Person 2:

- 1 - be distracted by something happening behind you
- 2 - enthusiastically agree with your partner
- 3 - develop heart burn but you fear it's a heart attack



## THE TONE OF THE INVITATION

Developed in November, 2019, tested at Clarence Mews with residence art practitioners.

The Tone of the Invitation was an early experiment of using different tones for direct address, examining how such tone might affect on one hand subsequent participatory responses and, on the other hand, overall enjoyment and perceived sense of agency with the participatory task.

In this exercise, spectator-participants are addressed in five different vocal tones / manners. They are:

- 1) rude/aggressive
- 2) confused / unclear
- 3) gentle / caring
- 4) collaborative / supportive
- 5) rushed / pressured

They were given the task of writing an instruction for the next person and respond to two question about how they experienced their moment of participation.

I wanted to test if the tone of address would first) affect their participatory contribution, and second) affect their enjoyment / feeling of agency

This exercise contributed to the development of the introductory letters given to the audience in *Would You #1*.





This portfolio has been developed alongside the thesis *Transgression and Dissensus in Participatory Performance*, submitted to the University of Essex on the 2 October 2024.

This document is best read in conjunction with said thesis but aims to give autonomous overview of the creative, explorative and experimental explorations of transgression and dissensus by Caroline Mueller and her many invaluable collaborators of students, colleagues, mentors and performers.

A special thanks needs to be given to Caroline Salem and Ed Frith, as most of the practice presented here has been developed in their live/work space Moving Architecture at Clarence Mews, Hackney, London.

Another special thanks needs to be expressed to Noah, as his soft play balls, toy cars, party hats and other toys have continuously been abducted throughout my PhD journey.

Thank you